

PART III

DIALOGUE: A POSSIBILITY FOR PEACE

Chapter Ten

Dialogue as a Means of Addressing Terrorism

Chapter Aim: This chapter aims to present Dialogue as a possible means of addressing global terrorism by focussing on improving relations between Muslims and Christians as has been promoted by the Silsilah Dialogue Movement in the Philippines, a country experiencing its own internal forms of terrorism. This setting will be regarded as a microcosm of the global terrorist problem.

Introduction

Just as Postmodernism and Postcolonialism showed how the Islamic world has been marginalised by the West and the discursive reproduction of domination of those holding power was exposed, I move to a local example of this phenomenon: the island of Mindanao in the Philippines. Mindanao, a microcosm of the global terrorist problem, will be examined in terms of its history and how it has produced a Muslim-Christian Dialogue Movement, the Silsilah Dialogue Movement (SDM). Thus this chapter posits that dialogue is a possible means of addressing terrorism. At its simplest level, a form of Dialogue is people talking together, each with his/her own viewpoints but intent on learning from the other. It is the learning that helps to create the solutions necessary in the resolution of conflict. To be guided as to how effectively dialogue may work in the macrocosm, it is necessary to examine how dialogue works in a microcosm. There are many microcosms where Muslims are in conflict with Christians giving rise to terrorist expression such as in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria, Sudan, Indonesia and Egypt. Mindanao has been chosen because there is an active dialogue presence there that is readily accessible to me.

The chapter begins with a general discussion of the dialogue as a human possibility in which “dialogue” is defined and issues relating to the terms “exclusivist”, “inclusivist” and “pluralist” are explored. The discussion then moves to examples of Muslim and Christian foundations of dialogue in the Holy Quran and the Holy Bible which attest to the legitimacy of inter-faith principles relevant to Muslim Christian conflict. Examples of how dialogue, principally Muslim-Christian dialogue, is being used in the world are then discussed. Muslim-Christian dialogue in the Philippines is examined where the Mindanao conflict is summarised and the importance to this conflict of structural injustices highlighted. The Silsilah Dialogue movement is then discussed in terms of its structure, its history, its purpose

and aims. The chapter ends with thoughts on the possibility of engaging those we may call “terrorists” through dialogue.

The Dialogue as a Human Possibility

It was Johann Galtung, celebrated peace researcher, who spoke of the generosity of the dialogue. He claimed he was always grateful not only to his fellow participants in dialogues, but also to ‘the dialogue itself as a human possibility’ (Galtung and Ikeda 1995: 39). He sees the dialogue as almost the opposite of the debate. While there are winners and losers in debates where one party triumphs over the other by catching him or her in contradictions, dialogues are open-ended and promote mutual enrichment, each party laying all their cards on the table. In dialogue, as opposed to debate, there can only be winners (Galtung and Ikeda 1995: 39). So while debate can be seen to be about winning, dialogue can be seen to be about learning. In order to lay all cards on the table, however, the participants have to feel safe or secure in that space. This is essential for dialogue to be effective.

There is an important role for secularism in dialogue with respect to transcending or resolving conflicts in the world. Many dialogues initiated by the United Nations are of this type, for example. I am not by any means denying the valuable contribution made by secularist based dialogues to any conflicts extant today and in the past. I want to, however, pursue interreligious dialogue, specifically Muslim-Christian dialogue, in this thesis because these two religions have been conflicted historically and continue to be so today in many locations, including the Philippines where I base my research. Given that I have previously identified fundamentalist terror organisations such as al-Qaeda as being opposed to Western modern rationalism, it might appear to be more logical to consider dialogue between rationalists and fundamentalists. However, I consider Muslim-Christian dialogue to be more relevant because the conflict between Islam and Christianity has been and still is entrenched on many fronts. Dialogue might facilitate an understanding between these two religions such that Muslims might see that Western knowledge has some integrity.

Considering secularism within dialogue, one has to ask what role do non-religious people play in interfaith dialogue. The intersection of secularism and interfaith work no doubt produces some opposing and hostile responses. However, I consider that it would add a new dimension to the interfaith movement. Thus I conceive that while it may be a difficult process to initiate, a respectful relationship may result. However, Eck (2005: 44) sums up the

situation well when she says: ‘...the uncommitted certainly have a place in the dialogue of a pluralistic world, but the heart of the issue with which we struggle is the difficult, potentially explosive, and potentially vibrant encounter of people with strong and very different commitments.’

Leonard Swidler, a Catholic professor of interreligious dialogue, incorporates the learning dimension into his definition of dialogue: ‘Dialogue is a conversation on a common subject between two or more persons with differing views, the primary purpose of which is for each participant to *learn* from the other so that he or she can change and grow (Swidler 1983:1). Seena Fazel, employing an interfaith context, also stresses learning in dialogue by defining dialogue as ‘a collective process or a conversation, a two-way communication or a reciprocal relationship in which two or more parties holding significantly different beliefs endeavour to express accurately to dialogue partners what they mean and to *learn* from each other in the process’ (Fazel 1997: 137). Fazel, however, extends her definition of dialogue in this context by including the refining of the ‘beliefs and values of one’s own faith vis-à-vis the insights that one has gleaned from others’ (Fazel 1997: 137).

Based on these overviews of dialogue, it can be seen that interreligious dialogue offers a proactive means for people of different faiths to come together, talk and possibly come away with an enhanced understanding of the Other to the extent that their own views are refined. Such a process works to mend relationships and ultimately build peace. It is a means of progressing towards building a peace that will enable coexistence.

An issue that is highly relevant to interreligious dialogue is encapsulated in a question posed by Eck (2005: 22-23): “Is our God listening?” Eck (2005: 22-23) subsequently explains that this question brings forward the challenge of an encounter with real difference and that there can be many responses which can take on theological, social and political forms. She goes on to explore, however, just three possibilities which are suggestive of the range of interpretation within almost every religious tradition: the exclusivist response, the inclusivist response and the pluralist response. These three outcomes will be briefly examined.

The exclusivist position encompasses *our* understanding of reality. Our encounter with God is the one and only truth. Put in terms of the above question, “our God” is not listening to those of other faiths. Exclusivism is not just fervent interest in one’s own traditions,

however. It comes with a highly unconstructive attitude toward other traditions. The exclusivist position embraces religious truth as “a given”. The uncertainties of secular culture have made Christian exclusivism attractive in the world today (Eck 2005: 23-31). The exclusivist sees religious diversity as a threat to his/her religious beliefs. Such people insist upon doctrinal uniformity, claiming exclusive authority for their beliefs and practices (Boase 2005a: 247). From a Christian perspective, the exclusivist position regards religious truth only as God’s revelation in Jesus Christ and nothing else (Braybrooke 2005: 219).

The inclusivist position includes others in our world-view but it is on terms that we have set. Our way of seeing things is superior to the others or at least wide enough to let the others in. The inclusivist does not exclude or censure others and is not self aggrandising. S/he uses her/his own conceptions of the religious such as God’s universal love, for the Christian, for example. However, inclusivism can dodge the question of real difference by reducing everything to our own terms, for inclusivists often assume that their world-view is the whole (Eck 2005: 23-36). The inclusivist is thus more broad-minded and would acknowledge the need for tolerance and mutual respect between people of different faiths. Such a person, however, would consider other religious traditions to be incomplete or deficient (Boase 2005b: 2). From a Christian perspective, inclusivism is the view that there is some knowledge of God outside the Christian church; however God’s “final” revelation is in Jesus Christ. In addition, good people who are not Christian, it is hoped, will also be “saved” by God, despite their lack of Christian faith (Braybrooke 2005: 219).

The pluralist position embraces the view that truth is not the exclusive or inclusive possession of any one tradition. God is our way of conceptualising a Reality that cannot be completely known by any one particular tradition and this includes our own. Thus a pluralist recognises the limits of one’s own worldview and seeks to understand others on their own terms. The Christian pluralist does not limit God to the God s/he knows or to the image through which s/he knows God. The pluralist is driven to find out what others know of God, what God has revealed to the Other. From a Christian pluralist perspective, the plurality of religions is not a problem to be solved but a fact of the world (Eck 2005: 23-38). The pluralist thus believes that no one creed has a monopoly on spiritual truth. Such a person seeks to understand each religion as an expression of the Divine. A Pluralist needs and wants to come to terms with the truth claims of the other (Boase 2005b: 2). As Braybrooke (2005: 219) states, “all religions point to the Divine mystery who or which is the source of all religious life”.

So to just restate those positions: the exclusivist rejects the truth of the Other, the inclusivist is more broad-minded in that s/he may acknowledge the need for mutual respect between people of different faith, but would nevertheless consider other religions to be inferior while the pluralist seeks to come to terms with the truth claims of the Other and possibly refines her/his own claims to truth. However, while these groups have been presented as discrete entities, they might be better represented as points along a continuum. It is quite likely that moving back and forth along this continuum is the way a person grapples with her/his religious identity. So while it may seem obvious that the pluralist position best facilitates interreligious dialogue, it needs to be recognised that the exclusivist and the inclusivist challenged by the very dynamics of forming a religious identity may also contribute to dialogue as well.

It is necessary, however, to stress the importance and usefulness of the pluralist position in dialogue in today's climate. Hans Kung, a Catholic priest and an eminent theologian, has eloquently articulated that 'there will be no peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions' (Kung 2000: 229). John Hick, Christian philosopher and evangelist turned pluralist, contends that the second half of the 20th century has seen a worldwide development of interreligious dialogue so that it is now possible for leaders of religious institutions to meet with goodwill and respect. However, Hick claims that they still, for the most part, retain the conviction of the centrality and precedence of their own tradition (Hick 2004: 252). Hick (1997:163) affirms the value of pluralism by claiming that it is not another historical religion making an exclusive religious claim, but a meta-theory about the *relation*⁹⁸ between the historical religions. I posit that an important part of dialogue is the development of the *relationship* among members of the historical religions for without relationship it will be harder to engage in argument and tackle differences.

John Paul Lederach is a prominent figure in the field of peace and conflict, particularly in the analytical framework of conflict transformation. He defines a particularly key role for dialogue in this framework. In conflict transformation, Lederach views peace as rooted in the value of *relationships*. These relationships have two characteristics: our face-to-face communications and the ways we structure our social, political, economic and cultural

⁹⁸ My italics

relationships. Rather than seeing peace as a static “end-state”, conflict transformation views peace as an evolving quality of relationships. Lederach suggests that we need to develop our capacities in envisioning the change processes at all levels of our relationships: interpersonal, inter-group and social-structural. One set of capacities points towards direct, face-to-face communication. The other set calls attention to the need to see and create change in our ways of organising social structures, from families to complex bureaucracies, i.e. from the local to the global (Lederach 2003: 20-21).

Lederach suggests that in conflict transformation, a fundamental way to promote constructive change on all the levels discussed above is dialogue. Dialogue is one mechanism that is essential to justice and peace on both an interpersonal and a structural level. While we naturally think of dialogue as direct interaction between people or groups as does conflict transformation, a transformational view also believes that dialogue is necessary in creating and in dealing with social and public spheres where human institutions, structures and patterns of relationships are constructed. Processes and spaces must be created where people can connect and shape the structures that order their community life (Lederach 2003: 21-22). The implication here is that dialogue is therefore needed for us to constructively interact in how we formalise our relationships and in how our organisations and structures are put together and in how they respond and perform. Dialogue is not only important in how we relate at a face-to-face level but much more deeply; it affects the very structures of society upon which our relationships are based. Thus in ways discussed here, it can be seen that the dialogue, as Galtung has expressed, is a very real human effort that is full of possibility. I now proceed to a discussion on Muslim and Christian foundations of dialogue. Although statements can be found in the Quran and the Bible that are contrary to the tolerance of other religions, both the Quran and the Bible are nevertheless also sources which exemplify interfaith dialogical principles. Interfaith dialogue and interfaith respect are gaining momentum across the broad sweep of religions so it becomes important to draw from those parts of the scriptures which attest to these principles.

Examples of Muslim and Christian Foundations of Dialogue

There are various examples in both the Quran and the Bible which call attention to the dimension of interfaith principles, pluralism and interreligious dialogue. Limited examples will be given here. With respect to the Quranic model of pluralism, Hofmann (2005: 239)

sites the *Surat al-Ma'idah* (5:48) as a ‘virtual manifesto of religious pluralism’. It is an assurance for the endurance of more than one religion:

To every one of you We gave a law and way of life. And if God had so willed, He could surely have made you all one single community. But [He willed otherwise] in order to test you through what He has given you. Therefore, compete with each other in doing good works. To God you all must return. Then he will make you truly understand all about that which you used to differ.

Surah (5:48)

In the Quran, Surahs 30:22 and 49:13 attest to pluralism in races, colours, languages and religions, such pluralism being part of human nature.

Among His other signs are the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colours. Surely there are signs in this for all mankind.

Surah (30:22)

You people! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you might get to know one another.

Surah (49:13)

It is in keeping with these basic principles that Muslims are urged not to engage in religious disputes:

We have appointed for every community a way of worship that they shall perform. Therefore do not allow yourself to be drawn into disputes about this ...God will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection concerning that about which you used to differ.

Surah (22:67-69)

... God is our Lord and your Lord. We have our own works and you have yours; let there be no argument between us. God will bring us altogether, for to Him we shall return.

Surah (42:15)

Time after time God makes it clear that religious pluralism corresponds to His will:

Truly those who believe, and the Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabaeans – whoever believes in God and the Last Day and performs virtuous deeds – surely their reward is with their Lord, and no fear shall come upon them, neither shall they grieve.

Surah (2:62)

Had your Lord pleased, He would have united all mankind in one community.

Surah (11:118)

Had it been God's will, He could have united them in one community.

Surah (42:8)

The following quotation from the Quran, short but profound, facilitates the Islamic concept of peace through dialogue:

There is no compulsion in religion.

Surah (2:256)

As Hofman (2005:239) declares, the Quranic model considers religious pluralism not only normal but useful; it treats faith as a personal matter and discourages religious argument.

Muslims are urged not to judge non-Muslims.

With respect to pluralism and dialogue in the Bible, in the New Testament, Jesus emphasises God's love for all, the love for one another and the faith of people outside Israel. This is seen in the first Christian communities according to the Acts of the Apostles. After Paul had attempted to present God's word to the Jewish community and this attempt was rejected, Paul turns to non-Jewish people. This attempt was met with a good measure of acceptance. However, some brothers from Judea came to Antioch and made this demand upon the gentiles (non-Jewish people) in the Christian community: "Unless you have yourselves circumcised in the tradition of Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15, 1). The same was happening in Jerusalem, where some Pharisees who had embraced the faith held: "that the pagans should be circumcised and instructed to abide by the Law of Moses" (Acts 15, 5). It would mean the end of diversity and plurality in the burgeoning faith. Two positions developed in the assembly, Peter's and that of James but in the end they fundamentally come to an agreement: Gentile Christians should not be forced to be circumcised. The assembly's final agreement in not demanding the circumcision of the Christian gentiles legitimised the existence of a gentile church with its non-Jewish culture and its theological vision embracing gentile nations, cultures and religions (Richard 2002: 5-6). The following quotation embraces the legitimacy of the gentile church:

For we hold that people are in God's grace by faith and not because of all the things ordered by the Law. Otherwise, God would be the God of the Jews; but is he not God of pagan nations as well? Of course he is, for there is only one God and he will save by faith the circumcised Jews as well as the uncircumcised nations. Do we, then, deny the value of the Law because of what we say of faith? Of course not; rather we place the Law in its proper place.

(Romans 3, 28-31)

The following three quotations also from the New Testament offer reflection for interreligious dialogue:

He (God) wants everyone to be saved and reach full knowledge of the truth.

(1 Tim. 2, 4)

God has revealed his grace to the salvation of all.

(Titus 2, 11)

Peter began: I now see how true it is that God has no favourites, but that in every nation anyone who is Godfearing and does what is right is acceptable to Him.

(Acts 10, 34-35)

As can be seen by these examples, both the Quran and the Bible furnish Muslim and Christian foundations of inter-religious dialogue respectively. The following section investigates how dialogue, particularly Muslim-Christian dialogue has been used in the world.

Examples of Dialogue in the World

While dialogue has seen to be effective in entrenched conflict, it is optimum that dialogue be used not only where there are long-standing conflicts but also whenever a conflict emerges. It is in this emergent phase, away from the battlefield, that dialogue can prove most useful. The following discussion provides six brief examples where protagonists to conflict are following dialogue as a path to peace. This discussion includes aspects on dialogue relating to the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, with representatives of Islam, HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal of the Hashermite Kingdom of Jordan, the United Nations, Sudan and the Malukas.

Dialogue and The Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI

The Pope Benedict XVI Islam controversy arose from a lecture delivered on 13 September 2006 by Pope Benedict XVI at the University of Regensburg in Germany. More than 50 Islamic nations demanded an apology for the speech, which provoked anger in the Islamic world for the *quoting* of a 14th century Christian emperor who said that the Prophet Muhammad had brought the world only ‘evil and inhuman things, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached’ (Ruby 2006: 1). It is likely that the Pope was revitalising a conversation within the world, but for the most part between the Catholic Church and Islamic leaders on the question of whether God’s will and purposes can ever be served by acts of violence, as George Weigel suggests (Ruby 2006: 2). Dr John Esposito, renowned academic in religion and Islamic studies, commented that the citation was particularly offensive to Muslims. Esposito claimed that the Quran and Muhammad did recognise ‘the right to defend Islam and the Muslim community by fighting those Meccans who threatened and attacked Muslims’ (Esposito quoted in Ruby 2006: 2).

Pope Benedict XVI responded to the challenge by meeting with diplomatic envoys from 22 Muslim majority countries in order to end “misunderstanding” and to affirm that dialogue between Muslims and Christians was essential:

Inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue between Christians and Muslims cannot be reduced to an optional extra. It is, in fact, a vital necessity, on which in large measure our future depends....Inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue is a necessity for building together this world of peace and fraternity ardently desired by all people of good will.

Benedict XVI cited in Asia News (2006: 3)

Addressing the diplomats, Pope Benedict XVI talked about the need for dialogue in terms of building together a world of peace based on reciprocal knowledge which recognises the religious values we have in common and respects the differences (Asia News 2006: 4).

Pope Benedict XVI's referral to the need for Muslim Christian dialogue in order to address the numerous challenges with which humanity is faced was an impassioned call for mutual understanding.

Dialogical Response by Representatives of Islam to the Holy Father

On October 13th 2006, one month after Pope Benedict XVI's Regensburg address of September 13th 2006, 38 Islamic authorities and scholars from around the world, representing differing schools of Islamic thought had united in a spirit of open intellectual exchange and common understanding to deliver an answer to the Pope. In their *Open Letter to the Pope*, H.E. Allamah Abd Allah bin Mahfuz bin Bayyah et al (2006) had spoken about the teachings of Islam. One year later, Muslims expanded their message. In *A Common Word Between Us and You*, His Royal Eminence Sultan Muhammadu Sa'ad Ababakar et al (2007) declared common ground between Christianity and Islam. There were 138 Muslim scholars, clerics, and intellectuals who came together for this declaration. Every major Islamic country or region in the world is represented in this message which is addressed to the leaders of the world's churches as well as to Christians everywhere. Rather than engage in polemic, the signatories of this document have adopted the mainstream Islamic position of respecting Christian scripture (Introduction to *A Common Word Between Us and You* 2007: 1).

Professor John Esposito, founding director of the Al-Waleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University, has called this Muslim reaching out to Christian leaders a 'historic event' (Esposito 2007:1). Esposito claims that this is a first step in history where Muslims, as a people, have come together and agreed on the fundamental principles that bind them to Christians, love of the one God and love of one's neighbour. He echoes the signatories of the letter that more than half of the world's population consists of Muslims and Christians and so are the two faiths 'critical to meaningful world peace and justice' (Esposito 2007:1). Esposito (2007: 1) describes this historic document as 'a crystal-clear message of peace and tolerance'.

Daniel Madigan SJ, of the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims, reminds us of forty-some years ago when over two thousand Catholic bishops at Vatican II approved an epoch-making statement that, as Pope Benedict has reaffirmed, remains the

official position of the Church with respect to Muslims today. *Nostra Aetate*⁹⁹, as it was entitled, focussed on the things we have in common, which are the basis for the esteem for Muslims that the council professed. Madigan points to the possibility that we might read *A Common Word* as a first collective Muslim response to *Nostra Aetate*, a response that agrees to adopt the same approach as the Council: the affirmation of common beliefs and an appeal to work together for justice and peace. Madigan, while suggesting the need to understand and appreciate each other at the level of ideals and norms especially those we have in common, also points to ‘our personal and communal failure’ to live up to those ideals as a ‘dialogue of mutual repentance’ (Madigan 2007: 7). Such an uncommon dialogue will be one perhaps where crucial breakthroughs may occur.

I think it is important to emphasise the sincerity of *A Common Word*. These are not people who are looking for merely a ceremonial appreciation of fellowship. They appear to be seeking a vital intellectual and spiritual engagement. As Madigan (2007: 3) declares, they have shown a determination to pursue this discussion with seriousness and respect. These elements suggest a sound basis for effective dialogue.

Dialogue and HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal

Prince El Hassan bin Talal was crown prince of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan from 1965-1999 and is uncle to the present King Abdullah II of Jordan. In an address at the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Birmingham, Prince El Hassan bin Talal spoke of social and religious diversity being a salient feature of human societies today. He stated that while appreciating the richness of this diversity, we must also recognise the unity in the universal principle of life. The multiplicity of faith, race and culture linked by this universal principle mandates that people of differing religions and ethnicities live in mutual trust and respect and it is by promoting dialogue on inter-communal and inter-faith issues that this may be achieved (Prince El Hassan bin Talal 1998: 2-6).

For Muslims and Christians alike, religious faith is a basic source of shared values as witnessed in peace and human dignity but Muslim Christian dialogue is not new to this world. Tolerance towards other faiths is a basic principle of Islam, a religion with a celebrated tradition of respecting and accepting people of other faiths, particularly Christians

⁹⁹ *Nostra Aetate* is the Declaration on the Relations of the Church with Non-Christian Religions of the Second Vatican Council.

and Jews within the structure of an Islamic umma. The three monotheistic religions, Islam, Christianity and Judaism spring from the same sources and convictions. They form an integral part of the same universal human culture and we ‘are all equally the children of God’ (Prince El Hassan bin Talal 1998: 6).

Prince El Hassan bin Talal (2006: 4) in a later address to the World Council of Churches in 2006, observes that despite our ever-increasing inter-connectedness, communities around the world remain ill-informed about each other. He suggests that dialogue between adherents of the faiths involve engagement at the level of people; the role of dialogue in peacemaking is not so much about religions talking to one another, it is about the adherents of religions talking to one another (Prince El Hassan bin Talal 2006: 4). The point that is being made is that dialogue must happen at the grassroots level as well as the institution level. It is a bottom-up process just as much as it is a top-down one. On the small scale it is an inward revaluation of relationship where mutual understanding is the outcome.

Dialogue and the United Nations

Dialogue within the United Nations (UN) is different to the type of dialogue under discussion here but it is useful and for that reason must be mentioned. The UN itself was set up to avoid war. It was created in the belief that dialogue can triumph over dissension and that diversity is a universal value which is not sacrificed in the endeavour to bridge the boundaries between conflicting cultures. The idea of “dialogue among civilisations” is thus rooted in fundamental UN values (Annan 2001: 1). Kofi Annan makes reference to the fact that alongside the diversity of cultures, there does exist one *global* civilisation based on mutual values of tolerance and freedom. While our civilisation celebrates this diversity of human cultures, we also find cause to fear it. Many wars are born from people’s fear of those who are different and it is only through dialogue that we can overcome such fears (Annan 2001: 1). So defending the global civilisation depends upon our ability to dialogue within the diverse civilisations that comprise the global. We must encourage dialogue without generating new boundaries and enhance partnerships without stifling integration. Maintaining this balance is deeply connected with fulfilling our responsibility to dialogue.

With respect to the formal functions of the UN, dialogue is part of many facets of UN operation but is encompassed and perhaps best illustrated in UN peacekeeping missions when peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding link together at the indigenous interface. It is

at this level where indigenous participation stimulates meaningful relationships with peacemakers/keepers/builders. This forms the basis of constructive dialogue between UN agent and indigenous inhabitant (Iribarnegaray 2002: 101). When the peacekeeping mission engages at grassroots level with local communities, it is in working with them and dialoguing with them that encourages local communities to meet the challenge of claiming the responsibility for their own recovery.

Dialogue as promulgated by the UN has many other roles, however, including accessing processes of reconciliation; promoting universal respect for human rights; promoting a culture of peace regardless of belief and culture and encouraging the seeking of common ground to address threats to global peace. Underlying these roles is the cherishing of diversity as a great advantage of humanity.

Muslim Christian Dialogue in Sudan

The two-decade civil war in the Sudan which pitted the Islamic government against rebels based in the mostly animist and Christian south has been Africa's longest-running conflict. The unequal development policies between the North and South gave rise to disparities including religious rivalry, cultural hegemony and racism. A peace treaty between the Islamist government and the rebels was signed in January 2005. Prior to the signing of the peace treaty, however, there were concentrated efforts to promote inter-religious dialogue in Sudan, including initiatives at both governmental and community levels (Badri 2004: 41).

Badri (2004: 42) states:

In our world today we can hardly find a nation with a monolithic religion. We live in a world of many religions with multi-faith states. Therefore, dialogue is a natural and necessary component of one's existence. It is a civilized process which upholds respect for the values of others.

Badri (2004:42)

The US Department of State (2003: 5) also reported this dialogical initiative. An inter-faith NGO was formed with government support in December 2002. The Khartoum-based Sudan Inter-religious Council had equal numbers of Muslims and Christians and was dedicated to promoting dialogue. At that stage the Council was yet to produce clear evidence that its approach to inter-religious dialogue would gain keen Muslim participation and effective action from the government. Nevertheless, there resulted in more public acknowledgments of a shared religious tradition by opening meetings with invocations from both traditions.

While relations between the various religious communities were strained, the dialogue was an important step to foster understanding between them. US diplomatic efforts to bring about peace in the country continued to centre on supporting religious dialogue. The US Embassy enlisted the help of organisations such as the Sudan Council of Churches and the Sudan Inter-religious Council to this end, and also maintained and fostered relationships with religious leaders from both Muslim and Christian traditions (The US Department of State 2003: 5). While all may not yet be harmonious, a peace accord was achieved. It is hard to say how much this dialogue contributed to the peace process in the granting of the accord but certainly this dialogue was working vigorously at the micro-level in pursuing religious coexistence. Rapprochement between Christians and Muslims and a meaningful religious dialogue between Christianity and Islam can only work toward peace in the Sudanese context.

Muslim Christian Dialogue in Maluku, Indonesia

The islands of Maluku Province in Indonesia were once the centre of global commerce due to the spices they produced. Over the centuries the islands changed hands between Dutch, Portuguese and English traders leaving a diverse cultural and religious motif on the islands' society. As a result, Muslim, Catholic and Protestant religions proliferated within resilient local customs.

The Moluccans existed in an uneasy alliance until violence between Christians and Muslims began on Ambon Island on 19 January 1999 and spread quickly to southeast and central Maluku. Villages were razed while at least five thousand people were killed leaving seven hundred thousand as refugees. In the middle of 2000 the nature of the conflict changed when a Java-based fundamentalist Islamic militia, Laskar Jihad, sent fighters to Ambon which thereupon engaged Christian militias. The government imposed a state of civil emergency. By 2001, the level of violence was declining but the population was divided into Christian and Muslim zones. The security forces were challenged to contain the conflict. (International Crisis Group 2002:1).

It was at this stage that civilian peace activist, Ichsan Malik, had a vision. Malik attempted to convince their leaders that sentiment existed on both sides for Muslims and Christians to engage in dialogue. His vision was a bottom-up approach which aimed to strengthen desire for peace at the grassroots level incorporating people involved in and affected by the conflict before involvement of the authorities. The form of Muslim Christian dialogue inspired by

Malik and called “Baku Bae” was divided into five main stages (People Building Peace II 2002: 4):

1. Leaders of parties directly involved in the conflict met. Each side blamed the other for the conflict.
2. The participants promised to continue using local traditions as a means of accommodating the interests of all the different parties.
3. Entire communities – people from all walks of life and different religions – were invited to general assemblies.
4. Neutral zones were set up on the borders between communities where Muslims and Christians felt secure enough to undertake intergroup activities.
5. The results of discussion and activities were disseminated to people from the Muslim and Christian communities through workshops that encouraged a transformation from thoughts of conflict into those of peace. This stage paved the way for legal action to redress grievances suffered by victims and the reinforcement of the rule of law including investigation into the roots of the conflict.

What made Baku Bae successful were the benefits that people felt when they tried dialogue instead of fighting. Both the Muslim and Christian communities saw that embracing the simple method of Baku Bae – dialogue, cooperation, finding common ground in neutral centres – reduced the polarised atmosphere. Dialogue helped to create safe spaces where Muslims and Christians shared basic services together. By late 2000, Muslims and Christians were meeting openly at these spaces without fear of reprisal. As more of these spaces were created, people began thinking of returning to their villages. Both Christians and Muslims set up sidewalk markets serving people from both sides of the divide. This economic activity gave these spaces added importance (People Building Peace II 2002).

Baku Bae was a way of peacebuilding through dialogue and community focus. For negotiation to have been successful, everything had to be put on the table including the primary issue of pluralism. Ordinary people had to be at the centre, not only the leaders and the influential. People themselves needed to reconstruct their own future and dialogue proved a means to do so.

From these examples it can be seen, how dialogue can embrace diversity, how dialogue can be both a grassroots and a top down process, how, in effect, dialogue is central in addressing

conflict. Predominant in the above discussion was the Muslim Christian dialogue. This will be featured in the following discussion on Muslim-Christian dialogue in the Philippines, a phenomenon that will be contextualised against the Mindanao conflict and resistance and how this conflict has fostered a Muslim-Christian Dialogue Movement.

Muslim-Christian Dialogue in the Philippines

Muslim-Christian dialogue in the Philippines has emerged against a background of the marginalisation of the Muslim population on the island of Mindanao. The following section briefly discusses this background and the Silsilah Dialogue Movement (SDM), a Muslim-Christian dialogue group which was created as a response to the sufferings of Christians, Muslims and the indigenous people of the island.

The Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines

Mindanao is a large island situated at the southern end of the Philippine archipelago. Contact with Muslim traders from what is Indonesia and Malaysia today was responsible for the conversion of many of the inhabitants to Islam in the 13th or 14th century. While Islam spread influencing social, political, religious and cultural life, Muslim converts coexisted amicably with the indigenous tribes who had held to ancestral traditions. The arrival of the Spaniards in the 16th century was a turning point for the Philippines, however. They colonised the archipelago from the mid 16th to the late 19th century, converting most of the inhabitants to Catholicism, but they encountered resistance particularly from Muslims in the Southern Philippines (Catholic Peacebuilding Network 2005: 1). The Spanish introduced an ethno-religious hierarchy, according to which indigenous and Muslim Mindanaoans, whom they referred to as "Moros" (the Spanish term for Muslims in Spain), were considered inferior to Filipino Christians (Catholic Peacebuilding Network 2005:1).

The Spanish had never controlled more than small portions of Mindanao. However, the island was included in the package in 1898 when the Spanish "sold" the Philippines to the US as a part of the settlement of the Spanish-American war (Catholic Peacebuilding Network 2005:1). With the arrival of the US, Philippine history began to be reshaped, particularly in the southern islands as the Muslims (Moros) tried to reassert their rights to Mindanao. Clashes between the Americans and the Muslims intensified as the US military went about establishing colonial rule, a system of control which reduced traditional leaders to 'virtual impotence' (Ringuet 2002: 33). The US regime encouraged Christian Filipinos from the

Northern Philippines to resettle in Mindanao (Catholic Peacebuilding Network 2005: 1). This meant that Muslims, who had formed a clear majority on the island, were becoming outnumbered by the Christian settlers. Legal reforms under the US regime discriminated against non-Christians and by the mid-20th century, at the time of Philippine independence (4 July 1946), the Muslims and Indigenous People of Mindanao were dispossessed and disempowered (Catholic Peacebuilding Network 2005: 1). This period marked the creation of confrontation and conflict which produced a high level of disunity within the country resulting in internal conflicts proliferating amidst poverty and civil unrest (Ringuet 2002: 33).

The Moros fought for an independent Mindanao in post-independence Philippines. Rather than ceding to the demands of the Moros, the new Philippine government continued with a colonialist agenda and adopted more regressive measures. It promoted further migration of the Christian population into Mindanao (Ringuet 2002: 34). By the 1960s the entry of settlers from northern and central Philippines made the Moros an outright minority in their own land (Ringuet 2002: 34). The situation was ripe for the formation of activist groups whose motivation was to safeguard the rights of the Moro people. Principal among them was the revolutionary Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

The MNLF put forward a political program that set out one path toward dealing with the grievances of the Moros. The struggle aimed at setting up an independent state, which would guarantee a recuperation of lost lands, a safeguarding of Muslim traditions and identity, and an end to subjugation to Christian-Filipino rule (Bertrand 2000: 38). The mobilisation of the Moros depended on using a nationalist appeal to the Bangsa Moro (Moro nation) and a corresponding right to self-rule. An agreement was reached with the government on 23 December 1976 which granted autonomy on the basis of 13 provinces and nine cities in Mindanao (Bertrand 2000: 38). The MNLF leader, Nur Misuari, was made chairman of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD) and the government supported his candidacy as governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Misuari was elected governor a few days after the peace agreement (Bertrand 2000: 38). By placing Misuari in charge of both institutions, it was believed that the peace settlement would gain wide appreciation among the Muslim community and demonstrate to non-Muslims that autonomy could benefit all groups. Thus autonomy has become the foundation stone of the approach to peace in Mindanao, but it does not address all the

important grievances or problems that contribute to conflict. The agreement was based on a political compromise that omits crucial issues, such as land ownership and fragile relationships that prevail between Muslims, Christians and other tribal groups (Lumads) (Bertrand 2000: 38). So even though critical issues remain unaddressed and there is still conflict between the Philippine Government and the MNLF in the contemporary period, the MNLF has been taken into the political mainstream. The complicating development, however, has been the emergence to prominence of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a breakaway group from the MNLF, and Abu Sayyaf, a hardcore terrorist group (Bertrand 2000: 38).

The MILF has grown to uncertain but alarming size and has entrenched itself deeply in Mindanao. It demands Muslim self-rule and full independence as well as to set up an Islamic government after liberation (Schiavo-Campo and Judd 2005: 2). The MILF appears to have emerged as the government's main enemy. Although American forces were introduced into the Philippines in 2002 to help the Philippine military tackle the Abu Sayyaf problem, significantly, rogue MNLF and MILF elements were not included (Smith 2002: 24). There have been relations between the MILF and the smaller terrorist group, Abu Sayyaf, as well as the Indonesia based Jemaah Islamiyah although these have been sporadic and loose (Bowden 2005: 2). Chronic conflict between clans and widespread banditry confuses the origin of attacks such as bombings and firefights, however (Schiavo-Campo and Judd 2005: 2). Peace talks have occurred intermittently between the Government and the MILF but have not been entirely successful (May 2007: 2). Attempts to negotiate a settlement with the MILF, with assistance from the government of Malaysia, have been continuing for several years, following the signing of a ceasefire in 1997. However, progress has been slow. This has, at times, given way to a military offensive on both sides. There had been some success more recently. Philippine peace negotiators and MILF rebels reached an agreement on 16 July 2008 on the issue of ancestral domain which was understood to possibly pave the way for a full peace accord (Jacinto and Samonte 2008: 1). Ancestral domain, which refers to the rebel demand for territory that will constitute a Muslim homeland, has been seen as the single most important issue in the peace negotiations (Jacinto and Samonte 2008: 1). However, the agreement, meant to be the framework for a final political settlement, provoked intense opposition within the Filipino political establishment. It was seen to be an impermissible concession to the MILF's separatist demands. The peace deal was therefore aborted and war was renewed in September 2008 (Pastrana 2008: 2-3).

During the past three decades of violence in Mindanao, millions of people have been displaced (Catholic Peacebuilding Network 2005: 2). Material inequality and competing ethnic and religious identities underpin the root causes of conflict. International religious groups also play a role in that just as Spanish conquistadors appealed to the Catholic Church to mobilise support for armed conflict, Muslim extremist groups draw support from Islamist extremists internationally (Catholic Peacebuilding Network 2005: 3).

Gunrunning, extortion and kidnapping appear on a regular basis in this region as well as fire-fights and bomb attacks (Abdoolcarim 2003: 1). The authors of these attacks are insurgent groups like MILF and Abu Sayyaf which are becoming more radicalised with the passage of time. Mindanao, a poor and lawless region, shows evidence of morphing from being mainly a separatist issue for the Philippines into a terrorist problem for the rest of Southeast Asia (Abdoolcarim 2003: 2). The iniquities in governance, legally and historically, and the actions of the Islamic militants create fallout within the Christian and Muslim population in the forms of divisions and conflicts between them. The International Crisis Group estimates that the war in Mindanao has killed about 120,000 people between 1972 and 2004 (Cochrane 2004: 3). Such a situation is not unlike similar responses elsewhere – such as Iraq, Sri Lanka, Palestine, Pakistan, India and so on.

Structural Injustices

It can be seen from the above discussion that Filipino society as it has developed under Spanish and American domination has been and is currently adversely affected by structural violence¹⁰⁰. The crucial issue of the lands historically lost to Muslim peoples appears to be a prime example of this type of violence. Alyson Slack substantiates this when she argues that economic disparity, arising from inequitable distribution of land and other resources is the fundamental issue of the separatist groups (Slack 2003: 3). This issue, Slack claims, has yet to be fully acknowledged by the government and incorporated into its negotiations. The economic roots of the problem are, in fact, totally ignored. Over the past century,

¹⁰⁰ Johann Galtung, peace educator, has defined a typology of violence: direct violence, structural violence, cultural violence and ecological violence. I am concerned with structural violence in this context. Structural violence occurs when there exists a clear victim who is being harmed in some way by the situation but the victim is unable to identify the action or group that is causing the harm. The harm, in fact, lies in the relevant structures of society that puts the victim in the disadvantaged position. It is a less visible form of violence than direct violence (Galtung 1990: 292-294). Toh Swee-Hin and Floresca-Cawagas (1987: 3) refer to a similar typology of violence which also includes structural violence.

governments have continually re-structured the island's land ownership to favour the commercialisation of agriculture at the cost of communal and subsistence farming. Slack notes that Mindanao is among the most natural resource-rich areas of Southeast Asia and the most well-endowed island of the Philippines yet there is a striking contradiction between Mindanao's natural wealth and its degree of underdevelopment (Slack 2003: 3). The existence of structural violence which disfavours Muslim peoples in Mindanao society is therefore well illustrated. It is not difficult to appreciate the importance the MILF lay on the issue of ancestral domain.

Toh Swee-Hin et al (1992: 12) note in the context of educating for peace within the Notre Dame University Experience in the Philippines in 1987 that intercultural healing also requires, in addition to intercultural awareness and tolerance, the redress of structural injustices in Philippine society. Educating for cultural solidarity thus 'goes *beyond* promoting tolerance of diversity *to* transformations for justice and autonomy, whether it be in economic, social, political or cultural spheres' (Toh Swee-Hin et al 1992: 12).

I make this point here about the importance of addressing structural violence in Mindanao because it is essential in the ultimate transformation of conflict¹⁰¹. In order to move away from violent and destructive patterns toward capacities which are resourceful and nonviolent, the deep issues which are causing the structural injustices must be engaged. However, dialogue is a necessary and important first step in this process. It provides an appropriate form of interaction where learning and a deepening perception about identity and relationship can occur which are prerequisites in the transformation of conflict. It will become clear how the Silsilah Dialogue Movement (SDM) goes a long way toward meeting these prerequisites.

Silsilah Dialogue Movement

The sufferings of Christians, Lumads (indigenous people) and Muslims in Mindanao was the stimulus for the creation of the SDM which was founded in Zamboanga City on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines in 1984 by Fr. Sebastiano D'Ambra PIME, a Catholic Italian priest. Fr. D'Ambra arrived in the Philippines in 1977 and from that time witnessed a

¹⁰¹ I wish to emphasise that this thesis is not aimed at addressing structural violence in the Philippines. It is necessary to identify that structural violence is a problem in Mindanao because it impacts upon the substance of dialogue carried out in my study of Muslim-Christian dialogue. The aims of this thesis are outlined in Chapters One and Two.

deepening of the division between Muslims and Christians in the Philippines which ultimately challenged him to a personal response resulting in the birth of the SDM¹⁰² (D’Ambra 2002).

Fr. D’Ambra faced much hardship in setting up the Movement. In the early years, he was accused by the military of helping the Muslims. He was also misunderstood by Christians and suspected by Muslims. In spite of these difficulties, however, he gained the respect of the majority of Muslims and Christians. In addition, the MNLF commanders of the area asked him to become their negotiator to avail of the amnesty offered by the government. Working in this capacity brought him in close contact with the MNLF rebels as well as the political and military leaders. This resulted in many MNLF rebels and their families being reunited and a certain peace being achieved in the area. After becoming the victim of a military ambush in 1981, however, Fr. D’Ambra was requested by his superiors to return to Italy. Using this time to reflect on his experiences in the mission and to immerse himself in Islamic and Arabic Studies, Fr. D’Ambra returned in 1983 and the next year, founded the Silsilah Dialogue Movement in Zamboanga City (D’Ambra 2002).

Fr. D’Ambra chose the Arabic word, “Silsilah”, literally meaning “chain” or “link” to describe the inter-religious Dialogue Movement. This movement aims to deepen understanding between Muslims and Christians and also with people of other living faiths. Fr. D’Ambra explained that he was impressed by the Sufis’ or Muslim mystics’ usage of the concept of a “spiritual chain” which describes a process of experiencing the Divine. It is also used idiomatically to mean a lineage or a genealogical tree which can mean a spiritual chain of humanity created by God. “Silsilah” is therefore key in defining those (Muslims, Christians and people of other living faiths) who are moving *together* towards a common vision through the Dialogue Movement (Interview D’Ambra 2006).

Silsilah (2007a:3) promotes the Culture of Dialogue, Path to Peace as the aim of the movement. This is the attainment of peace among individuals in society by living a dialogical style of life:

A dialogical style of life as practiced by an individual is a style of life characterised by a deep and meaningful relationship of love, understanding, solidarity, unity and peace with God, with one’s self, with others, and with the whole of creation, in the hope of attaining peace for all of humanity.

¹⁰² I have learned about the inception and evolution of the SDM which is covered in this section both through documents that Fr. Sebastiano D’Ambra has written and also through interviewing him.

Embedded in the dialogical style of life or “life-in-dialogue” are four pillars:

- (1) Dialogue with God – a loving relationship with God who is the source and fountain of dialogue, manifested in prayer and meditation and in doing God’s will.
- (2) Dialogue with Self – loving and understanding one’s self by caring for the self in all aspects of one’s personality – physical, mental, emotional. Psychological and spiritual.
- (3) Dialogue with Others – respecting, understanding, accepting, and appreciating all people including the other’s diversity in religion and culture and for a deeper and better harmony, solidarity and peace in society.
- (4) Dialogue with Creation – caring for the Earth, especially the flora and fauna because these too are creatures of God and are necessary for our own survival (Silsilah 2007a: 4).

Fr. D’Ambra states the dialogical style of life in broad terms as a “way of life” or “style of life” that has a spiritual focus. It is to pursue a deeper understanding of life through a spiritual channel, to seek out deeper spiritual connections. The dialogue is *not* to be used or seen as a *strategy*, however. For example, while it can and does promote peace in society, this occurs because the dialogue is based in spirituality which as a consequence fosters solidarity and peace among people. It is the spirituality which comes first, however, and yields the fruit of peace. Putting it more simply, peace essentially includes spirituality. Inter-religious dialogue cannot be sustained if it does not have a spiritual foundation (Interview D’Ambra 2006).

Creativity is part of Silsilah’s dialogical style of life also. While all of the pillars are fundamental to “life-in-dialogue”, the last pillar upon which Silsilah is based, Dialogue with Creation, is particularly innovative. Silsilah runs a Farmer’s School that teaches techniques of organic and biodynamic farming. This promotes Silsilah’s vision of dialogue with creation among those who work the land. As well as respecting the integrity of Mother Earth, this hands-on activity has a great potential to contribute to learning and understanding among those involved. In the area of training, Silsilah also demonstrates creativity by incorporating music and the arts in its training courses and these are great ice-breakers which are avenues for sponsoring understanding among participants (Silsilah 2007a).

How is the dialogue organised? Fr. D'Ambra conveys that Muslims are encouraged to explore the Muslim faith more deeply as Christians are encouraged to explore the Christian faith more deeply, i.e. both must work to become deeply rooted in their own faith. Then, as Fr. D'Ambra explains, "one must find in one's own faith elements of peace". For example, the Greater Jihad, the struggle for purification of the heart in Islam, is an appropriate vehicle for Muslims in which to engage and reflect on the journey to peace (Interview D'Ambra 2006). The Beatitudes can provide an entry point for reflection and self-reflection from a Christian perspective on that same journey (Silsilah 2005). While the differences in religious beliefs are recognised, such awareness promotes the realisation in one's own faith of God's dialogue with humanity. Fr. D'Ambra speaks of having "special eyes" on the dialogical aspect which takes people through a process of personal challenge and spiritual growth. This leads ultimately toward social transformation. Thus there is a movement from a personal living of the dialogue towards social harmony and peace (Interview D'Ambra 2006). So it is possible to move from violence and aggression to peace and co-existence. If there is a significant number of people with sincere hearts and minds in society who believe in and practice the spirituality of "life-in-dialogue" and promote it at all levels of society, then it is claimed that that society has embraced the culture of dialogue (Silsilah 2007a).

Despite the challenges Fr. D'Ambra experienced in setting up the SDM including confrontations with the military resulting in the death of a dear friend and colleague, the Movement now has its own identity, a Silsilah Centre that exists away from central Christian and Muslim areas at Harmony Village outside Zamboanga City. There, a small chapter, a mosque, a library and a media centre are available for people who are associated with the Movement and want to use these facilities. A Training Centre runs basic, special and intensive courses. In the basic course lasting four weeks Introductory Arabic is taught along with the essential elements of Dialogue and Christian and Islamic Teachings. The Intensive course is an accelerated adaptation of the Basic Course. The Special Course changes yearly and keeps abreast of events happening in the world relevant to the mission of the Silsilah Dialogue Movement. For 2006, the title of the Special Course was "Religious Fundamentalism in the Search for Dialogue and Peace" (Interview D'Ambra 2006). For 2007, the Special course was "Inter-religious Dialogue and its Contribution to the Promotion and Attainment of Peace" (Sisilah 2007b).

Silsilah: The Structure

According to Fr. D'Ambra (Interview 2006), while the Silsilah Dialogue Movement does recognise certain religious leaders, it does not “belong” to any church nor does it work under the umbrella of any organisation. The Movement has autonomy and from difficult beginnings in 1984 has etched out a well-earned identity not only within the Philippines but also through linkages to other countries. Not seeking to impose conversions of any kind, the Movement functions to sustain the concept of dialogue by creating a new culture of dialogue where people work together in relationship on a journey toward peace. While the Movement has historically embraced a Muslim-Christian dialogue, it also welcomes peoples of all faiths and cultures into dialogue. To those involved with the Silsilah Dialogue Movement, the challenges faced have yielded positive rewards. The Movement, born in an island of the Philippines, now touches the lives of people in other nations (Interview D'Ambra 2006). The transformation to peace is in progress.

In addition to the Summer Course Program that is offered every year, the SDM promotes dialogue through the formation of the Forum. The Silsilah Forum is an unstructured group formed by Muslims, Christians, people of other faiths and alumni who wish to support each other in their commitment to dialogue and peace. They voluntarily undertake to live the spirituality of life-in-dialogue and bring this spirit into their families, work places, groups and institutions. A Silsilah Forum is a group with a simple structure, but with great commitment on the part of the people comprising the Forum. There are two coordinators, one Muslim and one Christian, one of whom is chosen to be the link person of the Forum. The Movement has a central coordinator in Zamboanga City who is in contact with all the link persons of the different forums. The Forum in each area works in collaboration with other groups and institutions. It is sustained financially with some basic assistance by the Movement. However, it is encouraged to find local sources and to share resources with other Forums. Any group decides the schedule of their own gatherings. It must be emphasised, however, that for Sisilah, dialogue is not a strategy but a spirituality that is needed in moving people in conflict together towards peace (Silsilah 2007a). Peace is therefore not pushed; it is an emergent property of the dialogue process with spiritual growth and understanding the key. By these means violence and terrorism are challenged.

Silsilah: Active-Harmony Approach

Fr. D’Ambra acknowledges that there have been many attempts at analysis of conflicts and in the mechanisms for handling conflicts but they are lacking in terms of a deeper reflection that brings us to God’s plan for humanity, i.e. they are lacking in a spiritual element. Fr. D’Ambra presents the Active-Harmony Paradigm in an attempt to bring people from a reactive to a pro-active stage of solving conflicts. This approach is a dynamic and positive commitment to live the culture of dialogue through harmonious relations among people and communities of different cultures and religions in order to build together a civilisation of dialogue and peace. Requirements for this approach encompass the following (D’Ambra 2000:1):

1. A positive understanding of the concept of pluralism
2. A continuous searching and reading of the signs of the times
3. An active faith inspired by the Holy Book or philosophy in life that each one believes
4. A deeper understanding of the word “Harmony”
5. A positive understanding of the concept of Non-Violence

In the past (and present also), faith and religion have been occasions of conflict. Active-Harmony uses faith and religion to gain that harmony that is required for daily living together. It is a paradigm based on the life-in-dialogue spirituality (D’Ambra 2000: 3). While its methodology will not be explored here, it is necessary to stress the importance of spirituality in Active-Harmony in terms of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Please see Appendix 3 for a diagrammatic representation.

Addressing Terrorism through Dialogue

As was seen earlier in the chapter, debate is not dialogue; there is a difference between them that is at once revolutionary and fundamental. Through debate, each side tries to convince the other of its own point of view putting the view of the other side secondary to its own vital message. This is the type of communication that is predominantly adopted by people not only in ordinary, everyday interaction but also within business oriented corporations. By contrast, through the process of dialogue, we not only listen, we listen to be won over. Dialogue brings with it its own sense of equality – the weakest have the advantage of being heard while the strongest, in being heard, must justify their position and be willing to listen.

Through the dialogical approach, we seek to make sense of the other's view and the other's actions. If the other's actions have been what we may call "terrorism", we need to illuminate the background to those actions notwithstanding their ugliness. Dialogue can give us the understanding to know the perspective of the other. To do this it is imperative to enter into dialogue with those who *support* the actions of the terrorists. By doing this we transcend the narcissistic monologue we perpetuate within the limits of our own cultural milieu and thereby gain insight into what fuels the actions of terrorist discontent. Such insight aids in our dialogical attempt to understand the conditions that create the environment in which terrorism emerges. By seriously attempting to dialogue with those who see terrorism as a legitimate means of expression means that there exists the possibility of an exchange that can move beyond terrorism to less violent forms of expression and ultimately coexistence. This can be done by all parties in conflict through an understanding and willingness to address the issues that create discontent and frustration in the first place.

In the second US Presidential Debate in 2004, President Bush said, in vindicating his decision to invade Iraq, "The hardest decision a president makes is ever to use force" (Bush 2004d: 4). Earlier, on a radio program, he had said, "And, as a last resort, we must be willing to use military force" (Bush 2003e: 1). Was the invasion of Iraq a last resort? The controversy that it engendered from different quarters all over the world and the chaotic aftermath shows that it was not. And is it the hardest decision to decide to use force? Surely the hardest thing a president can do, or anyone for that matter, is to talk to people, to dialogue. Dialogue requires a courage that the use of force does not. One may have to admit that the Other has legitimate grievances and that is a huge step. Legitimate resistance necessitates examining deeply one's own agenda and that can be a painful experience not only in terms of confronting the truth but also in facing that one may have to instigate some fundamental changes in one's own regime. Engaging with armed groups and addressing violence through dialogue may result in positive, if uncomfortable, outcomes.

The peace agreement between the Philippine government and the MILF referred to earlier in this chapter is still very fragile. In May of 2005 there was another such optimistic moment. Al Haj Murad, MILF's then leader eloquently praised the peace process at this time in saying that the Malaysian-brokered negotiations with the Philippine government bolstered by a two-year ceasefire show that 'seemingly irreconcilable issues' can be resolved as long as both sides approach the peace process with 'open hearts and minds' (Panares and Maragay 2005:

2). Murad also said, ‘After decades of unrelenting struggle, our flickering hope for a just and comprehensive political solution ... is rekindled’(Panares and Maragay 2005: 2). Even though this moment passed, surely Murad must be recognised as being imbued with the spirit of dialogue at that time.

Conclusion

This chapter introduced dialogue as a means of addressing terrorism. Unlike debate which was seen to be about winning, dialogue was seen to be about learning. While a pluralist position was seen to best facilitate interreligious dialogue, the exclusivist and inclusivist positions were suggested to also contribute in that the forging of a person’s religious identity perhaps requires moving along the continuum marked by these positions. Muslim and Christian foundations of dialogue were briefly examined as excerpts from the Holy Quran and the Holy Bible. Examples of how dialogue, principally Muslim Christian dialogue, was being used in the world were then discussed. An overview of the Mindanao conflict in the Philippines was given followed by a discussion of the importance of recognising structural violence in the Mindanao setting. The purpose and structure of the Silsilah Dialogue Movement was discussed. This Movement is essentially a Muslim-Christian peace initiative, although other faiths are included under its auspices. An introduction was given to the Active Harmony Paradigm, a means of infusing conflict resolution with a spiritual element. For the purposes of this thesis, the Mindanao setting is to be regarded as a microcosm of the global terrorist problem. The chapter ended with reflection on engaging those we may call “terrorists” in dialogue. The next chapter will present the findings from field work undertaken at the headquarters of the Silsilah Dialogue Movement, Zamboanga City in Mindanao, the Philippines.

Chapter Eleven

Research at Mindanao

Chapter Aim: This chapter aims to present the findings of field research performed at the Silsilah Headquarters of the Silsilah Dialogue Movement at Harmony Village, Zamboanga, Mindanao in the Philippines. It will be shown how dialogue between Muslims and Christians at Silsilah has produced a variety of significant results which can have a positive effect on the nation's terrorism problem. Such a contribution to a solution to the terrorism problem in the microcosm, it is argued, can be applied and extended to the macrocosm, to global terrorism.

Introduction

I spent three weeks in May 2007 at the Silsilah Dialogue Movement's headquarters, Harmony Village, Mindanao (Philippines), in order to participate in two Dialogue courses and interview the President of the Movement and participants of past and present courses. This was done to investigate the possibilities and potential of using dialogue as a means of addressing conflicts and reducing violence in societies where 'cultural' divisions had already resulted in violent responses, which were labelled or recognized as being forms of terrorism. I have therefore used the Mindanao setting which provides an environment where terrorist responses proliferate¹⁰³ to explore Muslim-Christian dialogue in my field research. This chapter reports the results of that field research.

Information about the participants and other interviewees is provided followed by comments from the founder and President of Silsilah, Fr. Sebastiano d'Ambra who attests to the vibrancy of the Movement as applied against the backdrop of the conflict in Mindanao. The data is subsequently discussed via a division into three sections: the Mindset before Dialogue, Experiences during Dialogue and the Mindset after Experiences of Dialogue. A summary of findings is given with reference to this latter division together with a table of the frequency of resultant changes arising out of the dialogical experience. How the dialogical process can counter possible terrorist activity is then discussed. Finally overall findings are summarised.

¹⁰³ See Chapter Ten, The Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines for a brief history of the insurgency problem in Mindanao and how Mindanao is morphing from being mainly a separatist issue for the Philippines to a terrorist problem for the rest of Southeast Asia.

The Interviewees/Participants

As stated above and in the previous chapter Silsilah was founded by a Catholic priest, Fr. Sebastiano D'Ambra who is also the president of the dialogue movement. It can be said that Silsilah is administered by Catholics. It will be seen, however, that it enjoys a good name among its Muslim participants. At the time of carrying out this research, most participants had completed previous dialogue courses and in this instance it was their second or third course. In addition, some participants had been exposed to Silsilah in other ways as well, e.g in employment by a Silsilah related entity. The interviewees comprise Fr. Sebastiano D'Ambra, President of the Silsilah Dialogue Movement, Remey, Chairman of the Board of Trustees and 13 participants who have undergone or who were undergoing courses at the time of interview. The participants consisted of six Christians and seven Muslims. The interview questions were loosely structured which allowed the interviewees space and time to respond at leisure.

Silsilah: Working for Dialogue

Fr. D'Ambra asserts that "dialogue is an integral mission of the church." He acknowledges that the church has in past centuries contributed in some ways to the creation of certain barriers between cultures and religions. For example, the church was silent on the subject of slavery and could have made a more substantial commitment in the areas of human rights and women. He makes these comments not to discredit the church but to accept these mistakes realistically and to point out that the church has now a better approach, an "attitude of dialogue" which is "more sincere, more inspiring". In this way both Christians and Muslims particularly can be inspired (Interview – D'Ambra May 2007).

That we cannot transform society without a transformation on the personal level is a foundation on which Fr. D'Ambra has built his concept of dialogue. What this statement implies is that we must begin with ourselves. This is our responsibility. Through deep understanding we act to bring people together as part of the human family. It has a spiritual quality. It is not a strategy. It is addressed to all people who have some form of religiosity. Learning from the past and the present we encourage people to go to a deep level, to be a more prophetic person. If we can bring about this shift in our daily existence, then perhaps we may affect our extended relationship with others (Interview – D'Ambra May 2007). Hence the courses are offered to all people who have a concern for seeing the transformation of society into a more peaceful one irrespective of what religion they may be. At the courses

I attended, in addition to the Christians and Muslims, was one person who professed no religion and one person who was a Buddhist. These two people were encouraged to participate and were welcomed warmly even though the overall theme was based on Muslim-Christian dialogue. This approach was relevant to people who were not religious because the topic was on “Culture of Dialogue – Path to Peace” albeit from a Muslim-Christian perspective. Seeing this topic approached from such a perspective would effectively open up new understandings and new considerations for the non-religious on what a culture of peace can embrace.

According to Fr. D’Ambra, the barriers that stand in the way of harmonious dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Mindanao are the continuing war and the prejudices of the past. Certain Muslim groups introduce radical thinking among the people while the more radical Christians capitalise on past prejudices. A goal therefore needs to be sustainable for it to be realised in the wider community. Contributing to reconciliations of conflicts that have arisen over barriers to the dialogue process, Silsilah has an active involvement in community life. In Zamboanga there are up to 6 communities where Silsilah is present. Effort must be sustained in order to maintain goals which most often target youth. If there is no strong leader in an area, the situation slips back to the former state of affairs. Sustaining effort is therefore highly important. While the new radical ideas create confusion, Fr. D’Ambra lays emphasis on the fact that Silsilah has been active for 23 years and has been consistent (Interview – D’Ambra May 2007). I understand Fr. D’Ambra to mean that despite the circulation of radical ideas, Silsilah has secured its presence and kept to its aims of providing an environment, a safe space in which both Muslims and Christians can continue to dialogue.

The Mindset before Dialogue

Remey runs the Media Desk for Silsilah and helps during the Summer Courses by assisting data analysis and reporting but is not involved in the Summer Courses directly. Part of her work is to get the reflections together from course participants wherein she identifies the most interesting ones. Based on her interpretation of the reflections, she considers that Muslims are wary of the fact that Silsilah is run by Catholics but after exposure Muslims realize there is no attempt at conversion and this facilitates interaction. Remey claims stereotypes exist for the Muslim and Christian identity in Mindanao. For example, according to Remey, to

Christians, Muslims are warlike, more prone to expressing anger in a violent way and are seen as the enemy while Christians are seen by Muslims as exploiters and land-grabbers.

In the sample group, although the stereotypes did not emerge exactly as Remey had described, the majority of participants experienced some form of prejudice or anger toward the Other before a form of dialogue was established. Jacklyn, a 21 year-old Christian, spoke of “biases” that she struggled with. She was trying “not to put a gap” between herself and her Muslim co-participants but at the same time she did not want to lie about the biases that she felt. She said, “I felt shameful to my own self” for “I can’t deny I had my own biases”. Boy, a Christian, aged 35, spoke of initially having “prejudices” toward Muslims but his attitude changed since becoming affiliated with Silsilah. Sr. Mary Ann, a Christian, aged 29, admits that before joining Silsilah she had biases towards Muslims. Lindee, a young Christian, describes her level of engagement with Muslims prior to her Silsilah experience as just bare “tolerance”.

On the other hand, the Muslims did not speak of “biases” or “prejudices”. Anger surfaced in what they saw as the causes of the Mindanao conflict. Nur-ain, a Muslim woman, aged 30, saw the causes in land grabbing, economic and political issues and poverty. Of the MNLF, Nur-ain said, “They are fighting for our existence. I can’t blame them. ...At least there is someone who will fight for us, our religion”. For Norina, a Muslim woman aged 27, coming to Silsilah was prompted by feelings of persecution. She stressed that the “colonial mindset is hard to take” and “destroys the value of being a Philippino”. For Mohammad, the land issue illustrates the lack of compromise taken by the Christians. Mohammad asserted that Christians grab lands; 80% have been taken by non-Muslims, he claimed. Al-Frazkhan, a Muslim, had a lingering fear about being converted and said that his need to be aggressive was because he wanted to protect his own faith.

Thus while there is evidence to support the view that some Muslims possess an angry even aggressive attitude prior to dialogue, there is also evidence to support the view that some Christians do feel prejudiced toward Muslims prior to dialogue. It is true to say therefore that discord to some extent exists prior to dialogue and such discord is likely to be representative of the population as a whole. In fact, if these traits are emerging in people who want to come for the purposes of dialogue, then it is likely that the discord is greater within the general population among people who have not initiated attempts to dialogue.

Experiences during Dialogue

The Christians who stated they experienced some form of prejudice or negative attitude prior to coming to Silsilah for courses had positive experiences during dialogue. There was an overcoming or reducing of biases in connection with a greater understanding of the Muslim identity. Relating to Muslims became deeper and brought with it a degree of peace until ultimately friendship was a possibility. This observation is reflected in the following cases.

Jacklyn said that in trying to remove her biases it was difficult to adjust. But happily she said that during dialogue, “I was able to overcome all biases” and could respect what they, the Muslims believed in, what they were practicing. Jacklyn strongly affirms that the dialogue is important in resolving conflict and helps her to see the “Other” with more compassion and understanding. She found she was able to reflect and to overcome her biases. She expressed happiness at being able to do this. She said, “I am blessed to have Silsilah in my life. I have learnt a lot of things”. She appeared joyful at this revelation. Boy who works as a teacher of Muslim students on the Island of Santa Cruz, admits to encountering problems in the community on the Island. He says there are arguments on certain issues but they are easily patched up. “I want to end my day reconciling. I want to be at peace. I want us to talk to each other with dialogue,” says Boy with conviction. “Dialogue is a big part of it”. Sr. Mary Ann’s attitude has changed toward Muslims since being affiliated with Sislsilah. She says that now her biases and prejudices have been reduced. “That strengthens my commitment to work with them”, she says. “I now work with Muslim women and children. We have a daily encounter with each other. Muslim women are being empowered. Children are being trained. We are working for the best interests of children”, she says. Lindee claimed her Silsilah experience turned “tolerance” of Muslims into “coexistence” with Muslims. For Lindee, aside from new learning that the Silsilah course has provided, dialogue has continued to become “a way of life”. She says, “It has challenged me. The way you relate to Muslims is different. It is not shallow. It has become deeper with the result that you want to become friends.”

Three of the Muslims, Nur-ain, Norina and Al-Frazkhan, who had issues which led to feelings of aggression toward Christians had very positive experiences during the courses and subsequent dialogue. Mohammad who also experienced feelings of aggression toward Christians had a less marked reaction, but nevertheless positive. While Mohammad spoke of

the importance of the need for tolerance, Nur-ain, Norina and Al-Frazkhan revealed that there was a need to transcend tolerance and move deeper into the areas of sincerity, brother and sisterhood, and hospitality. The following reports support this observation.

Nur-ain spoke highly of the Basic Course and said that you could not find the same thing in other places – “Silsilah is the place for Dialogue”. “It widened my perspective and increased my tolerance”, she stated. Nur-ain fervently believes that the dialogue helps you see Christians with more understanding. She says, “I can sense immediately if there is something wrong.” Such sensitivity is part of dialogue. Sincerity is a necessary part of Dialogue, she says. For Norina, confronting the corrupt colonial mindset challenged her to dialogue. She wants those who look down at Muslim people to have more understanding of being Muslim. She says with passion, “I didn’t join MILF or MNLF. I joined Silsilah. My father joined MNLF. But Silsilah is *my way*.” Norina thinks that the Basic course is an “enriching experience” that “expands horizons”. The course participants can transcend being mere acquaintances and “go deeper as brothers and sisters”. For Norina, dialogue means listening and learning from others, “getting their hearts” and “not making them annoyed”. The emphasis, for Norina, is more on listening and reflecting later. She says, “I want to see what you say and then reflect”. About the dialogue experience, Norina states, “Beyond tolerance is alliance. You are like a mirror to me”. Norina speaks highly of the Silsilah program and she acknowledges that Silsilah is not about converting subjects. Of his experience in the Basic Course, Al-Frazkhan said that “Immersion” was the highlight. “It was a most wonderful experience”, he said. Living with a Christian family for the first time made Al-Frazkhan realise and appreciate the hospitality of Christians “who are just like Muslims in terms of hospitality”. Mohammad is less enthusiastic than the former three Muslims discussed. He says that “it is helpful from a Muslim viewpoint to understand how a non-Muslim thinks”. What he considers important that he has learnt in the course is the need for tolerance. He stated that the dialogue helped him discern the dimension of knowing the “Other” but he insisted that “his love is solely for the worship of one God”. Mohammad thinks the course will definitely help him, however, and that he will be able to apply it in his daily life.

Of the five remaining interviewees who did not express that they experienced a prejudice or aggression before coming to Silsilah for courses, four still claimed that they had significantly positive dialogue experiences at Silsilah. These responses are more cautiously considered

and less emotional than those formerly described. They focus on how the courses aided the dialogue process, e.g. from Evelyn's emphasis on how the courses furnished her with information on how to deal with other faiths to Josephine's assertion on how well Silsilah prepares people to enter into dialogue and from Rasma's declaration that through dialogue she learns ways to foster understanding between Muslims and Christians to Hagg's concept of Silsilah being the "bridge" between Christians and Muslims. The following reports support these claims.

Evelyn, aged 27, is a Christian and teaches Muslim students on the island of Santa Cruz. She was exposed to the Muslim community while growing up but she says Silsilah has deepened her understanding a great deal. She thinks the summer courses gave her new insight. "They gave me information on how to deal with other faiths", she says. Josephine, a young Christian, holds Silsilah in "very high esteem" and thinks Silsilah makes very sincere efforts to prepare people to enter into dialogue. Josephine understands dialogue through an exchange of hearts and lives. She says, we define it through the lives we live here, "understanding and entering into each other's cultural diversity and religious tradition". Rasma, a young female Muslim employed as a social worker, says, "The course is very important for me". She added that "it helps us to be open and respectful towards each other". What she considered she had learned in the course was how to help her be open with Christians about her own religion. She says, "I share with them 'What is Islam'". . Rasma declares that dialogue reduces conflict – "Through the dialogue", she says, "We learn ways to foster understanding between Muslims and Christians". Rasma says she has experienced openness, respect and trust among her co-participants. Rasma does experience resistance, however, in her involvement in the dialogue. This encompasses other people's fears of her being converted. Rasma emphasises: "But I just tell them I'm not going to be converted. My faith is constant. I love my religion." Rasma attempts to overcome the resistances by inviting those concerned to attend seminars in Silsilah and to be open with them about Silsilah, about Silsilah's main purpose. Rasma stresses to them that it is within Silsilah's purpose that she can have her own religion, her own beliefs. Hagg, 49, is a Muslim teacher of religion. This was Hagg's first time to attend a Silsilah course. He was invited by the president of Silsilah, Fr. Sebastiano D'Ambra. Hagg says that "Silsilah serves as a bridge between Muslims and Christians". What he considers important has been the presentation of a comparative study of both religions and he thinks the course will be helpful to Muslims and

Christians both. Hagg says that it's an opportunity to begin to understand each other's faith and as long as he is available, he wants to participate.

The remaining interviewee, Said, was a Muslim who converted from Christianity. He said he came to the Special dialogue course because a friend encouraged him to participate. He had not completed the four week Basic Course. He came searching for religion and other activities. Said said, "In my personal perception IRD (Inter-religious Dialogue) was not explained very well. Religious knowledge was lacking and only the peace aspect was addressed". Said was of the opinion that the course did not help him at all. Said remained the only participant reporting an overall negative experience.

Thus 12 out of 13 interviewees reported positive experiences regarding the courses on dialogue. Those having the most intense experience in terms of emotion being shown were both the four Christians, Jacklyn, Boy, Sr. Mary Ann and Lindee, who all reported initially having prejudices and the three Muslims, Nur-ain, Norina and Al-Frazkhan who initially reported experiencing anger or aggression. Four out of five of those who did not report either a prejudice or anger had positive experiences from the dialogue courses as well, the only exception being Said.

The Mindset *after* Experiences of Dialogue

The interviews of both Christians and Muslims suggest there have been various significant changes in their mindset after experiences of dialogue. Although some are connected to an individual's relationship with God as reflected in the four pillars of Dialogue (with God, with self, with Others and with creation) the direction of this study is to focus on self and others, on how dialogue applies to the relationship between Christians and Muslims and the community. The more prevalent of these changes are listed in Table 11.1 below.

Table 11.1 Description of Changes to Mindset after Exposure to Dialogue

Change Number	Description of Change
1	Dialogue helps Muslims and Christians understand each other.
2	Dialogue changes the perception of the "Other" in a positive way.
3	Dialogue can help in solving conflict between Muslims and Christians.
4	Ability to dialogue is aided by the opportunity to be with the "Other" in a safe environment similar to which Silsilah provides.
5	Having the opportunity to dialogue in an organisation like Silsilah means people will less likely turn to violent means to solve conflict within the community.
6	Dialogue is based on sincerity and trust between Muslims and Christians.

7	Dialogue decreases one's level of aggression towards the “Other”.
8	Dialogue can improve community relations (harmony, solidarity) between Muslims and Christians.
9	Dialogue can facilitate the deepening of one's own faith.
10	The Silsilah Dialogue courses can be successfully applied to one's own circumstances in life.

The following are concise reports on each participant which show a change or changes in their mindset after completing courses and being involved in dialogue. At the conclusion of each report I have assigned numbers in respect of the above changes that apply to that particular participant. If a change has not occurred *after* experiences of Dialogue but *during* Dialogue and appears in the list of changes, the number appearing at the end of the participant's report is displayed in bold. There is some overlap here but I believe it does not prejudice the results. After submitting the reports I present a summary of findings with respect to the mindset after experiences of dialogue followed by a report of overall findings.

Participants' Reports

Jacklyn says she was very confident (“definitely 100 %”) that she could apply what she has learnt from the courses into her daily life. Dialogue helps Muslims and Christians understand each other, she emphasizes. It “can solve problems between Muslims and Christians”. Jacklyn believes that Silsilah promotes harmony, peace and solidarity between the two religions and that the opportunity to join Silsilah reduces the likelihood of violence being used in the solution to conflict in the community. She said that Silsilah was well-known in Mindanao and that it could help groups to resolve their conflicts. (1) (2) (3) (5) (8) (10)

“Silsilah has deepened my understanding with Muslims”, says Boy. He agrees that having the opportunity to join Silsilah lessens the probability that people will turn to violent means as a solution to conflict in the community. “All conflicts would come to an end if everybody engaged in dialogue”, says Boy. “People causing conflict don't know dialogue. Consider Abu Sayyaf. The best solution to terrorism is dialogue. If groups come together and meet and we ask, ‘What are your demands?’ We must *listen* and then give our side. Why have wars when dialogue can do the job?” says Boy. (1) (3) (5) (8)

Sr. Mary Ann believes the “culture of dialogue” can be used to address violence. She says, “I will be more conscious about this in future and hence I will be more participative”. “If people have that same awareness then maybe”, Sr. Mary Ann says, “violence can be reduced” and in

this way the opportunity to join Silsilah can lessen the probability that people will turn to violent means as a solution to conflict within the community. (2) (3) (5) (8)

For Lindee, dialogue has become a life-long process that is done not only with the mind but the heart and this helps her to see others with more compassion. “Joining Silsilah helps because the knowledge Silsilah provides helps me understand more”, says Lindee. So, for Lindee, having the opportunity to join Silsilah does lessen the probability that people will turn to violence to solve conflict. In coming to a reconciliation of differences between groups in conflict, Lindee believes as a Christian she can reach out more. “Knowing a Muslim’s religion is a very big factor”, says Lindee. It challenges you to further the knowledge of your own religion, she says. She claims you come out appreciating people’s differences a lot more. Her attitude toward Muslims since becoming affiliated with Silsilah has changed a lot. She is now more sensitive and this is a big thing but she stresses that “dialogue is not automatic - you do it slowly”. “Dialogue is sincere and intentions are clear and clean”, says Lindee. (1) (2) (5) (6) (9)

To Evelyn, Dialogue now means clarifying issues in a proactive way in seeking to understand the “Other”. In overcoming resistances, when someone provokes her for example, Evelyn applies sensitivity, spirituality and solidarity. Evelyn says, “I evaluate my own behaviour towards others setting aside my pride. I ‘level’ with the person I am dialoguing with”. Evelyn has been able to contribute to the process of reconciliation of differences on Santa Cruz Island by listening to Muslims and mediating between them. Evelyn agrees that having the opportunity to join Silsilah lessens the probability that people will turn to violent means as a solution to conflict within the community. (1) (3) (5) (6) (7)

Josephine is sure that the courses will help her on a day-to-day basis and that they hold a great application in life. She stresses, “We live using the things we have already learned.” Her attitude to Muslims has changed significantly. “It has been a radical change”, she says. “I’ve had Muslim friends before but Silsilah has helped me to understand them. Now when someone says something negative about Muslims, I want to say, ‘That’s not what they are.’” Josephine thinks that having the opportunity to join Silsilah does lessen the probability that people will turn to violent means as a solution to conflict within the community. “Simple steps lead to greater things; there is a ripple effect”, says Josephine. (1) (2) (5) (10)

Nur-ain claims that Dialogue has really helped her in the work situation. Nur-ain's work in Notre Dame University is supervised by a Catholic priest. What she has learnt is the ability to be with the "Other" and through that sharing she can understand why they do this and why they do that. Nur-ain considers the opportunity to be with the "Other" very important. The courses certainly helped her in this way. "After the course I was like a new person", she stated. Her attitude to Christians changed in a positive way. She considers she will be able to apply the course in her daily life. She was subsequently chosen by the Silsilah staff to be the Silsilah representative in Jolo, where she lives. This attests to her ability to dialogue. Nur-ain believes that having the opportunity to join Silsilah lessens the probability that people will turn to violent means as a solution to conflict in the community. She posits herself as evidence to support this statement. Nur-ain believes there is a great need for Dialogue in Mindanao to bridge the gap in the conflicting parties. (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (10)

Norina feels that one advantage to dialogue is that Silsilah can teach willing learners how to improve Muslim communities but she says with sadness, "We close our doors when it comes to learning from them. As Muslims we don't let them in". This was a resistance that Norina encountered being involved in the dialogue. She cannot get the support from her community. She said, as Muslims, we need more responses from Muslim communities to Silsilah. She acknowledged that "Silsilah is a really respected name in dialogue in the region". Norina stressed that "Muslim communities need Silsilah. Silsilah opens a gate". To go to Silsilah, Norina claims, can be a very useful thing for a young person to do in the context of the Mindanao conflict. Silsilah provides a social preparation for both communities to live together because the basis of dialogue is sincerity. Norina explains that she already had convened a group of young Muslim women called "Muslimah" (Muslim Women for Dialogue and Peace). She wanted to strengthen reading and public speaking skills in these young women but the group did not quite take off. However, there was a relaunch of the Muslimah Group at Silsilah headquarters on the 26th of May and Norina was chosen to be the Program Co-ordinator which attests to Norina's excellent dialoguing skills. Norina says that broadly speaking the intentions of the Group are to strengthen spirituality and responsibility toward the community through dialogue. Norina said, in speaking of her fellow Muslims, that "in Zamboanga our sense of community service is low" and there was a need for real dialogue. For Norina (4) (6) (8)

While Mohammad spoke positively about his Silsilah experience and held that joining Silsilah meant that people were less likely to turn to violence as a solution to conflict within the community, his vision is for Silsilah to be more focused on the participation of non-Muslims with a view to their understanding more on Islam. (5) (10)

Al-Frazkhan said that he would gradually apply as much of the courses as he could. His Muslim friends are discouraging him – “You are joining the Christians”, they said. Al-Frazkhan tells them Silsilah is a place where it is intended for you to deepen your *own* faith as a Muslim or Christian. He cannot convince his friends who still do not trust that conversion is not the aim of Silsilah. They believe that Christians can be traitors. He, too, has some doubts still. He says, “I believe attending Silsilah and mingling with Christians will gradually ease my doubts”. Dialogue has helped Al-Frazkhan become more patient and decreases his level of aggression. “It makes me listen more than to talk” says Al-Frazkhan. In terms of whether Al-Frazkhan can see the “Other” with compassion, Al-Frazkhan states, “I am still in the process. I have started to respect their beliefs in contrast to my previous life where I had a ‘mine is the truth’ type of mentality. Is this the reason why God has created us in so many ways? It could be God’s will to have so much diversity. It is a gift from the creator.” (4) (6) (7) (9) (10)

Rasma thinks the course will help her and she will be able to apply it in her daily life. Her intention is to start in her family and in her daily work in her community. As a person progresses in Silsilah, there is born a will to be more spiritual claims Rasma. She says when she became a member of Silsilah, “I became more faithful to my religion”. Rasma’s vision is to see Muslims and Christians exist in harmony. She says that Silsilah will certainly be able to help facilitate this. Rasma agrees that having the opportunity to join Silsilah lessens the probability that people will turn to violent means as a solution to conflict within the community. As a person progresses in Silsilah, there is born a will to be more spiritual, says Rasma. (1) (3) (4) (5) (6) (8) (9) (10)

Hagg believes “in some way or another” that being able to join Silsilah lessens the chance that people will resort to violent means as a solution to conflict within the community. What has helped reduce violence has been efforts between Christian and Muslim leaders in dialogue. Hagg’s vision for Silsilah is to have a forum in Basiland between Muslim and Christian leaders. (1) (3) (5)

Said believes that there is no conflict between Christians and Muslims in Mindanao. Both Christians and Muslims are being used politically, he claims. However, Said contends that dialogue has helped end or reduce conflict through formal knowledge and the education of both parties. Said also believed that having the opportunity to join Silsilah lessens the probability that people will turn to violent means as a solution to conflict. (3) (5)

Participants' Reports Tabularised

In considering the reports in total, I begin by referring back to Table 11.1 which lists changes in the mindset after experiences of dialogue. In addition, I repeat that numbers suggestive of a particular change have been placed after each participant's report. If a change has not occurred *after* experiences of Dialogue but *during* Dialogue and appears in the list of changes, the number appearing at the end of a participant's report was bolded. Most of the following changes occurred after experiences of Dialogue, however. Following the list of changes is Table 11.2 which reflects the frequency of a change against participants and the composition with respect to whether the changes are by Christian (C) or Muslim (M) participants. Subsequent to this is a summary of the findings for the Mindset after Experiences of Dialogue.

Table 11.2 Frequency of Changes to Mindset after Experiences of Dialogue

Change Number	Frequency	Composition
1	8	5C3M
2	5	4C1M
3	8	4C4M
4	4	4M
5 (Prompted By Question)	11	6C5M
6	6	2C4M
7	2	1C1M
8	5	3C2M
9	3	1C2M
10	6	2C4M

Mindset after Experiences of Dialogue: Summary of Findings

As explained earlier, in the sample group, there are six Christians and seven Muslims. These small numbers cannot comprise a major study which can draw substantial conclusions.

However, even with this small sample possibilities are created which point to the positive aspects of dialogue – how it can work to change a person’s perspective about another person or group. The interview questions were loosely structured which allowed the interviewees to respond in their own time. The above changes are recurring themes and do not represent direct questions with the exception of Change Number 5 which was prompted by a question. The question asked in this instance was: “Do you think that having the opportunity to join Silsilah lessens the probability that people will turn to violent means as a solution to conflict within the community?” 12 out of the 13 interviewees were asked this question and as can be seen from Table 11.2, 11 answered in the affirmative. This suggests that Silsilah has a good reputation for its programs of dialogue.

As stated above, unlike Change Number 5, all other Change Numbers were not the result of a direct question but collected as themes from the entire interviews. Change Number 1 (Dialogue helps Muslims and Christians understand each other) and Change Number 3 (Dialogue can help in solving conflict between Muslims and Christians) both drawing 8 responses each, support and extend Change No. 5. It is perceived here that dialogue can actually help in solving conflict between Christians and Muslims. This is the central finding of this small study. Mutual understanding between Muslims and Christians is seen to be one way of facilitating this.

Both Change Numbers 6 and 10, attracting 6 responses each, were reported by twice the number of Muslims than Christians (2C4M). It is a possibility that sincerity and trust (Change Number 6) are more of an issue to Muslims who have experienced a marginalisation of their population and now find themselves a minority on the island of Mindanao where once they were a majority. This is perhaps why applying the courses (Change Number 10) may attract more attention from Muslims than Christians – Silsilah is a safe space where Muslims can feel they can practice their religion without intervention, where they are, in fact, encouraged to do so and hence they may be motivated and may be quite receptive to applying the courses on a daily basis. What gives this supposition more credence is that four Muslims alone reported Change Number 4 – the ability to dialogue is aided by the opportunity to be with the “Other” in a safe environment similar to which Silsilah provides. Thus while providing a fertile environment for the dialogical process, Silsilah holds the potential of acting as a place of safety especially to Muslims. This is true also of Christians, of course,

but Christians being a majority on Mindanao appear to have lesser need of the safety environment that Silsilah provides.

Change Number 2 attracted 5 responses. What is significant here is that these five responses constitute 4 Christians and only 1 Muslim. The Change Number context is: Dialogue changes the perception of the “Other” in a positive way. Remembering Remey’s observation of the reflections that, to Christians, Muslims are initially seen as the enemy, are warlike and more prone to expressing anger in a violent way (Interview Remey), it can be seen that this change represents a very positive result. Such a result is in accordance with Remey’s further observation that underlying the Christian participants’ reflections is the impression: “I realise now that Muslims are not like that (i.e. stereotypically warlike and roused to anger quickly.) They can be very gentle” (Interview Remey). There appears to be a change in the Christian perception of Muslims after dialogue. This change creates hope for the dialogical process. Change Number 8 also attracted 5 responses. The Change Number context is: Dialogue can improve community relations (harmony, solidarity) between Muslims and Christians. This is typified by the participant’s desire to see Christians and Muslims living together in harmony and solidarity. Norina takes this one step further by claiming that Muslim communities need the benefits that Silsilah can bring them. Norina’s “Muslimah Project” is concrete evidence of her claim (Interview Norina).

At the lower frequencies, Change Number 9 – Dialogue can facilitate the deepening of one’s faith – attracting 3 responses, shows that conversions do not appear to be the case in dialogue between Muslims and Christians. Rather, concomitant with the positive results that dialogue brings, comes the possibility of benefit to a participant and his/her faith in terms of a movement towards greater commitment. Change Number 7 – Dialogue decreases one’s level of aggression towards the “Other” – attracts 2 responses. In these instances it could be the process of dialogue that the participants work their way through that displaces the aggression, i.e. to “level”(Interview Evelyn) and to “listen” (Interview Al-Frazkhan) to the “Other”.

Influences from Radical Groups

The dialogue between Muslims and Christians of the Silsilah programs and the dialogue that continues in the community after occurs against the backdrop of the Mindanao conflict. Fr. D’Ambra claims that the Movement is not spared being exposed to ongoing radical ideas.

Young people are being recruited by Abu Sayaaf, for example. Because poverty is pervasive and they receive a good salary in this way and at the same time perceive that they can fulfill their obligations as a Muslim in terms of Jihad, this sort of recruitment is very attractive to certain young people (Interview – D’Ambra May 2007).

Fr. D’Ambra states, “We, in Silsilah, can say this is not the way. While we acknowledge that obstacles are indeed present, we must acknowledge there are also results to dialogical initiatives and these results need to be consolidated, nurtured. We might move one step ahead and then be forced to go back. As a result of this, some people get discouraged and we encourage those who get discouraged. Hope is a positive link in all of this” (Interview – D’Ambra May 2007).

While the dialogical initiatives of the Silsilah Dialogue Movement do not conceptualise dialogue simply as a strategy, results show that dialogue can be perceived as a powerful tool for deepening interfaith cooperation while at the same time working to preserve the identity of each religious community. Out of this come positive messages on mutual respect and understanding which the analysis of my interviews suggests. As the interviews show, three of the very articulate Muslims, Nur-ain, Norina and Al-Frazkhan had issues about the vilification of their religion which led to feelings of anger and some aggression. While I am not saying that without Silsilah in their lives these three people would have become candidates for MNLF, MILF or Abu Sayyaf, I am suggesting that Silsilah has helped to counter their anger and aggression to make space for more positive attitudes toward dialogue that can act to work against such moves.

This is seen in each of these participants’ statements. Nur-ain says, “They (the MNLF) are fighting for our existence. I can’t blame them.” However as stated in “Participant’s Reports”, she posits *herself* as evidence to support her answer to the question, “Do you think that having the opportunity to join Silsilah lessens the probability that people will turn to violent means as a solution to conflict within the community?” Nur-ain is rejecting MNLF involvement although understanding its rationale. The reason, however, for her rejection appears to be her affiliation and belief in Silsilah’s purpose. She is now Silsilah’s representative in her homeland of Jolo (Interview Nur-ain).

Norina also rejects becoming part of MILF or MNLF. Although her father joined MNLF, Norina chooses to join Silsilah: “Silsilah is *my way*”, she says with emphasis. As Program Co-ordinator of Muslimah, a Silsilah based dialogue and peace group for Muslim women, Norina demonstrates her leadership skills and her belief in the values that Silsilah promulgates. Muslimah incorporates the following aims:

- To strengthen spirituality of Muslim women
- To prepare Muslim women for Dialogue
- To encourage Muslim women to do community service (Interview Norina)

Two of the women at the Muslimah Group were Julieta, aged 36, and Jubaira, aged 44. Julieta likes the course and says she is learning to respect other people more. She says she is also learning more about being a Muslim, about Moros and about the one and only God. She says the course “can only help people, can improve our relations between Christians and Muslims” (Interview Julieta). Jubaira is the chairperson for the NGO entitled “Basilan Women Initiative Foundation, Inc.” It is a non-government and non-profit organisation established in 2001. She is a former provincial board member and formerly had been elected as City Councilor. Jubaira says she finds the course “interesting” and that “it gives a forum for women to speak”. As (Muslim) women are usually only concerned with the smaller matters of communities, Jubaira says, the course will organise and empower women through conducting seminars and letting women have their say. Jubaira says she thinks the course will be helpful. Applying the course in her daily life means to dialogue with other Muslims and Christians also including men and religious leaders. Jubaira spoke enthusiastically of the course. “I like this program. This is the first program of its sort. I hope it can be echoed in our respective areas because the women need the dialogue. During elections there is the concern of corruption – buying votes and violence. We women are affected. There is a problem in Basiland with the election. We need your help. We need dialogue. My major concern is about the election. Everyone should be trained in dialogue”, says Jubaira (Interview Jubaira).

In his way of life Al-Frazkhan reveals that guns are in the hands of children. “When you are 12 years old you must carry a gun. A father teaches a child to fire guns”, he says. Feelings of aggression born in this manner stay with a person. In addition his aggression serves to protect his own faith. Al-Frazkhan admits his aggression and says it is still there during dialogue. “I can feel it”, he says. However, he has learnt to reflect and that makes him feel

better. He claims his hesitations have been overcome by “compassion and respect”. In terms of contributing to the process of reconciliation of differences between groups in conflict, Al-Frazkhan affirms that he has “in a little way”. He is making advances to the youth about the situation of conflict. Al-Frazkhan says, “Arms can never be a solution to a problem. Guns are in our hands when we are young. I want to change this tradition. Instead of guns let us use pens. There is no future in holding guns. We cannot escape from conflict in this way – we are carrying the instrument of conflict”. While it cannot be said that Al-Frazkhan’s rejection of arms can be wholly attributable to Silsilah’s dialogue programs, it can be said that it is likely Silsilah has had an influence upon this result (Interview Al-Frazkhan).

Overall Findings

Over 60% (8/13) of the participants in the study experienced some form of alienating behaviour toward the “Other” before a form of dialogue was established. In the case of Christians, prejudice was an orientation while in the case of Muslims, anger was a predominating theme. These participants all had an overall positive experience during dialogue. For Christians, relating to Muslims brought with it the eventual possibility of friendship while for Muslims, relating to Christians brought not only a recognition of the need for tolerance but in most cases an acknowledgment of the need to move into deeper connections with Christians. Of the remaining 38% (5/13), 31% (4/13) responded more cautiously to experiences during dialogue but these responses were positive and well-considered and focused on how the courses aided the dialogue process. Only 7% (1/13) reported some significant negative attitudes to the dialogue experience.

With respect to the mindset after experiences of dialogue, themes from the entire interviews support and expand the central question: “Do you think that having the opportunity to join Silsilah lessens the probability that people will turn to violent means as a solution to conflict within the community?” 12 out of 13 participants were asked this question and 11 answered in the affirmative giving an indication of the worth of Silsilah as an agent in making dialogue available to the community. Central to the findings was the report that dialogue can be helpful in solving conflict between Muslims and Christians. This was seen to be facilitated through dialogue fostering understanding between the two groups. Also applicable to these issues was the finding that dialogue both promoted and was promoted by sincerity and trust between Muslims and Christians. This was reported by significantly more Muslims than

Christians within the group and could be interpreted as being more of an issue to Muslims who have been marginalised in Mindanao. Concomitant with these mindset changes was the finding that dialogue improved community relations at least in some situations.

What is apparent from the findings is that for dialogue to succeed and take hold amongst the population, it is necessary to have a safe space to initially nurture the dialogical initiative. Silsilah provided just this kind of space and this proved again to be especially important to Muslims. The stereotype of Muslims being warlike and prone to expressing anger dissolved to a large extent when through dialogue the perception of the “Other” was changed in a positive way. Al-Frazkhan being accused of “joining the Christians”, however, is interesting to note. It suggests that there is an acceptance among some Muslims that Silsilah is wholly a Christian organisation with motives of conversion. A solution to this dilemma is for Silsilah to accept a joint Christian-Muslim governance structure. Sharing power with Muslims in the organisation would help to accentuate what is already fact, i.e. that the organisation is not about conversion but about respect and understanding.

Recruitment of young people by terrorist groups is a reality in Mindanao. However there are positive results to dialogical initiatives which have the potential to counter this trend. This was shown to be the case in three young people who having been faced with the possibility of a choice between insurgent group and Silsilah, freely chose Silsilah.

Conclusion

Silsilah is a most credible peace and dialogue organisation based in Zamboanga, Mindanao. It is an organisation which has consolidated itself as a movement for it has expanded its original base to include other areas in the Philippines, the latest centre being Jolo, inaugurated September 1, 2007 and which now serves, like other centres, as a venue for dialogue and peace for people of different faiths. Silsilah’s mission includes the initiation and sustaining of dialogue between Muslims and Christians in regions where war has created deep psychological wounds between these people. It has been shown that dialogue promoted by Silsilah can help in solving conflict between Muslims and Christians within the Silsilah environment. The prejudices of Christians and the anger of Muslims appeared to lessen through their program of dialogue. The majority of Muslims and Christians stated that they believed that having the opportunity to join Silsilah lessened the probability that people will turn to violent means as a solution to conflict within the community. Silsilah itself is

nevertheless still subject to ongoing influences from radical groups. However, it has been shown how, when a choice existed, three very lucid Muslims clearly chose Silsilah above a radical group. The availability of Silsilah in this region of conflict is thus of critical benefit for its inhabitants.

This contribution towards a solution to the insurgency problem in the microcosm of the Mindanao setting, it is suggested, can be applied and extended to the macrocosm, to global terrorism. While engaging with terrorists is proscribed by the international community and peace at any price is eschewed, the reality is that much can be gained from contact and dialogue. The IRA and the PLO, “terrorist” organisations that experienced dialogue with government elites are cases in point. Extending dialogue to Islamist organisations such as Al-Qaeda is regarded as anathema. Yet the horror of continuing attacks around the world raises the question of the validity of dialogue as a means to attempt a solution in contrast to the War on Terror where a great many people are losing their lives to say nothing of the legitimacy of that approach. While engagement will not be easy, there is the possibility that a common humanity will emerge that might be key to the solution of the problem. The fostering of understanding through dialogue, as has been discussed in the research on Mindanao, could be a potent factor in stemming conflict and preventing people from joining radical militant groups. This small study shows how words and not guns may hold the promise to bring about the necessary change that will lead to peace rather than militancy.

Chapter Twelve

Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study can be divided into two parts: those that arise from the analysis in Part Two, which was supported by the postmodern and postcolonial perspectives and other material in Part One; and those that arise from Part Three. Part Two dealt with critical discourse analyses which incorporated deconstruction of text extracts from President George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden in order to examine the epistemological bases of the Neoconservative Bush discourse and the counter discourse by Al-Qaeda. Part Three dealt with the idea of dialogue as a possible process of peacemaking which could contribute to a solution for the problem of global terrorism and possibly lead to conflict transformation. I will now make a division of these parts in order to summarise the findings before presenting a discussion for each.

(A) Summary of Major Findings for Epistemological Bases of Discourses

For the primary aim of this research, my research findings have been arrived at by applying postmodern and postcolonial theory and critical discourse analysis to the texts of Bush and bin Laden. These texts show how George W. Bush Inc. have defined a version of Western civilisation that is projected to represent cultural, religious, political and social superiority and legitimacy over all other forms of civilisation. Co-incident with this pursuit of domination of minds has been the inexorable reality of American history as an expansion of its power and influence base. “We seek to shape the world, not merely be shaped by it” (The National Security Strategy 2006: 2)¹⁰⁴ is a fitting mantra to a modern, aggressive, American colonial mindset, a mindset that has used September the 11th as the organising principle for the defence strategies of preemption and the export of a brand of democracy to reshape the Middle East¹⁰⁵. This has been effected not to right the wrongs that colonial interference has wrought upon Middle Eastern economic and political affairs and daily living but as an intentionally belligerent act of self interest. The American-led globalised world economy, the underlying regime of “truth” developed by the West and based upon neo-liberal ideas has

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter Five, “Pre-emption and the Fight against Terrorism” for a discussion on how this strategy makes clear that it is necessary to connect imminent threat to the capabilities and aims of adversaries today. See also Chapter Eight, “Discussion on Lines of Argument relating to September the 11th/Defence Strategies” for a reference to the National Security Strategy (2006).

¹⁰⁵ See Chapter Eight, Table 8.3 – S1, S2, S3, S4, S5

challenged the identity and the well-being of Islamic peoples¹⁰⁶. While the Bush regime has been both economically and militarily leading the advance of its version of freedom and civilisation around the world, Islamic peoples find there is no mutual respect for the significance of their civilisation. The Islamic world has, in fact, been marginalised not only economically but also in terms of its contribution to human history¹⁰⁷. However, despite its grand imperial narrative, the Bush texts show how the discourses emanating from 9/11 events portray the US as an innocent actor on the world stage¹⁰⁸ where US people were innocent bystanders, invaded without any particular provocation on their part and without knowledge in what ways their nation was culpable in relation to the Muslim world. Attempting to understand the terrorists' motives does not come across as a consideration for these bystanders, for the picture has been interpreted for them by the Bush regime that the terrorists are only inspired by evil¹⁰⁹, the proof being the suicide bombing, the flying of planes into a city full of people.

The resurgence happening within the Muslim world at the present time takes in fundamentalist groups some of which have reacted violently against the continually marginalising Western threat. This can be seen in the emergence of bin Laden's al-Qaeda. Bin Laden clearly perceives Muslims as *victims* of Western hegemonic practices¹¹⁰. It is apparent that bin Laden questions himself about the Muslim dilemma, appealing to the Saudi regime to take issue regarding the foreign occupation of American military personnel but not being successful. For bin Laden, Islam is not a docile faith; like the early Muslims, it means standing up for your rights and this means fighting against oppression¹¹¹. He exhorts Muslims to fight as the US domination seems to go unchecked in the world¹¹². There is a question as to how legitimate is his jihad, whether it can be defined as a "defensive" jihad in Islamic terms. While his jihad may be interpreted classically as an "offensive" jihad owing to his directive to kill Americans, civilian and military alike, it is evident that bin Laden has drawn upon the philosophy of Sayyib Qutb to implement his jihad and this gives more

¹⁰⁶ See Chapter Six, "The Marginalisation of the Peoples of Islam" and Chapter Nine, Table 9.3 – V1 to V6 and C1 to C6

¹⁰⁷ See Chapter Six

¹⁰⁸ See Chapter Eight, Table 8.3– I1, I2, I3

¹⁰⁹ See Chapter Eight, Table 8.3 – I3

¹¹⁰ See Chapter Nine, Table 9.3 – V1 to V6

¹¹¹ See Chapter Nine, Table 9.3 – C1 to C6 and D4

¹¹² See Chapter Nine, Table 9.3 – D4, D8, D9

latitude than the formal principles of “defensive” jihad permit¹¹³. Also some Muslims today interpret jihad doctrine as a doctrine of self-defence¹¹⁴. This was witnessed in the liberation struggle in Afghanistan following the Soviet occupation when Muslim leaders believed they had a duty to challenge this domination by force. This call to jihad provides identity and purpose in offering an agenda which to bin Laden’s followers enables the leading nations of the West to be repelled at least symbolically. This response is labelled “terrorism” by those nations. As with Islamic fundamentalism in general, it is given expression as a kind of formula where texts are interpreted in a literalistic sense. This formula simplifies and orders. There is a desire to go back to the original teaching of Islam which promises a life of less complexity. Bin Laden’s political agenda, however, can be seen broadly as the goal of jihad for the cause of self-defence¹¹⁵. Bin Laden’s discourse is therefore a counter discourse of terrorism or a discourse of response to the hegemonic discourses of the powerful and leading nations of the West, principally those of the Bush regime but also broadly against the western Civilising Project that does not regard Islam or Muslim people as being associated with an old and esteemed civilisation in the Middle East.

(B) Brief Summary of Major Findings for the Possibility of Dialogue as a Peace Process in addressing Global Terrorism

Through a discussion of examples of dialogue in the world which included a dialogue by the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, with Islamic scholars, clerics and intellectuals, a dialogue by HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan with the World Council of Churches, dialogue within the United Nations and Muslim Christian dialogue in the Sudan and Maluku, Indonesia, it was shown that dialogue is a natural and essential part of human existence¹¹⁶. As we live in a world where different faiths proliferate, it was shown that dialogue is a means not only of communicating with others but also of expressing respect for the values of others. Various examples in both the Qur'an and the Bible were shown to call attention to the dimension of interfaith principles, pluralism and interreligious dialogue¹¹⁷.

¹¹³ See Chapter Seven, “Jihad” for a discussion of classical doctrines of “jihad” and its review by influential modern groups today.

¹¹⁴ See Chapter Seven, “Jihad” for references to the colonial period when many Muslims felt that Jihad was justified against colonial powers.

¹¹⁵ Chapter Nine, Table 9.2 in its entirety establishes this fact.

¹¹⁶ See Chapter Ten, “Examples of Dialogue in the World”

¹¹⁷ See Chapter Ten, “Examples of Muslim and Christian Foundations of Dialogue”

As the focus moved to Muslim Christian dialogue in the Philippines, it was revealed how the Muslim population on the island of Mindanao had been progressively marginalised preparing the way for the emergence of revolutionary and ultimately terrorist groups. This in turn produced groups ripe for dialogue¹¹⁸. The Silsilah Dialogue movement was founded in Zamboanga City in 1984 by Fr. Sebastiano D’Ambra PIME, a Catholic Italian priest. Fr. D’Ambra conceives the dialogical style of life as a “way of life” or “style of life” that has a spiritual focus. It was seen how Silsilah’s Active-Harmony Approach incorporates this spiritual element into its conflict resolution mechanism¹¹⁹.

Investigating the possibilities of using dialogue as a means of addressing conflicts where ‘cultural ‘divisions had resulted in violent responses which were being labeled as ‘terrorism’, I interviewed Fr. Sebastiano D’Ambra, the then president of the movement, Remy, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, six Christian participants and seven Muslim participants who were attending courses at Silsilah and who were living in communities close to terrorist activity. Over 60% of the participants in the study experienced alienating behaviour toward the “Other” before the beginning of dialogue. Christians experienced prejudice while Muslims experienced anger¹²⁰. These participants all had positive experiences during dialogue, however. Approximately 31% responded more cautiously to dialogue but these responses were positive also. Only 7% reported overall negative attitudes to the dialogue experience. Central to the findings was that dialogue assisted in solving conflict between Muslims and Christians as well as promoting sincerity and trust between them. In addition to these major changes was the improvement in community relations that accompanied them. Silsilah offered a safe space in which the participants could freely interact. This proved significant for Muslims who were the marginalised group. The stereotype of Muslims as warlike and prone to anger softened when dialogue changed the perception of the “Other” in a positive way. An encouraging finding was that 92% of both Muslims and Christians as a group believed that having the opportunity to join Silsilah lessened the probability that people will turn to violent means as a solution to conflict within the community¹²¹.

¹¹⁸ See Chapter Ten, “The Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines”

¹¹⁹ See Chapter Ten, “Silsilah Dialogue Movement”

¹²⁰ See Chapter Eleven, “The Mindset before Dialogue”

¹²¹ See Chapter Eleven, “Mindset after Experiences of Dialogue: Summary of Findings”

Drawing together Aims and Research Question with Research Result (A)

Owing to the fact that there are multiple aims and objectives and research questions, I have used headings where necessary and have reiterated the substance of the aims/research questions in an attempt to clarify my discussion. There are initially two strands to the discussion: The first strand deals with the subject of terrorist response to Western hegemonic discourses (Research Result A) and the second deals with the possibility of dialogue as a peace process in addressing global terrorism (Research Result B). Aims and research question related to Research Result A will be discussed first.

The Hypotheses

The following hypotheses address the primary aim of investigation which is: To expose the discursive reproduction of domination in society by those holding power, i.e. the Bush Administration and the neoconservative right, and to show how a response is made through Islam in the development of a counter discourse, labeled “terrorist”, to these hegemonic discourses.

Hypothesis One is:

Global terrorism is authored by Islamic fundamentalist leaders in order to project their value system in its entirety onto the free world.

Hypothesis Two is:

Global terrorism is a response (reaction) by a group of oppressed people (or people who perceive themselves as being oppressed) who have no other means of protecting their value system in a world dominated by the neo-liberal agenda and supported by a militaristic neo-conservatism led by the USA. This group of oppressed people is Islamic fundamentalist.

I contend and argue here that in the face of my research findings, my first hypothesis is only supported to a minor degree and my second hypothesis is supported to a major degree.

In order to discuss the hypotheses with clarity, I will begin with Hypothesis Two. Bin Laden's perception of Muslims as victims is the basis from which to view his later actions. In line with Hypothesis Two, we must ask if the contention that Muslims are victims can be supported. While Islamic Civilisation was for many centuries a foremost military and

economic power¹²², it is a fact that the Western world had for centuries gradually infiltrated most of the areas that had once been part of the Muslim empire with a contact that was both demoralising and destructive¹²³. The postcolonial reality is that the Western European colonialism¹²⁴ followed more recently by the Anglo American hyper imperialism¹²⁵ that Islam has suffered has brought devastation and an ongoing marginalisation to the Islamic world. The present spread of core American convictions worldwide of freedom, democracy and globalisation¹²⁶ which are based on neoliberal ideals and which form an underlying regime of “truth” contextualised against a postmodern reality has rigorously challenged the identity of Islamic peoples¹²⁷. Against this hostile environment, a great betrayal to Muslims was the sanctifying of the American presence in the holiest of places of Saudi Arabia by the Saudi regime¹²⁸. Islam has Saudi Arabia as its heartland. Historically, Saudi Arabia has occupied a special place in the Islamic world, for it is towards Makkah and Islam's most sacred shrine, the Ka'abah, located in the Holy Mosque in Makkah, that Muslims throughout the world turn devoutly in prayer five times a day (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia 2008)¹²⁹. As Saudi Arabia is then the foundation of the house of Islam and has this singular place among Islamic countries as the cradle of Islam, I find there is legitimacy in bin Laden's indictment against both the US and the Saudi regime for the American presence here. I consider that these factors taken together, the postcolonial reality of marginalisation, the postmodern reality of the spread of the “truth” of the neoliberal ethic inhibiting the flowering of alternative perspectives including that of Islam and the actual sponsoring of Saudi Arabia, the cradle of Islam, by the US leading to the presence of US troops there, create a case for Muslims to be considered victims.

¹²² See Chapter Six, “Islamic Civilisation at its Zenith” for a discussion on the accomplishments of this once great civilization.

¹²³ See, for example, Chapter Six, “Interpretations of Islamic Decline” for a discussion on why this great civilisation lost its ascendancy. One of the reasons occurring in medieval times was that the Inquisition had forcibly converted a great number of Andalusians who were key transmitters of knowledge between Muslim and Christian civilizations. Their demise created difficulties for the Muslim world to access Western knowledge. In contrast, Christian Europeans were permitted to live freely in Muslim lands. In more recent times, colonialism and imperialism have eroded the very fabric of Muslim civilisation.

¹²⁴ See Chapter Six, “Some Facts concerning European Colonialist Intervention in the Middle East”

¹²⁵ See Chapter Six, “Some Facts concerning American and Anglo-American Intervention in the Middle East”

¹²⁶ As has been discussed in this thesis, globalisation has a lot of good, positive effects. However, the benefits do not outweigh the costs for many people.

¹²⁷ See Chapter Eight, “Discussion of Lines of Argument relating to Freedom/Democracy/Globalisation”.

¹²⁸ See Chapter Nine, bin Laden Text 4, First Extract for a discussion on the “occupation” of the land of the two Holy Places. The US troops were not the result of an invasion. Their presence resulted from an invitation by the Saudi Government to the US Government as a protection measure against Saddam Hussein's forces.

However, this allowed foreign armies to be stationed in Islam's holiest land to the protest of many Muslims.

¹²⁹ See Chapter Seven, “Traditional Islam” for a description of the Five Pillars of Islam which shows the central importance that Makkah holds for Muslims.

The consequence of Muslims being victims is that the practice of Islam has been compromised. This powerlessness breeds hostility and opposition within Islam itself and fuels the emergence of groups with a fundamentalist agenda. Fundamentalists see Islam as being like a kind of formula where texts are interpreted in a literalistic way¹³⁰ and there is a desire to return to the basics of the Qur'an and the *sharia*¹³¹. This provides a blueprint for life which simplifies and orders, where life's complexities are erased. From out of fundamentalist Islam come further groups who are prepared to fight against the domination of the West embodied by the neoliberal agenda. Such a group is bin Laden's al-Qaeda. While bin Laden appears to draw inspiration from Sayyid Qutb's revolutionary philosophy which advocates a replacement of the Western, secularised world with an Islamic world order¹³², bin Laden's appeal to honest Muslims that they should mobilise the Islamic nation to 'liberate themselves from those unjust and renegade ruling regimes, which are enslaved by the United States' (Bin Laden 2003: 6) illustrates that the fight is a response to the Western marginalising threat and not an initiative¹³³. Bin Laden's call to jihad, in providing meaning in terms of identity and social cohesion, offers a means of repelling the West both actually and symbolically. It can be seen, therefore, that those holding power, those who perpetuate the neoliberal agenda have oppressed the world of the "Other" to the point where violent responses have been provoked. Islamic fundamentalist groups are both a product of and a reaction to this neoliberalising world and in the absence of other means to express themselves in their marginalised world, some resort to violent means to protect their value system. The second hypothesis appears to be thus supported.

One issue that appears to lend support to Hypothesis One, however, concerns the Caliphate, the only form of governance that has full approval in traditional Islamic theology. Daniel Pipes, American historian and analyst who writes on militant Islam, maintains a weblog which has entries alluding to the global nature of this proposed Caliphate. For example, Pipes quotes from a speech by Donald Rumsfeld saying that Islamists 'seek to take over governments from North Africa to Southeast Asia and to re-establish a caliphate they hope, one day, will include every continent' (Pipes 2006: 3). A *global* caliphate, if it ever could be

¹³⁰ See Chapter Nine, bin Laden Text 10, Second Extract

¹³¹ See Chapter Seven, "Islamic Fundamentalism" for a discussion on Monroe and Kreidie's study in the grouping and distinction of Muslims as nonfundamentalist/fundamentalist (Monroe and Kreidie 1997: 28).

¹³² See Chapter Seven, "Sayyid Qutb: Influential Fundamentalist Thinker" which discusses Qutb's philosophy and his influence on bin Laden.

¹³³ In fact Chapter Nine in its entirety, the textual analysis and subsequent summary, shows bin Laden's actions as a response to Western domination.

established, would of course be an unprovoked aggression against the West and would conform to the parameters of Hypothesis One. What do the Islamic militants, themselves, say about the caliphate, however? As has been seen in the results from the CDA on bin Laden, bin Laden, while not explicitly referring to the Caliphate has nevertheless set the stage for a possible Caliphal claim. For example, the regimes that bin Laden (2003: 6) lists for liberation (*Islamicisation*)¹³⁴ – Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen – is suggestive of a move toward the establishment of the Caliphate. There is also some early evidence which pointed to a strategic goal of bin Laden's of ensuring that ‘the pious Caliphate will start from Afghanistan’ (Scheuer 2005c: 2). Al Qaeda second in command Dr. Ayman Zawahiri is possibly the most expressive and the most knowledgeable about the issue of the caliphate. He writes:

If the successful operations against Islam's enemies and the severe damage inflicted on them do not serve the ultimate goal of establishing the Muslim nation in the heart of the Islamic world, they will be nothing more than disturbing acts, regardless of their magnitude, that could be absorbed and endured, even if after some time and with some losses.

The establishment of a Muslim state in the heart of the Islamic world is not an easy goal or an objective that is close at hand. But it constitutes the hope of the Muslim nation to reinstate its fallen caliphate and regain its lost glory.

Ayman Al Zawahiri cited in Mansfield (2006: 215)

Zawahiri stresses that it is in “the *heart* of the *Islamic world*”, that it is the Muslim nations’s hope to “reinstate its *fallen* caliphate”. The language used reflects that this objective is more in line with Muslims protecting their value system than dominating the world. Realisation of a scenario that would establish a Caliphate in the heart of the Islamic world would pose a great challenge for Western civilisation because it would reject the basis of the current international political system (National Intelligence Council 2004: 8)¹³⁵. However, it is necessary to consider the allure that the concept of the Caliphate has to people of the Islamic world. Bush’s concept of the Caliphate, a totalitarian empire to which terrorists are drawn by a distorted idea of Islam¹³⁶, is erroneous. This form of political system was originally built upon a concept of citizenship that included differing ethnic creeds. There was a blending of race and religion (Nushin Arbabzadah 2004: 2; Ahmed 1999a: 63). There is great respect within the Muslim world of the historical concept of the Caliphate (Ahmed 1999a: 63;

¹³⁴ See Chapter Eight, bin Laden Text 9

¹³⁵ See Chapter Three, “Power Imbalance, Globalisation and the Terrorism Response” for a brief discussion of rebuilding the Caliphate in response to globalisation.

¹³⁶ See Chapter Eight, Bush Text 11

Menocal 2002: 174)¹³⁷. Radical and moderate Muslims alike resonate with the ideal of the Caliphate.

On considering how this information on the Caliphate affects the hypotheses, there appear to be two principal issues involved. On the one hand there is the existence of Islamic fundamentalist goals to restore the Caliphate and these goals coming to fruition would greatly confront Western civilisation. On the other hand, there is the fact that these Caliphal plans can be seen as restoring a cherished ideal, the last being destroyed by marginalising Western forces coming through the form of the Turkish Republic in 1924 (J. E. Lewis 2004: 5)¹³⁸. I think it would be accurate to say that the move toward a caliphate is in line with a protection of the value system of a broad spectrum of Muslims even though this would come at great cost to the West, if realised. I therefore submit that Hypothesis One is only supported to a minor degree whilst Hypothesis Two is supported to a major degree.

Aims (1) and (2)

These two hypotheses go towards in part investigating Aims and Objectives (1) which I will state again: *To expose the discursive reproduction of domination in society by those holding power, i.e. the Bush Administration and the neoconservative right, and to show how a response is made through Islam in the development of a counter discourse, labeled “terrorist”, to these hegemonic discourses.*

This aim was largely born out in addressing Hypothesis Two but further realised in the two chapters of Critical Discourse Analysis¹³⁹ and connected to Aims and Objectives (2): *To critically examine the epistemological bases of the Neoconservative/Bush discourse and counter discourse by Al-Qaeda on terrorism and anti-terrorism by using Critical Discourse Analysis.*

This aim was realised in the two CDA chapters based on Bush and bin Laden text excerpts. It was seen through CDA how September the 11th was presented by the Bush Administration as the organising principle for the policy changes of the exportation of freedom and democracy around the world and also preemption. Considering the first of these principles, it

¹³⁷ See Chapter Six, “Islamic Civilisation at its Zenith” for a discussion on the medieval Islamic Caliphate.

¹³⁸ See Chapter Six, “Interpretations of Islamic Decline”

¹³⁹ See Chapters Eight and Nine, CDAs on selected texts from Bush and bin Laden

was also seen how the Bush Administration's aims of exporting freedom and democracy around the world revealed American-style democracy with its globalised economy to be projected as the paramount model for all modern civilisations¹⁴⁰. Such a projection stems the flowering of alternative possibilities; alternative ways of living, alternative ways of knowing. Mutuality was not seen to be a part of this projection, a projection which challenges the very identity of minorities including specifically Islamic peoples. This American seizure of global hegemony is thus self-righteously imposing its own brand of monoculture on indigenous cultures around the world. The CDA also established that there has been a move away from the strategy of deterrence for it is held that deterrence strategy can no longer protect the American nation. Preemption, the second organising principle originating from the events of September the 11th, leans heavily on the terrorist agenda. When radicalism and technology meet, it is argued; outlaw regimes could give or sell nuclear, chemical and biological weaponry to terrorist allies who would use them without recourse to any sort of moral undertaking (Bush 2002b: 2)¹⁴¹. Terrorists must, therefore, be prevented at all costs from using modern technological weaponry. So threats must be neutralised before they fully materialise. The battle must be taken to the enemy (Bush 2002b: 2)¹⁴². This is the manufactured basis behind the principle of preemption. The War on Terror employs this rationale to back up the offensive nature of its operations. The US thus uses the threat of terrorism to justify its imperialist mission and expansionist agenda in the Middle East through the conduit of the War on Terror. We are told that what is at stake is the freedom of civilisation (Bush 2001c: 6)¹⁴³. Through the discourses of those holding power, the Bush Administration and the neoconservative right, a version of civilisation has been defined where its regime of "truths" platform the discursive reproduction of domination in society. This discursive reproduction of domination is well illustrated in the rhetoric that supports the War on Terror¹⁴⁴.

In discussing these hypotheses, I have argued that through the spread of the neoliberal ethic including recent neoconservative variants of it and postcolonial marginalisation, Muslims can be seen as victims to a substantial degree. My results also show that the powerlessness

¹⁴⁰ See Chapter Eight, Discussion of Lines of Argument relating to Freedom/Democracy/Globalisation where it is indicated that America's salvational role in the world can be traced back to earlier presidencies, notably those of Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt (Lipset 1996: 197).

¹⁴¹ See Chapter Eight, Bush CDA Text 4

¹⁴² See Chapter Eight, Bush CDA Text 4

¹⁴³ See Chapter Eight, Bush CDA Text 2

¹⁴⁴ A sample of this rhetoric is the 11 texts that constitute the Bush CDA.

associated with this condition generates opposition to the hegemonic discourses associated with the neoliberal and neoconservative values that are impacting upon Islam. A consequence of this is the manifestation of groups with a fundamentalist agenda, an agenda that seeks to return to the values of the early days of Islam, to a perceived time of simplicity as opposed to the complexities inherent in modern life. Such groups demonstrate a counter discourse to the Western hegemonic discourses. Those who actively and aggressively resist the influence of these global, hegemonic discourses are labelled “terrorist”. The counter discourse, labelled “terrorist”, is seen, for example, in bin Laden’s militant action and rhetoric which is a response to Western domination¹⁴⁵.

Thus through my results, Aims and Objectives (1) has been achieved: The discursive reproduction of domination in global society by those holding power, i.e. the Bush Administration and the neoconservative right, has been exposed and it has been shown how a response has been made through Islam in the development of a counter discourse to these hegemonic discourses by the West led by the USA, labelled “terrorist”.

Research Question (1)

This brings into consideration my research question: *In the context of modernist and neo-conservative thought, how have powerful players and forces attempted to influence the construction of knowledge and the interpretation of global terrorism?* My analysis of Bush texts shows that through liberal-democratic discursive formations the Bush regime has both redefined freedom, a key feature of Western civilisation, and projected militarisation as an accepted practice¹⁴⁶. This has achieved two neo-conservative functions to be processed by an American public: (1) Freedom has undergone a radically conservative shift to the right. This links freedom more readily with the liberation of civilisation from terrorists, for example, as well as free trade making the fight against terrorists as in the War on Terror and globalisation more acceptable, and (2) Dissent of militarisation has been suppressed making militarisation more tolerated as in for example, the invasion of Iraq. Thus new knowledge has been constructed by neoconservative forces in the areas of freedom and militarisation. Use is made of these new constructs through the promulgation of America as a sacred beacon, a

¹⁴⁵ Western domination is referenced in various places throughout this thesis but for a specific listing of interventions in the Middle East, see Chapter 6 – Sections on “Some Facts concerning European Colonialist Intervention in the Middle East” and “Some Facts concerning American and Anglo/American Intervention in the Middle East”. In bin Laden Text 4, First Extract, bin Laden elaborates those interventions which he deems have been visited upon the people of Islam.

¹⁴⁶ See Chapter Eight – Section on “The Bush Discourses: Postmodern and Postcolonial Considerations”

theme that has emerged many times in my analysis of the Bush texts¹⁴⁷. America's sacred narrative forged by the processes of history and re-crafted by neoconservative forces has been fashioned as a beacon and protector of universal ideals and human rights, as a veritable extension of United Nations principles making it seem at times as if US initiatives have been legitimised by the UN when in actual fact no such legitimisation has taken place¹⁴⁸.

In the interpretation on terrorism and in accordance with the theme of the US as a sacred beacon, terrorism has been advanced by the powerful as the antithesis of freedom, as the force that will compromise US freedom¹⁴⁹. This theory is conveniently alarming to an American public. Neoconservative players have worked to shape core American convictions. These convictions define a destiny for America and include foremost the advancement of freedom and democracy around the world¹⁵⁰. If terrorism will compromise our freedom, the nucleus of our destiny, then how closely must we guard it? How scrupulously must we seek out the terrorists and offer them appropriate redress? In order to do this how important is it that the enemy, the terrorists, must be conceptualised as evil? The demonisation of the enemy has served the purpose of garnering public support for the fight against terrorism, a fight that would eventually be played out however, in the terms Bush and his neoconservative team wished. An example of demonising the enemy is seen when Bush claims there is no neutral ground between good and evil meaning that it is the terrorists who have entirely defined and are responsible for the struggle we are in¹⁵¹. This drives an ideology of "us versus them". This form of discourse is very controlling because it allows us, the West, to be not only heroic but also innocent. The terrorists, described as "men without conscience – but they're not madmen" (Bush 2006b: 2) do not qualify for our understanding for, we are told, they are only inspired by evil¹⁵². Hence the powerful have removed us as concerned citizens and witnesses from this struggle so we can retreat into our innocence and not responsibly question what our governments are telling us. This situation does not come as a surprise as I have showed, through postmodernism, that modernity has elevated the cultural order of Western civilisation to the point where it becomes the sole repository of truth¹⁵³. So the

¹⁴⁷ See Chapter Eight, Table 8.3 – S8, S9, S11, F1, F2, F3, F14, F15, F16, F17, F19, F20, I2, I4, I5, I6

¹⁴⁸ See Chapter Eight, Bush Text 7. US founding documents are likened to those of the UN which greatly promotes the credibility of US motives.

¹⁴⁹ See Chapter Eight, Table 8.3 – I4

¹⁵⁰ See Chapter Eight, Table 8.3 – F1, F2

¹⁵¹ See Chapter Eight, Text 6 Macro propositions 1 and 4

¹⁵² See Chapter Eight, Table 8.3 – I3

¹⁵³ See Chapter Three, "Descartes' *Cogito*: The Birth of Modern Thought in the Enlightenment"

terrorists become ontologically guilty as they are denied a real and substantial cause for their actions.

The narrative described above, terrifyingly simplistic, obscures the reality of US motives and US dominance. These motives find their discursive justification in President Bush's utterance: "September the 11th changed how America must look at the world"¹⁵⁴ (Bush 2004c: 2). September the 11th is given as the cause for a change in foreign policy in the direction of preemption as a defence policy as opposed to deterrence and in the exporting of democracy. I refer back to Aims and Objectives (1) and (2) for a discussion of these two foreign policy changes¹⁵⁵. The response to the September the 11th attack, the War on Terror with the consequent invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, is thus based on the rationale provided by this change of foreign policy. The War on Terror, however, has been made out by the neoconservative players to resemble the most natural response that America as a nation could make; a war. The new construct of freedom and the dissent of militarisation feed into this response as the liberation of civilisation from terrorists. The striking similarities between these views and Cold War ideas and fears about the spread of communism suggest that the Bush Administration is still not clear about the engagement with Al-Qaeda being a postmodern war which is very much unlike the spread of communism. It is impossible to avoid asking the question: "Is the liberation of civilisation from terrorists the only agenda to the War on Terror? Herman and Peterson (2008: 4), writers on political economy and the media, have put this question very succinctly: "Is the United States simply responding to the 9/11 attack or do its leaders have a larger agenda for which they can use 9/11 terrorism as a cover?" Chapter Five implicitly asks this question. I have found disturbing results which find expression in the Bush Administration's drive towards *Pax Americana*, the exporting of American values around the world¹⁵⁶, and also the push towards a pre-emptive nuclear war capacity¹⁵⁷, hence dominance through this position of power¹⁵⁸.

¹⁵⁴ See Chapter Eight, Text 8. This began the rebuttal of President Bush to Senator John Kerry in the opening question of the 2004 election debate.

¹⁵⁵ See also Chapter Eight, "Discussion on Lines of Argument relating to September the 11th /Defence Strategies"

¹⁵⁶ See Chapter Five, "The Neoconservative Vision" for a discussion of *Pax Americana*.

¹⁵⁷ See Chapter Five, "Pre-emption and the Fight against Terrorism" which includes a discussion on how the Bush Administration usurped Congressional authority in 2002 to begin work on a low-yield nuclear program.

¹⁵⁸ See Chapter Five, "Defining the Enemies and Scope of the Global War on Terror" where I argue that the GWOT can logically be conceived as a convenient platform from which to implement US control of the post Cold War world.

Pax Americana encompasses the expanding of the boundaries of American-style neo-liberal democracy around the world as well as the maintenance of US military preeminence. It is a neoconservative vision. In one of the most important contemporary neoconservative documents, “A Report of The Project for the New American Century”¹⁵⁹, Kristol and Kagan (1997:1) report that although the American peace has proven itself stable, it is not self sustaining¹⁶⁰. The US cannot allow itself to become vulnerable to rogue powers who might acquire weapons of mass destruction. States such as North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Libya pose the greatest of threats to *Pax Americana*. It is notable that 4/5 of these states are Muslim and the other is communist, the old and familiar enemy. So it comes across that the new enemy is conceptualised to be like the old enemy wherein the response to conflict with that enemy is to create another war. Herein lays the political rationale for embarking on the War of Terror. I believe this rationale is based on the idea or intention of, if necessary, waging preemptive wars to remake the geopolitical map¹⁶¹ – something the rest of the world need to be very concerned about.

With respect to a pre-emptive nuclear capacity, William Arkin, military analyst, has stated that, ‘What has evolved since¹⁶² [9/11] is an integrated, significantly expanded planning doctrine for nuclear wars’ (Osgood 2007: 2). The US Strategic command has announced that it had achieved an operational capability for rapidly striking targets around the globe using nuclear or conventional weapons. CONPLAN 8022 is a new strike plan that includes a pre-emptive nuclear strike against weapons of mass destruction facilities anywhere in the world (Ruppe 2006:1). As has been stated earlier in this thesis¹⁶³, this kind of acquirement is made justifiable through the conduit of the War on Terror as a possible means of restraining rogue states (Goldstein 2004c). However, strong evidence suggests the evolution of the Bush Administration’s nuclear posture *preceded* 9/11. Joseph Cirincione, nuclear weapons and policy expert, claimed that America possessed an enhanced nuclear posture formed by committed ideologues prior to 9/11 (Goldstein 2004a)¹⁶⁴. Cirincione (2003:3) strongly asserts that the war in Iraq was not about WMD or terrorism; it was about

¹⁵⁹ “A Project for the New American Century” is a Washington-based think tank created in 1997. PNAC demands the establishment of a global American empire to be ascendant above all nations and to effect greater economic and military force in the world (Pitt 2003)

¹⁶⁰ See Chapter Five, “The Neoconservative Vision” for Kristol and Kagan’s views.

¹⁶¹ See Chapter Five, “The Neoconservative Vision” for a discussion of this vision for US world domination.

¹⁶² My italics

¹⁶³ See Chapter Five, “Pre-emption and the Fight against Terrorism”

¹⁶⁴ See Chapter Five, “Pre-emption and the Fight against Terrorism”

seeing that the US ‘uses its power to transform the world’ in the manner that it wanted¹⁶⁵. September the 11th has thus been used as the justification for this enhanced nuclear posture when it is probable that this posture was well on the way before this date. 9/11 gave the US administration an opening to declare their existing intentions; they now had a reason to proceed with their agenda.

Herman and Peterson (2008:4) claim that documents of the prior decade show clearly that the Bush team was openly hoping for another “Pearl Harbour” that would allow them to go on the offensive and ‘project power in the Middle East and across the globe’. One of these documents is the “Project for the New American Century” mentioned above. In the words of Kristol and Kagan (1997: 51) in this document¹⁶⁶, ‘the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor.’ Herman and Peterson (2008: 4) point to the fact that “the huge military forces’ that have been built up in the US expediently permit this power-projection by threat and use of force. In Chapter Five I have concluded that the War on Terror is a platform from which to legitimise the projection of American values and influence around the world effecting US control of the post Cold War world. Herman and Peterson (2008: 4) also reflect this conclusion when they say, ‘The military buildup was not for defensive purposes in any meaningful sense; it was for power-projection, which is to say, for *offense*.’ So regarding both my question and Herman and Peterson’s earlier question as to whether the US has a larger agenda for which they can use 9/11 terrorism as a cover, the answer to this question is yes. The events of September the 11th can be equated to being the new Pearl Harbour.

Drawing together Aims and Research Question with Research Result (B)

The aim of this section is: *To explore the possibility of dialogue as a peace process in addressing global terrorism*. The research question: *How can dialogue be used in dealing with global terrorism as an alternative to “the war on terror” approach discussed above?* These two items will be considered together in the following discussion.

¹⁶⁵ See Chapter Five, “Pre-emption and the Fight against Terrorism”

¹⁶⁶ See Chapter Five, “The Neoconservative Vision”.

Aim (3) and Research Question (2)

I have already spoken about the dialogue for peace as a human possibility¹⁶⁷. As Galtung and Ikeda (1995: 39) claim, in dialogue all cards are on the table which makes for mutual enrichment between the parties in the pursuit of honest relations. Learning rather than winning can be seen as a primary outcome of dialogue (Galtung and Ikeda 1995: 39, Swidler 1983: 1, Fazel 1997: 137). Dialogue can therefore be seen to bring equality into the relations between parties – the weakest is assured to be heard while the strongest, in being heard, must be ready to listen.

It has been shown that dialogue can be especially effective at the interreligious level. Muslim Christian dialogue was evidenced in the dialogue between the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI and the 138 Muslim scholars, clerics and intellectuals who responded to him¹⁶⁸. It was also evidenced in the civil war in the Sudan between the Islamic government and Christian rebels at both governmental and community levels and between Muslims and Christians in the islands of Maluku Province, Indonesia¹⁶⁹. It was evidenced of course in Mindanao, a microcosm of the global terrorist problem, where a Muslim Christian dialogue movement called the Silsilah Dialogue Movement (SDM) has developed at the interface of the community and what could be labeled the strata of terrorist activity where the MNLF, MILF and Abu Sayyaf proliferate. I use the word “interface” deliberately here to indicate its common meaning: communication between two disparate entities. The disparate entities in this particular interface are the community and the strata where “terrorist” or insurrectionist movement occurs. A dialogue movement can be well situated within this interface as a pivotal point which while able to educate and influence the community also possesses the possibility to gain access to the militant strata. Such has been the case with the SDM. This occurred in the early days of the SDM when Fr. D’Ambra became the negotiator for the MNLF who acted upon an amnesty offered by the government. This brought contact with not only the MNLF rebels but also with the political and military leaders of the MNLF. The result of such contact reunited many rebels with their families which brought some peace to the area for a time (D’Ambra 2002).

¹⁶⁷ See Chapter Ten, “The Dialogue as a Human Possibility”

¹⁶⁸ See Chapter Ten, “Dialogue and the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI”

¹⁶⁹ See Chapter Ten “Examples of Dialogue in the World”

The dialogue movement in the interface can also be exposed to radical ideas from the militant strata, however. In more recent times, for example, the SDM has been subjected to ongoing radical ideas with young people being recruited by Abu Sayaaf. There are two reasons for Abu Sayaaf recruitment. Firstly, as poverty is pervasive and people receive remuneration when recruited, it is a means of bringing in an income. Secondly, people perceive they can fulfil their obligations as Muslims in terms of jihad (Interview D'Ambra May 2007). So there is a two way process, one positive, one negative, happening at the interface which is, however, fertile ground for the transmission of ideas, understanding and influence. While obstacles are present, there are also opportunities. There have indeed been positive results from the dialogical process at the SDM and these results need to be acknowledged and as Fr. D'Ambra says 'consolidated and nurtured' (Interview D'Ambra May 2007). So while dialogue was not seen as a strategy by the SDM, it was seen that dialogue was nevertheless a useful tool for effecting interfaith cooperation while safeguarding the identity of each religious community and for bringing into focus the underlying patterns and dimensions of the conflict.

Recalling Lederach's view that peace is rooted in the quality of relationships¹⁷⁰, it is evident that several of the changes to the mindset after experiences of dialogue in particular, impinge on the relationship dimension. Let us firstly consider those where dialogue has initiated face-to-face communication:

Change No 1: Dialogue helps Muslims and Christians understand each other.

Change No 2: Dialogue changes the perception of the "Other" in a positive way.

Change No 6: Dialogue is based on sincerity and trust between Muslims and Christians.

It will be noted that nurturing relationships takes time. These three findings are not the result of a need for quick fix solutions. This was not the first time the majority of participants had come to Silsilah for dialogue. Most of the participants had come previously or been involved at another Silsilah location on a number of occasions. One of the properties that makes Silsilah so credible is that it avoids the urgency that feeds a quick solution and focuses instead on building long-term relationships. This is in accord with Lederach's transformational approach which requires that we develop a capacity to see the immediate situation *without* being consumed by the demands of presenting issues¹⁷¹ (Lederach 2003:

¹⁷⁰ See Chapter Ten "The Dialogue as a Human Possibility"

¹⁷¹ According to Conflict Transformation theory, the "presenting issue" is the immediate situation of an episode of conflict (Lederach 2003: 31)

48). Lederach (2002: 55) cautions that we should look for and see the patterns in the context underpinning the presenting situation. One way of doing this which will be used in the Mindanao context is to listen to the voices of identity within the conflictive environment. Lederach (2003: 55) emphasises that a capacity to understand and respect the role of identity is essential to understanding the epicenter¹⁷² of conflict.

Issues of identity are particularly apparent in Change No 2 above. It will be noted from Table 11.2 that Change No 2 constitutes 4 Christian responses and 1 Muslim response. It was observed¹⁷³ that this change represented a sound commendation for dialogue because for Christians, Muslims are often seen as the enemy, warlike, prone to expressing anger in a violent way¹⁷⁴ and yet four Christians changed their perspectives towards Muslims favourably through dialogue. Jacklyn said that during dialogue she was able to overcome all biases and could respect what they, the Muslims believed in, what they were practicing¹⁷⁵. Sr Mary Anne's attitude changed toward Muslims since being affiliated with Silsilah. She claimed that her biases and prejudices had been reduced, that this strengthened her commitment to work with them¹⁷⁶. Lindee's attitude towards Muslims since becoming affiliated with Silsilah has changed a lot. She is now more sensitive¹⁷⁷. Josephine's attitude to Muslims changed significantly. She claims it has been a radical change. She said she has had Muslim friends before but Silsilah has helped her understand them¹⁷⁸. While there was only one Muslim response, this showed that perhaps the Christian stereotype is not as deeply rooted as the Muslim stereotype. Nur-ain, a Muslim, claims she has learnt the ability from Silsilah to be with Christians helping her to understand what they do and say¹⁷⁹.

As Lederach (2003: 57) says, generating solutions to specific problems can ease anxiety in the short term, but it rarely addresses deeper identity and relational concerns directly. Processes intended to explore these deeper questions will need to aim at creating spaces for exchange and dialogue, rather than at creating an immediate negotiated solution. Silsilah fulfils an integral function in these terms by constructing such spaces. These spaces underpin

¹⁷² According to Conflict Transformation theory, the epicenter of conflict is the web of relational patterns, often providing a history of lived episodes, from which new episodes and issues emerge (Lederach 2003: 31)

¹⁷³ See Chapter Eleven "Mindset after Experiences of Dialogue: Summary of Findings"

¹⁷⁴ See Chapter Eleven "Mindset before Dialogue"

¹⁷⁵ See Chapter Eleven "Experiences during Dialogue"

¹⁷⁶ See Chapter Eleven "Experiences during Dialogue"

¹⁷⁷ See Chapter Eleven "Participants' Reports"

¹⁷⁸ See Chapter Eleven "Participants' Reports"

¹⁷⁹ See Chapter Eleven "Participants' Reports"

the results apparent in the above findings. However, these findings are not only the result of direct inter identity exchange, they are also the result of the cultivation of internal, self and intra-group spaces where safe and deep reflection can occur. Such reflection is in addition facilitated by the manner in which Silsilah orders the geographical surrounds of the movement's home base where much of the dialogue and training courses occur.

It is necessary to say at the outset that physical safety is an issue in Mindanao and there needs to be a consideration in the designing of spaces in this aspect. Silsilah has catered for this contingency. Set apart from the community, Harmony Village, home of the Dialogue Movement is 14 hectares of farm and woodland situated on a hill in Pitogo, Sinunuc, Zamboanga City about eight kilometers from the city proper. While Zamboanga itself is not considered an area free from terrorist activity by Western countries, Harmony Village would be considered a safe space on this account by the students/participants. Of course the term "safe space" is more so a psychological referent than a physical one. In this case, however, both the psychological and the physical are linked to address the issue of physical safety here. I will speak more on this aspect below. With respect to both self space and dialogue space, dialogue courses are usually arranged on a live-in basis which gives participants time and space for solitude and reflection. This also facilitates people getting to know each other on an informal basis. This is where issues of identity may be negotiated more intimately as Muslims and Christians interact without the imposition of formal structure. This is not to say, of course, that a formal structure is not useful – it is useful in terms of providing spaces for exchange and dialogue in the various meeting places which cater for both big and small groups. There are various prayer areas which also allow for internal self space. These areas include a mosque, a chapel and a sacred labyrinth walk. The natural setting of Harmony Village is conducive to both dialogue and contemplation. Silsilah has thus built an optimum environment which furnishes spaces for exchange and dialogue and also for internal and self space, both necessary in addressing the deeper issues of identity.

The safety issue was reflected in Change No 4 listed in table 11.1 – Ability to dialogue is aided by the opportunity to be with the "Other" in a safe environment similar to which Silsilah provides. This attracted four responses and all these responses were Muslim showing at first perhaps the precariousness which these Muslims were initially feeling and later the acceptance of Silsilah which replaced earlier reservations. Al-Frazkhan, a Muslim, tells his unbelieving friends that Silsilah is a place where it is intended for you to deepen your own

faith¹⁸⁰ demonstrating the safety that Alfrazkhan is feeling in the Silsilah environment. Norina stresses that ‘Muslim communities need Silsilah. Silsilah opens a gate’¹⁸¹. Nur-ain claims enthusiastically that ‘Silsilah is the place for Dialogue’¹⁸². Both Norina’s and Nur-ain’s responses indicate that they have moved past the safety issue and are affirming the opportunity that Silsilah can offer their communities. Rasma tells her worried friends that it is within Silsilah’s purpose that she can have her own religion, her own beliefs¹⁸³. Rasma’s response is like Al-Frazkhan’s. It reveals at once a faith in Silsilah and in Silsilah’s purpose.

As Lederach (2003:59) claims we can easily fall into a technique-oriented approach toward dialogue and take for granted that it can only happen in direct face-to-face processes. There are other ways of deepening understanding about identity and relationship. This is witnessed in Silsilah’s dialogical style of life as discussed in Chapter Ten. Embedded in the “life-in-dialogue” four pillars are God, Self, Others and Creation¹⁸⁴. This allows dialogue to be manifested in prayer and meditation, caring for one’s self, respecting and accepting the diversity of Others and caring for the Earth. These types of dialogue promote deepening of relationship as well as promoting the idea that dialogue is based in spirituality which as a consequence fosters peace (Interview D’Ambra 2006). Of particular relevance in dialogue as Lederach (2003: 59) sees it is “dialogue-as-shared-work”. An example of this is the last pillar upon which Silsilah is based: Dialogue with Creation. As discussed earlier¹⁸⁵, Silsilah runs a Farmer’s School promoting the vision of dialogue with creation among those associated with the land. Silsilah also includes music and the arts in its training courses. Lederach recognises that appropriate exchanges in deepening understanding about identity and relationship can incorporate many ways including dialogue through music, the arts and dialogue-as-shared-work (Lederach 2003: 59). Silsilah has been visionary in incorporating these elements into its dialogical programs.

It can be seen from the above discussion that one set of capacities points towards direct, face-to-face interaction and another set calls attention to the need to create change in our ways of organising social structures. Although this is a more abstract consideration, it is still about

¹⁸⁰ See Chapter Eleven “Participants’ Reports”

¹⁸¹ See Chapter Eleven “Participants’ Reports”

¹⁸² See Chapter Eleven “Experiences during Dialogue”

¹⁸³ See Chapter Eleven “Experiences during Dialogue”

¹⁸⁴ See Chapter Ten, “Silsilah Dialogue Movement”

¹⁸⁵ See Chapter Ten, “Silsilah Dialogue Movement”

strengthening relationships. The following two changes listed in Table 11.1 indicate that there is a perception that dialogue can, in fact, allow the making of changes in social structures:

Change No 3: Dialogue can help in solving conflict between Muslims and Christians.

Change No 8: Dialogue can improve community relations (harmony, solidarity) between Muslims and Christians.

Change No 3 attracted 8 responses (4 Christian and 4 Muslim) while Change No 8 attracted 5 (3 Christian and 2 Muslim). For there to be changes in social structures, there needs to be the perception and the vision to do it. This will take time. It cannot be the result of a need for quick solutions. However, a seed has been planted in the minds of these people whose visions of dialogue can be seen to embrace an anticipation of hopeful things to come.

I spoke earlier about the interface, that boundary between the community and the strata of militant activity and I suggested that it was fertile ground for the transmission of ideas. The SDM occupies a special place in this interface in that it has the opportunity to disseminate the values and results inherent in the dialogical process and to influence others, in the process replacing radical ideas with the possibilities that dialogue can bring. While all participants contribute to this end, people like Nur-ain, Norina and Al-Frazkhan all occupy a position that is key to this process. Nur-ain is the Muslim Silsilah representative for Jolo. Norina is Program Co-ordinator of Muslimah, a Silsilah based dialogue and peace group for women. Al-Frazkhan is making advances to the youth about the situation of conflict¹⁸⁶. Each of these Muslims, being in an influential position and aware of how the Muslim identity has been historically marginalised in the Philippines, have an accurate perception of how identity is linked to power and to the structures which manage their relationships. This is in accord with their choice of joining Silsilah over a radical or fundamentalist group but with an expressed understanding toward the aims of radical groups such as MNLF and the MILF¹⁸⁷.

The possibility of using dialogue as part of a peace process in addressing global terrorism has been indicated in this Silsilah study. The setting up of dialogue groups to interface between community and radical groups in order to target those who may support these radical groups and in addition to direct dialogue with the radical groups, is a credible enhancement on what Silsilah offers already. On the 19 January 2006, bin Laden offered a truce to the West which

¹⁸⁶ See Chapter Eleven “Influences from Radical Groups”

¹⁸⁷ See Chapter Eleven “Influences from Radical Groups”

may or may not have been meant to be rejected¹⁸⁸. Here was an opportunity for Western governments to consider the possibility of dialogue. Dialogue is rich in promise as has been shown in the many examples used in Part Three of this thesis but especially in the dialogue movement in the Philippines. How dialogue can be used in this context of radical groups, and of global terrorism, depends to a large extent on the receptivity of Western governments to the idea of dialoguing with “terrorists”. Extending micro situations, as in dialoguing in the interface between community and radical groups in the Philippines, to the macro situation, where it is global terrorism that is the object of dialogue, is possible. Micro level dialogue can emerge as mechanism-shaping outcomes at the macro level. Also there is a recognised or established link already in place between local or regional “terrorist” organisations such as Jemaah Islamiah (JI) and Al Qaeda, so the potential for local dialogue to influence what is generally referred to as global “terrorism” is definitely possible.

(A) Implication of Findings

The implication of my findings is that the global terrorist threat is being used to justify and extend US domination. Plans aiming for not only the continuation of US supremacy and power but its expansion and formulated *before* the September the 11th events are being put into operation. Global terrorism is thus playing a functional role in the maintenance and furthering of US hegemony. Bin Laden is a plausible and convenient enemy. Without him, Bush would have no justification to assert *Pax Americana*. It is bin Laden who legitimises Bush’s push toward the Middle East and beyond. The construction of knowledge regarding freedom giving it a radical shift to the right and the suppression of the dissent of militarisation accommodate the Bush Administration’s offensive plans and strategies.

Taking a look at bin Laden’s stance it is necessary to keep in mind the philosophy of Sayyid Qutb. Qutb is recognised to be the theoretical father of Islamic fundamentalism¹⁸⁹. Fundamentalism has been seen in this thesis as a response to Western domination of Islamic countries. The arguments that derive from bin Laden’s speeches are to be identified within Qutb’s philosophy. Tibi (2004: 336-337) claims that in the writings of Qutb, the world order posed by fundamentalists competes with Western universalism. This reverberates throughout the bin Laden texts I have analysed where it is apparent that the battle lines are drawn between Muslims and ‘global crusaders’ (Bin Laden 2002c: 2). We are told that Al-Qaeda

¹⁸⁸ See Chapter Nine Text 13

¹⁸⁹ See Chapter Seven “Sayyid Qutb: Influential Fundamentalist Thinker”

was set up to ‘wage a jihad against infidelity, particularly to counter the onslaught of the infidel countries against the Islamic states’,¹⁹⁰ (Bin Laden 2001: 3). This is to say that the fundamentalist vision is not just rhetoric like the duplicitous rhetoric of the War on Terror. Fundamentalists aim to implement their ideas with the means at their disposal which can include violent means. Bin Laden’s intention *is* to defend Islam. His agenda is jihad as self defence. Bin Laden’s jihad could well be a response against a perceived enemy, one that is powerful and is considered a ‘real’ threat to Islam and the Muslim way of life. It is both fallout from and response to modernity. The Silsilah dialogue movement is relevant in this regard because it helps to build a bridge of understanding through which tolerance can emerge as a path to coexistence. Here is a means by which the Islamist may see that not all Western epistemology is bad – in fact it may be a means of understanding that both Christianity and Islam have common origins in the Middle East and this could provide the middle ground on which to work on deeper dialogue.

(B) Implications of Findings

The example of Silsilah shows the promise of dialogue. The implications of dialoguing in the interface between community and radical group and with the radical group itself would open up rich new possibilities for a more peaceful coexistence. This no doubt carries with it a great level of discomfort for both parties. Yet it must be tried. The readiness to listen and engage in dialogue is arguably the only way to embark on transforming any form of political violence into a sustainable peace. Breaking out of the cycle of violence requires a deep and sustained exchange. Such a peace cannot happen overnight. The dialogue process needs to start at grassroots level at the interface between community and radical group and radiate outward to include the international community for we cannot transform society without catalysing a transformation at the personal level as well. Dialogue is undeniably a more positive alternative than the so called “war on terror” response which has been equated to global crusading by bin Laden and which supports the cycle of violence. The willingness to dialogue constitutes a positive peace where ultimately patterns of violence may be replaced with social capacities for more dialogue with the possibility of leading to culmination in conflict transformation.

¹⁹⁰ See Chapter Eight Bush Text 8

The Obama Administration: Considerations for the Future of Global Peace

In the light of comments made above concerning the Obama Administration¹⁹¹, I anticipate that there could be a change in the ways in which the USA responds to “the Islamic Other”. It is not within the ambit of this thesis to pursue this issue. However, I wish to make a few brief comments on this matter in the light of this thesis. On June 4 2009, Obama reached out to the Muslim world in his speech at Cairo. The level of this reaching out was unprecedented in US history and projected equality between the two civilizations. Obama can be seen speaking as a partner while Bush was seen to be speaking from a superior position. While Obama’s move has no doubt been seen in some Islamic quarters as a positive step, there are also no doubt suspicions and caution within others which is understandable given the Western colonial and imperialist interventions which have occurred in the Islamic world and which have already been discussed in this thesis¹⁹². Obama will need to match deeds with rhetoric in order to make a consistent response to “the Islamic Other” and to secure the support of the Islamic world. If the Obama Administration substantially shifted away from the mindsets of the Bush years, in terms of a genuine interest in more deeply understanding what has been termed global terrorism, this would be a significant contribution towards global peace.

The Muslim-Christian dialogue study at the Silsilah Movement in the Philippines¹⁹³ identified some useful insights in how Christians might positively interact with Muslims, in how some of these insights might be relevant to finding solutions for dealing with the problem of terrorism. If the Obama Administration were to use similar insights in confronting terrorism, this may mean positive prospects for longer term peacemaking and peacebuilding. This could mean positive changes in a practical policy sense in such places as the Middle East, Pakistan and Afghanistan where wars on terror exist.

Where To From Here

In the above discussion, I have developed the pictures embedded in my data and made connections between the results of my analyses and existing theory and research. But what does this mean in terms of an interpretation of my findings and my original theoretical

¹⁹¹ See Chapter Five A Ray of Hope

¹⁹² See Chapter Six

¹⁹³ See Chapter Eleven Research at Mindanao

framework in the context of postmodernism and postcolonialism? Chapter Thirteen, the final chapter, will discuss and address this linkage.

Chapter Thirteen **Conclusion and Synthesis**

It is from Western culture, specifically, the legacy of the Enlightenment, that the modern view of the world originated. Modernity substituted reason for God as the sovereign authority that determined truth. Hand in hand with this rationalising influence came Western beliefs of the inevitability and the invincibility of progress, of science, of democracy, and of the rights of the individual. That the “West is best” became an underlying assumption of Western civilisation whose implications were that in the course of time, other cultures would adopt Western values permitting them to become universal. Thus universality and homogeneity became driving forces in the modern world which have found expression in the practices of colonialism and imperialism. This has meant that the modernity of the West has brought exploitation, marginalisation and even destruction to other cultures. It is obvious then that modernity has intentionally or unintentionally produced some unwanted and oppressive outcomes. Global terrorism is such an outcome. Those of us in the West need to accept this confronting reality and realise that for large numbers of people, the West has lost its integrity and its legitimacy.

Postmodernism and postcolonialism are intellectual movements that call into question the dominant discourse of modernity. They have been used in this thesis as a lens through which to view global terrorism. Foucault, the founder of postmodernism, attempted to contextualise notions of truth, knowledge, rationality and reason thereby casting aside the language of absolutes and looking in a new way into the workings of power. He asks, ‘Are we to understand that the entire human race is caught up in the process of Enlightenment?’ (Foucault 2003: 2). This question brings into focus the significance of the “Other”. The dominant colonial discourse relentlessly imposes its truth upon the Other determining what constitutes progressiveness and what constitutes wisdom. These absolutes are then applied to all cultures. Today this colonisation does not necessarily require invasion and occupation. Instant mass global communications can be the agent of assault. It is postcolonialism that represents these voices of the colonised, voices that have been forgotten or silenced in the shaping of the modern world.

A feature of the modern world today which also relates to global terrorism is globalisation. Globalisation may have initially provided the conviction in some quarters that the world was

inevitably heading towards greater prosperity for a greater number of people. However, it has subsequently shown its dark sides. Through the expansion of Western markets and the exporting of Western values, globalisation promotes itself as a movement that creates a unified world. Aspiration for a unified world, i.e. with one political and economic form, is modern in conception. Celebrating its benefits may be in the interests of corporate entities but it is to the detriment of the majority. Jacques Derrida says of globalisation, ‘the disparities between human societies, the social and economic inequalities, have probably never been greater and more spectacular . . . in the history of humanity’ (Derrida as interviewed by Borradori 2003: 121). It has been revealed in this thesis that the claim that globalisation is creating an environment where all people can share in the accumulation of global wealth is a false one¹⁹⁴.

September 11, 2001 was a defining moment in the history of the world. The attacks that were perpetrated on the US by al-Qaeda radicals were a strike against the prevalent myth of modernity and globalisation. As well as some damage to the Pentagon, the twin towers of the World Trade Center collapsed. Baudrillard (2003: 44) astutely observes that while the material object was destroyed, it was the symbolic object which was targeted. Baudrillard (2003: 47) pursues the theme of the symbol to the end:

The towers, for their part, have disappeared. But they have left us the symbol of their disappearance, their disappearance as symbol. They, which were the symbol of omnipotence, have become, by their absence, the symbol of the possible disappearance of that omnipotence – which is perhaps an even more potent symbol.

(Baudrillard 2003: 47)

The world system that the Twin Towers embodied was targeted by the terrorists and in the aftermath of the attacks the disappearance of the towers suggested that modernity and globalisation were themselves compromised.

Baudrillard (2003: 12) claims that terrorism is immoral; the symbolic challenge to the global world order, the response to globalisation is immoral but he also stresses that so is globalisation itself immoral. When global power dominates to the extent where modernity and globalisation severely restrict alternative forms of thinking, the idea of the terroristic challenge then becomes more comprehensible. The global system itself creates the circumstances for this ruthless retribution. By completely defining how life is to be lived and

¹⁹⁴ See Chapter Three, “Power Imbalance, Globalisation and the Terrorism Response”; Chapter Six, “The Contribution of Postmodernism and Postcolonialism in Understanding Terrorism Related to Islamic Fundamentalism”; Chapter Eight, “Lines of Argument relating to Freedom/Democracy/Globalisation

laying down the rules for all, the global system compels the Other to attempt to change those rules. By “global system” I mean the current global “system” in all its dimensions (Cultural, Social, Political and Economic). Perhaps the architects of the economic model that underpins free market capitalism and neo-liberal economic activity and also drives ‘economic globalisation’ are unaware that there are or possibly could be negative social effects felt by some people and particular cultural groups. In other words, there are possibly many casualties of globalisation whether or not this is acknowledged, whose lives are negatively affected leading to impoverishment and hardship and greater poverty at the bottom of the economic ladder – the poorest of the poor. Hence, more research is needed in this area to better understand the negative effects of globalisation in general and in particular on Muslim communities around the world and to find ways to address this issue. This research and concerns need to be addressed because it is these very same poor or poverty-struck people who can be influenced and are possibly convinced by al Qaeda to fight against ‘globalisation’ and its leading agents such as the USA, when told that this is where the blame should be directed. They are then likely to believe and agree that this is where action is needed to put an end to world domination and create greater economic equity. A new enemy is thereby created. The current global “system” may ultimately be determining the choices that people can make and in this process marginalising those groups who resist conforming to these pressures of economic globalisation and are unwilling to or disinterested in change. A possible response to this dilemma is to improve development and reduce underdevelopment in Muslim communities across the globe. Again, this is related to future research. It may be that given all the development efforts since the end of WWII, some groups are still unable to live well and make ends meet; they are suffering the effects of poverty. It is these people who may be rightly or wrongly blaming the West for their plight. It is also these people in Muslim communities who may be convinced by the likes of bin Laden into joining the ranks of an Islamist fundamentalist group to fight a violent jihad against the evil West and its neoliberal allies. They may be convinced their poverty and marginalisation is due to the negative effects of globalisation, irrespective of whether millions are benefiting from economic expansion. These benefits to others become irrelevant if you are poor, suffering and are feeling impoverished and helpless. Dialogue with marginalised people can help them see other ways to improve their lives and also perhaps challenge some of the negative ideas they may have about the West.

But is this a clash of civilisations or religions? Baudrillard thinks not. While the conflict is being defined as a war between radical exponents of Islam on the one hand and the West on the other, Baudrillard contends that this creates the misconception that there is a discernible confrontation between these opposites offering the possibility that there exists a solution based on force. While Baudrillard admits to an antagonism here, he sees it extending beyond America and Islam which are focal points. What he sees is ‘triumphant globalization battling against itself’ (Baudrillard 2003: 11). What Baudrillard is saying is that globalisation has produced singularities (species, individuals and cultures) that have paid with their deaths for the attempt to set up a single world system but there are also those who are using the methods of globalisation against globalisation. For example, the terrorists have taken over all the weapons of the dominant power including money and computer technology, aeronautics and media networks. They have incorporated into their tactics the tools of modernity and globalisation, without deviating from their aim, which is to destroy that dominant power.

Corey (2004: 12-13) interprets Baudrillard’s thinking in saying that Baudrillard attacks the predominant Western understanding of Good and Evil. “Good” is unification in a totalised world while Evil is what disrupts this unification. Corey claims Baudrillard is “immoral” and therefore “evil” from the standpoint of Western philosophy which interprets goodness as total unification. According to Corey (2004: 14), Baudrillard maintains that the world is ‘constituted by an inescapable duality’ and good and evil must maintain a balance. Through the West’s attempt to unify the world, globalisation unleashed a ‘total extrapolation of Good’ (Baudrillard 2003: 14) wherein all “otherness” was threatened with extinction. Corey (2004: 15) argues, and I agree with his assessment of Baudrillard’s thinking, that for Baudrillard, we must yield to the fragmentation that is taking place and accept the idea of ‘a radically plural world that cannot be unified by a transcendent system of law, politics, economics or values’. Baudrillard is thus for abandoning the Western dream of unification and universality in all its forms.

From Baudrillard’s concepts, it can be interpreted that terrorism, itself immoral, then becomes a response to this drive for unification which is also immoral. It is not the result of a clash of civilisations but, as Baudrillard says, of globalisation battling against itself. This is

in agreement with my findings in Chapter Nine¹⁹⁵ where I see Islamic fundamentalism, in postmodern terms, as being both a product of and response to modernity. Even though Bin Laden's conviction that the battle is not between Al Qaeda and the US but between Muslims and the global crusaders (Bin Laden 2001: 1), bin Laden's call for jihad is not an initiative, it does not define a clash between civilizations but it is a response to that 'total extrapolation of Good' (Baudrillard 2003: 14) which proceeds from modernity and more specifically, globalisation, in this case. The fragile balance of Good and Evil was upset when the West organized, politically, historically and technologically, a hegemony of the Good. Corey (2004: 14-15) astutely observes that this Western hegemony of the Good, the attempt to include all "otherness" within a universal order allowed the positive undertakings of Western economic growth and technological development to be met by equally negative responses. Baudrillard (2003: 15) claims that at this point a 'ghostly enemy' emerged: Islam. However, Baudrillard (2003: 15) is quick to say that Islam 'was merely the moving front along which the antagonism crystallized' for the antagonism is everywhere and in us all. So it is one kind of terror pitted against another as defined between global omnipotence on the one hand and one of its responses, Islamic fundamentalism on the other. So in postmodern terms it is seen that Islamic fundamentalism is both product and response to modernity.

Writing in 1990, Baudrillard refers to the Ayatollah Khomeini in the matter of Salman Rushdie illustrating that the Ayatollah offered proof of how it is possible to topple all existing power relations through the symbolic force of an utterance¹⁹⁶. With the West protecting Rushdie, Baudrillard claims the winner of the contest was unquestionably the Ayatollah. While we still had the power to destroy him, he was the victor on the symbolic level for symbolic power is always superior to the power of arms and money (Baudrillard 1990: 81-83). In this way, the perpetrators of the events of September the 11th threw down a real challenge to the West for they undeniably manifested symbolic power.

In answer to this challenge Bush gave the world a new construct of "freedom". It was a radical right-wing construction that embraced the battle against "evil" and which was more deeply connected with the globalised world. Here power was decided by the market where

¹⁹⁵ See Chapter Nine, "Discussion of Lines of Argument relating to Incongruity in September the 11th Stories" and "The Counter Discourse Response Labeled 'Terrorist': Meaning and Modernity"

¹⁹⁶ On 14 February 1989 Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa calling for the death of British novelist, Salman Rushdie and his publishers because his work, *The Satanic Verses*, was considered to be offensive to the Islamic faith. In the Muslim community the novel caused great controversy for what many Muslims believed were blasphemous references (Pipes 1989).

people must compete and win at any cost, alienating each other in the process. Coincident with this new construction of knowledge, Bush projected militarisation as an accepted practice and sought to quell its dissent. September the 11th was disreputably used for the justification of the promulgation of the new US foreign policies of preemption and the exporting of democracy. A vast military machine was set in motion firstly in Afghanistan and then in Iraq. The use of an “us” vs. “them” binary construction impeded an effective evaluation of the government of the US by its people. The use of this binary made simple what was complex and masked the reality of US dominance.

Neoconservative philosophy made good use of America’s sacred narrative that it, the USA, is a beacon of universal ideals and human rights. This narrative paradoxically accompanied paroxysms of American militarism. While economic concerns were included in this narrative¹⁹⁷, there was no respect given to the cultures of the ‘Other’. The reverence given to the Market eclipsed the very value of culture and its diversity. The occupying powers in Iraq failed to protect its cultural heritage. The plundering of Iraqi antiquities has seriously compromised this heritage (Woolf 2007: 2)¹⁹⁸. This is a great tragedy for a civilisation whose origins have rivalled those of Western civilisation. Edward W. Said has referred to the extreme position of intellectual and cultural superiority that colonial authorities assume (Said 1994). While the British Empire talked of emancipating people and creating nations, in the process of trying to transform Iraq into a Western-style democracy, the USA has perhaps not paid attention to the fact that this country is the cradle of modern civilisation – following the Neolithic revolution and its successes in ancient Mesopotamia. Here the invaders or ‘transformers’ need to engage with the people of Iraq about the type of democratic civilisation they wish to have in an Iraq liberated from the dictator Saddam Hussein, rather than setting out to dictate to them the kind of democracy that they must have. Furthermore, it is undemocratic to force such a democracy on unwilling people with the help of a strong military force and with the token backing of a selected few local political actors¹⁹⁹.

¹⁹⁷ For example, consider Emergent Line of Argument F19, The US will lead the world economy

¹⁹⁸ See Chapter Eight, The Bush Discourses: Postmodern and Postcolonial Considerations

¹⁹⁹ This in no way suggests that the people of Iraq or any Muslim or other nation for that matter wishes to be ruled by despots and corrupt cliques. It means that political intervention backed by a military without the consent of the people they are coming in to help means the violation of a nation state’s sovereign rights under international law, the right to decide such matters for themselves. It also raises the question of why such interventions, if they are so positive and progressive, have not been carried out against other “rogue” states such as Burma and Somalia or in efforts to liberate Tibet. This means that the “free” world is selective about which state it is willing to liberate. This is the subject of a different thesis and is raised here as a question for future research.

The importance of Islam to its followers in this cradle of civilisation has either been simply overlooked or Islam has been maligned. While Said is eloquent as to how Islam has been misrepresented historically by the *European mind* which has provided European civilisation from the Middle Ages onwards with a perversion of Islam (Said (1995) (1978: 70), it is plain that the *American mind* has also produced distortions of Islam as witnessed by the extreme hostile and pervasive images coming out of American society of Muslim peoples after September the 11th attacks – the seven million Muslim Americans who lived through this backlash were exposed to images construing Islamic peoples to be a ‘violent, irrational [and] fanatical people’ (Said 2002: 1)²⁰⁰. While Said’s conviction that the relentless pursuit of terrorism ‘allows the United States to do what it wishes anywhere in the world’, he does recognize the importance of globalisation also and sees terrorism as a resistance to it (Said 2001a: 2). Both Appadurai (2006) and Roy (2001, 2004b), later postcolonial writers take up and expand upon the connection between globalisation and terrorism²⁰¹.

In 1990, Baudrillard (1990: 83) said of terrorism that it was an act that punched a hole in our universe. This is a striking image that remains true today. The attraction to see in global terrorism only religious fanaticism must be resisted. It is erroneous to see in the events of terrorism logic of pure destruction. Just as Said, Appadurai and Roy link terrorism to a resistance to globalisation, for Baudrillard (2003), current terrorism is neither the descendant of anarchy, nor nihilism nor fanaticism but it exists side by side, contemporaneously with globalisation. It can be seen then that globalisation and the hegemony that the West imposes, appear to be undeniably complicit in the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism from which global terrorism has found expression. However, I believe, for reasons that I will outline below, that it is more to the point to consider that modernity itself is the ultimate cause of the emergence of this violent expression. While I have already claimed this association between modernity and Islamic fundamentalism in this thesis, I wish to clarify this relation here.

I have discussed in this thesis how modernity was characterised by Enlightenment thought which enthroned reason as the basis of truth, knowledge and authority. Reason became the source of Western epistemology. Now, taking the perspective of the Islamic fundamentalist,

²⁰⁰ A Gallup poll released during this period stated that 49 per cent of the American people said yes to the idea that Arabs, including those who were American citizens should carry special identification (Said 2002:1) See Chapter Four , “Postcolonialism’s Advocate: Edward Said”

²⁰¹ See Chapter Four “Later Postcolonial Contributors: Appadurai, Spivak, Roy, Bhabha”

Islamic fundamentalism, because of its reliance on divine sovereignty, refutes Western rationalist epistemology. In the Islamic fundamentalist's view, the West's rejection of transcendent principles undermines morality.²⁰² This is not just valid for bin Laden's organisation. The arguments of bin Laden's speeches reflect the philosophy²⁰³ of Sayyid Qutb who is recognised to be the theoretical father of Islamic fundamentalism. Qutb (1990) completely rejects the Western system of determining how a civilisation is constituted, i.e. he is rejecting human sovereignty and the human centered theory of knowledge based on reason, which finds its origins in the European Enlightenment. So what is in dispute here is Western rationalist epistemology in its entirety.

In Western terms, this rationalist epistemology has given enquirers passage to know truth through reason in an unequivocal denial of the authority of divine metaphysical truths. This division between the Western way of knowing the world and the way of the Islamic fundamentalist, between reason and divine truth, is a barrier for a common understanding. A struggle moreover exists between Islamic knowledge and modern secular knowledge. As Euben (1997: 450) says, Islamic knowledge reveals a yearning for meaning and certainty while the secular knowledge of modernity is defined by human beings expressing their desire to create a world on their terms. Thus Qutb's evaluation of modernity is a protest not only against rationalist ways of knowing the world, it is a protest against an epistemology that defines what is knowledge and what is worth knowing.

In spite of the violence with which bin Laden has responded, he has brought what could be considered an enlightening religious vision to his followers, a vision that competes with Western universalism. His call to arms is located directly in the Western discourse of modernity and it is against modernity that his movement is positioned but it is also paradoxically, modernity that has produced his movement. I believe it is more than just globalisation that has caused the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism. Its emergence is located within the very roots of modernity, in the Enlightenment itself, even though Islamic fundamentalism has only manifested in comparatively recent times.

²⁰² See Chapter Nine, "The Counter Discourse Response Labeled "Terrorist": Meaning and Modernity. Also see, for example, Emergent Lines of Argument C3 and C4 in Table 9.3 Emergent Lines of Argument from Bin Laden Texts Numbered and Grouped which argue for the reinstating of Islam to its former standing and the establishment of the "rule of God on earth". In addition see D3 which speaks out against Americans who are "enemies of God" and F2 which refers to the US wanting to impose its rule which is not based on "what God has revealed".

²⁰³ See Chapter Seven, "Sayyid Qutb: Influential Fundamentalist Thinker"

It has been argued in this thesis²⁰⁴ that the Enlightenment, for Foucault, was not limited to the spread of values such as justice, liberty and reason. Along with these values which have been lauded as Enlightenment ideals, a set of disciplinary techniques emerged which symbolised a new form of power. These techniques of control resulted in our modern system of power (Danaher, Schirato and Webb 2000). Thus Foucault proposed that at the onset of the Enlightenment a new form of power began to spread through society and this new form of power worked at the *micro-level* as a set of forces that determined how people behaved in their daily lives. This was a power of normalisation²⁰⁵ where non-conformity was discouraged and even punished (Foucault 1991, 200-208). Disciplinary forces acted to isolate what was not normal and set it apart for marginalisation or disposal²⁰⁶ (Foucault 1991: 235-236). There was thus really no good reason to accommodate the Other in any way who, by definition, opposed the truth, absolute as it was. Here the seeds of rebellion of the Other were sown, seeds that would take a long time to take root but nevertheless take root they would ultimately do in a proliferation of rebellions of which Islamic fundamentalism is but one expression.

So it becomes necessary to not only acknowledge the Other but to treat the Other in the most hospitable way we can. It is from Derrida that we gain insight on this issue. Unlike Baudrillard who holds Western dominance in question, Derrida does not completely reject the West but accepts it with much reservation. Corey (2004:16) claims that notwithstanding his criticism of the West, it is clear that Derrida wants to hold on to the ‘promise’ contained within those societies fashioned by the Enlightenment. According to Derrida, the true promise of the Enlightenment is what he calls “unconditional hospitality”. It is to care for the “Other” with no thought of return. It is to accept the “Other” without imposing our own rules. It is absolute ethical care for the “Other” without conditions (Derrida interviewed in Borradori 2003:128-129). Corey (2004: 17) describes eloquently what unconditional hospitality means when he says, ‘Pure hospitality is not a condition in which the other is invited to live with us; rather, the other arrives unannounced, and yet is given absolute care’.

²⁰⁴ See Chapter Three, “Foucault’s Challenge to Enlightenment Thought: Postmodernism and A New Concept of Power”

²⁰⁵ See Chapter Three, “Linking the Prison to Power and Control in Society Today”

²⁰⁶ See Chapter Three, “Foucault’s Challenge to Enlightenment Thought: Postmodernism and A New Concept of Power”

Derrida clarifies what he means by absolute hospitality by contrasting it with the concept of “tolerance” which is often accepted as the standard for ethics in the West. Derrida argues that tolerance is only a limited form of hospitality, a conditional and careful hospitality: ‘We offer hospitality only on the condition that the other follow our rules, our way of life, even our language, our culture, our political system, and so on’ (Derrida as interviewed by Borradori 2003:128). Derrida emphasises that tolerance is always on the side of the strongest from which point we can say, ‘I am letting you be, you are not insufferable, I am leaving you a place in my home, but do not forget this is my home’ (Derrida as interviewed by Borradori 2003: 127). A point to note here is that this concept of “tolerance” is similar to what the Muslims extended as hospitality to non-Muslims in the old Caliphate. What Derrida is saying here is that in “tolerance” as perceived as a Western standard, the acceptance of the “Other” is limited and for this reason “tolerance” *cannot be* the proper standard for ethics. Unconditional hospitality *is* a proper standard for ethics. However, one cannot live by it and organise it. As Corey (2004: 18) says, political, legal, and religious forms of organisation must, of necessity, be inhospitable to some and by the very fact that we are conscious of unconditional hospitality, we become aware to the degree to which these forms are limited and exclusive - they are, in fact, to different extents unjust. Thus, for Derrida, we must live in a state of constant tension – ‘between the conditional forms of tolerance and practice found in politics, law and religion, and the unconditional imperative of absolute hospitality’ (Corey 2004: 18). So Derrida would have us live in a state of continuing critical reflection in respect to our institutionalised systems of politics and law.

This ties in with Derrida’s concept of “messianicity” derived from the word “Messiah”. It is related to unconditional hospitality in that he sees unconditional hospitality as a “messianic promise”, a promise of, what he terms, a “democracy to come” in which absolute hospitality is granted to the “Other”. However, the “democracy to come” is not an actual event in the future (Caputo in dialogue with Derrida 1997: 24). As Corey (2004: 19) explains, Derrida’s “messianic” is ordered by the anticipation of a “democracy to come” that is always expected but never arrives: while no messiah, human or divine, will ever bring us “absolute hospitality”, Derrida all the same advises us to adopt a faith that is contradictory to itself, a faith that preserves the messianic orientation while possessing the awareness that the “democracy to come” will never actually come. Derrida (1994: 168) calls this faith a “quasi-messianism”, an ‘irreducible paradox, a waiting without horizon of expectation’. Derrida (1994: 89) enlarges upon this faith:

It is even more a certain emancipatory and *messianic* affirmation, a certain experience of the promise that one can try to liberate from any dogmatics and even from any metaphysico-religious determination, from any *messianism*. And a promise must promise to be kept, that is, not to remain “spiritual” or “abstract”, but to produce events, new effective forms of action, practice, organization, and so forth.

Derrida (1994: 89)

As Corey (2004: 19) suggests, while this paradoxical faith reveals how far the present falls short of the promised messianic age, it prevents us from accepting an extreme fundamentalism or a genocidal solution.

Using these conceptions of “hospitality” and “democracy to come”, Derrida speaks of a “New International” which consists of a different kind of space which is sensitive to the limits to state and law although not opposed to the idea of state or law. Derrida explains this by recognising that there are world crises in which international organisations such as the United Nations, for instance, have to intercede but cannot intercede the way they need to. Derrida sees international law as rooted ‘in a Western concept of philosophy, a Western concept of the state and of sovereignty’ (Derrida as interviewed by Caputo 1997: 12). Derrida perceives this as a limit and distinguishes a need to rethink the philosophical foundations of international organisations. He also sees as a limit the fact that these international organisations are governed by a number of particular states which provide them with the means to intervene in terms of military and economic power. So the universality of international law is ultimately dependent upon a number of powerful, rich states, a state of affairs which needs to change. Derrida believes it is, in fact, in the process of changing going beyond the current state of internationality, beyond belonging to a state where a ‘number of human beings are secretly aligned in their suffering against the hegemonic powers which protect what is called the “new order”’ (Derrida as interviewed by Caputo 1997: 12). Here he does not mean, of course, terrorist alliances but as Corey (2004: 19) says, a “spirit” that he calls the New International which lives in anticipation of an absolute hospitality that it knows will never arrive, but which all the same exposes the limits of all worldly forms and potentially restrains their most inhospitable possibilities. Derrida says of the New International, ‘It is not a new concept of democracy, but a new determination of the given concept of democracy (Derrida as interviewed by Caputo 1997: 12).

So, in postmodern terms, both Baudrillard and Derrida have deeply engaged the question, “What is our relation to the Other?” Baudrillard has addressed in his question the implications of modernity and globalisation on the “Other” in terms of global terrorism while

Derrida has concentrated on developing a model so that we may relate to the “Other” with the most ethical care. While both these theorists probe the depths of the problem they arrive at somewhat different conclusions. Baudrillard’s view that global terrorism is a result of globalisation battling against itself is commensurate with a world of increasing fragmentation, a rejection of the Enlightenment while Derrida attempts to save certain features of the Enlightenment to build a new system of ethics based on universal hospitality towards the “Other”. However, my reasoning and understanding falls in line with that of Derrida and Baudrillard both who think we must indeed listen much more closely than we have done before to the voices of the “Other” if we are to treat each other respectfully as human beings and prevent violence as far as we can. Both Baudrillard and Derrida seek to accommodate the differences of the “Other”. Baudrillard, however, asks us to accept a world devoid of a messianic spirit while Derrida wants us to embrace the hope of a messianic age, being aware that such an age can never in reality come to pass.

Derrida’s concept of absolute hospitality where we must live in a state of critical reflection as regards tolerance, politics and the Other means we must think about relating to the Other with the most ethical care. Relating to the Other with the most ethical care surely involves a dialogical initiative. The example from my field study was the initiatives undertaken by the Silsilah Dialogue Movement in Mindanao, the Philippines²⁰⁷. The mission of Silsilah which is celebrating its 25th anniversary of foundation in 2009, includes the initiation and supporting of dialogue between Muslims and Christians in regions where war and violence has produced deep psychological wounds between these two religious groups. Central to the findings was the report that dialogue can help in solving conflict between Muslims and Christians. The prejudices of Christians and the anger of Muslims reduced through their program of dialogue. Both Muslims and Christians believed that Silsilah provided an opportunity which had the effect of lessening the adoption of violent means as a solution to conflict within the community.

The findings indicate that for dialogue to succeed and be taken up by the people, it is necessary to have a safe space at the outset in which to nurture the dialogical initiative. Silsilah epitomised this kind of space which proved to be especially important to Muslims, the group marginalised in the Mindanao population. Silsilah avoids the urgency that feeds a

²⁰⁷ For discussion of the findings of the field research performed at Silsilah, see Chapter Eleven, “Research at Mindanao”.

quick solution, however, and focuses instead on building long-term relationships. This is in accord with Lederach's transformational approach which necessitates that we build up a capacity to see the immediate situation *without* being obsessed by the demands of presenting issues (Lederach 2003: 48).

However, it has not been within Silsilah's sphere of responsibility to redress the structural violence that pervades Mindanaon society. Land remains the most fundamental source of the conflict as Muslims native to the island have been methodically dispossessed of traditionally-based ownership. The imbalance in ownership of natural resources fostering economic disparity between Muslim peoples and other peoples of the archipelago has provoked the resistance that is expressed in the radical liberation fronts. They view their homelands as being illegally occupied (Slack 2003: 2)²⁰⁸ and while the most positive influences flow from the work that is done within Silsilah, the economic and structural roots of the problem need to be addressed. It is only then that a complete transformation of conflict can occur. The question of land and the allocation of rights to natural resources and their profits are issues that form the very basis of why there is an emergence of what has been labeled "terrorist" phenomena.

Still, Silsilah is well positioned to exert positive impact in terms of dialogue, a requirement in the process of transformation of conflict. Silsilah is subject to continuing influence from radical groups particularly Abu Sayyaf. The boundary between the community and the strata of militant activity is fertile ground for the transmission of ideas. The SDM occupies a special place in this interface in that it has the opportunity to circulate the results of the dialogical process and to influence others, in the process replacing radical ideas with the possibilities that dialogue can bring to facilitate peaceful coexistence. The philosophy of this microcosm can be applied to the macrocosm, to global terrorism. Engaging with terrorists is prohibited by the international community but the fact remains that much of value can be gained from dialogue and the many people exposed to the possibilities that dialogue can bring. While dialogue was extended to the IRA and the PLO both considered "terrorist" organisations in their prime, is it so bizarre that we can think of extending dialogue to Islamist organisations such as Al-Qaeda? This question becomes more palatable when the full weight of the findings of this thesis is considered with it.

²⁰⁸ See Chapter Ten, Structural Injustices

In this thesis it has been shown how the engagement of “difference” has been abused by certain representatives of the West. The European Enlightenment issued in modernity whose cultural order presented Western civilisation as the model for all cultures to follow²⁰⁹. The existence of difference was not respected as culture after culture became dominated or excluded by Western powers. Colonisation and imperialism have spread the dominant way of looking at the world which in the process has marginalised and devalued other world views²¹⁰. In the wake of this colonial onslaught came globalisation, a totalising globalised governmentality which continues to eradicate difference in favour of a single vision and which produces gross injustices and inequalities especially among non-Western nations²¹¹. While some of the colonised and/or globalised accept the new world view as a superior one, some act through the entrenched political systems that have been foisted upon them to register their disapproval while others react in peaceful protests seeking validation of their own indigenous realities. Still others choose more forceful resistance in the form of militant action labeled by some as “terrorism”. It has been shown in this thesis that global terrorism is both a child of and response to modernity. This is witnessed in the rise of Islamic fundamentalism from which global terrorism issues. Islamic fundamentalism as a movement has only surfaced in recent times, in the latter part of the 20th century, despite a nurturing of the desire to return to the 7th century²¹². It is also witnessed in the 2001 symbolic strike on New York, labeled “terrorist” against the Western value system and world order.

Islamic fundamentalism, however, while a subject of this thesis, is but one expression of Islam. There are other expressions – traditional, mystical and liberal – which make Islam a world religion. Reform within Islam is occurring and is important for it connects with other belief systems and the promising possibilities of creating a peaceful coexistence among them²¹³. For example, Ibrahim (2004: 2)²¹⁴ has alluded to the civilisational relationship between the Judeo-Christian world and the Muslim world and the pressing need for dialogue in this context while Khatami²¹⁵ calls for civilisational dialogue where all societies can

²⁰⁹ See discussion Chapter Three in “Descartes’ *Cogito*: The Birth of the Enlightenment”

²¹⁰ See Chapter Four, “The Colonial Encounter” for example and Chapter Six “Some Facts concerning European Colonialist Intervention in the Middle East”

²¹¹ See Chapter Three, “Power Imbalance, Globalisation and the Terrorism Response”

²¹² See Chapter Nine, “Discussion of Lines of Argument relating to Incongruity in September the 11th Stories”

²¹³ See Chapter Seven, “The Question of Reform” for a discussion on the reform occurring within Islam.

²¹⁴ See Chapter Seven, “The Question of Reform”

²¹⁵ See Chapter Seven, “The Question of Reform”

contribute and develop through the exchange of ideas (Esposito 2002: 137)²¹⁶. While there is a need for further research on the potential of dialogue with the Other from a Western perspective, i.e. what the West can do, there also exists a need for what all others not-the-West can think about and contribute to as well. Further research from the Islamic perspective would be most welcomed and enlightening.

In considering the practical implications of my thesis, I find there is enough evidence to suggest that al Qaeda's and other associated violent jihads backed by Fundamentalist Islamic groups are being justified as a response to negative political, economic and social changes being pushed by the West and its allies. This 'pushing' by the West was very obvious in the Bush era under neo-conservative political direction of foreign policy by the US. To challenge such a view – local dialogue promises to be a useful means of engaging with people who are being influenced by terror groups. Dialogue hence offers a means of finding a path to peace. It is better than the violence involved in a 'war on terror', which does not promise to deliver the same results. In the example in the Philippines, local dialogue helped to change people's views of each other. However this requires more research.

Given all the positive effects of globalisation that many people enjoy across the world (health benefits, travel, international exchanges of labour and information technology, communication enhancement around the globe and the promotion of interconnectedness among global populations) there seems to be a problem that relates to the failure of these benefits reaching everyone, especially the poor and particularly its positive effects may not be reaching the poor in Muslim countries. Islamic fundamentalists focus on the negative effects of globalisation while the neoliberals focus only on the benefits. Therefore, Bin Laden's and Bush's worlds collide because they see each other's civilisations as a threat to their own. The analysis of their speeches show that Bush pushed US style democracy as the hope of all humanity and was a keen supporter of globalisation through the use of free trade capitalism. He pushed the US as leading the world economy and freedom's global advance. Mutuality was not considered in his worldview. He conceived of the US as being an innocent actor on the world stage while bin Laden was seen as a terrorist, evil without cause, without conscience²¹⁷. Bin Laden believes the US is a leader of crime and terrorism in the world wanting to impose its rule which is not based on what God has revealed. Bin Laden wants to

²¹⁶ See Chapter Seven, "The Question of Reform"

²¹⁷ See Chapter Eight, Texts 1-11.

reinstate Islam to its former standing as part of a violent struggle aimed toward ultimately achieving peace. He does not understand why US domination should go unacknowledged in the world. His agenda is the goal of jihad as projected as a matter of self-defence²¹⁸.

Dialogue promises to be able to build tolerance at the local level where local conflicts are being acted out violently between groups. Collectively these engagements with threats of terror by Islamic fundamentalist groups in local geographic locations provides an avenue of hope and is a means of directly addressing what is generally referred to as ‘global terrorism’ at the macro scale²¹⁹. This however, does not mean that there is no need or possibility of dealing with al Qaeda at the Macro level through direct dialogue between the US administration and al Qaeda. Al Qaeda may not be a nation state but it is nevertheless a global network and movement of local nodes or cells that subscribe to the same overall cause. Al-Qaeda is a threat that is not confined within particular state borders and hence a war against it is illusionary or absurd. Opening up channels of dialogue in as many localities where al Qaeda and its Islamic fundamentalist associates are active would be more effective, less violent, with less collateral damage and involve less economic wastage, all of which has contributed in the past few years in destabilising the global economy through wars in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan and increasing fears that wars against countries such as Iran, North Korea, Pakistan and Somalia could follow.

It is possible to write a completely different thesis that concentrates on the totally positive effects of globalisation and development that has transformed the world since WWII to be a better place where the lives of millions of people have been improved. It is also possible to conclude that the USA and its allies are justified in continuing to fight a war on terror to neutralise a terrorist threat because al Qaeda and Islamic Fundamentalists are insane. However, in considering the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, this is not a peaceful solution; it is not an approach to making peace by peaceful means and does not promise to successfully end the violence. It definitely does not lead to greater understanding of the possible root causes of the conflict, which is what this thesis is able to shed light on by revealing the possible reasons for conflict. The thesis addresses the conflict between the West and al Qaeda by looking at the public image of both the Bush administration in the USA and bin Laden for al-Qaida.

²¹⁸ See Chapter Nine, Texts 1-14.

²¹⁹ Examining Bush’s and bin Laden’s public speeches was not carried out to sort out the differences between them but in a bid to understand whether there are explanations for the acts of terror carried out by al-Qaeda – in order to be in a better position to address grievances through dialogue in geographic locations where the threats were taking place in the world.

This is done by examining their public speeches to the world. What emerges is that they are responding to each other's policies and actions and systems of belief about what civilisation is or should be. The Bush administration has since been voted out of office and a new US foreign policy may lead to a different approach because it is not based on neo-conservatism. However, the war in Afghanistan continues as a war on terror. Therefore the Islamic Fundamentalist reasons for building and implementing a global movement based on the use of terror to combat the West led by the USA still remain in place. The war on terror needs to end and a more positive means of engaging with the issues raised by Islamic Fundamentalist groups is needed.

The analyses and discussion in this thesis brings us to a better understanding of motives for al Qaeda's response through the use of threats and acts of terror. This insight suggests that the USA needs a more positive foreign policy, one that can deal with Israel with more honesty and fairness and also for the West and its allies to be more critical of globalisation and its negative social consequences. Poverty in the Muslim world may be leading more people to join Islamic Fundamentalist groups to terrorise the West because they may be convinced that the West is the cause of their impoverished circumstances and is setting out to modify their culture, even change their religion. One way to engage with these ideas is to set up local dialogues to dissolve myths and to communicate ideas so that violent means used to resolve this conflict are abandoned. However, problems associated with poverty need serious attention. Muslims around the world who are not interested in and reject the Islamic Fundamentalist position can assist with local development in places where poverty is a major problem in Muslim communities (not whole countries). This applies to local situations such as Mindanao in the Philippines, where poverty is a serious issue as is the threat of terror. Dialogue proved to work well in this situation to change perceptions and build tolerance between Muslims and Christians. However, further analysis is needed to address poverty in equitable and impartial ways.

It is through better understanding of the 'Other' that sustainable peace can become reality. The solution of local dialogue that is being tried in the Philippines was found to be effective in building tolerance. A dialogue network organised and applied to combat global terrorism at every possible local node where it exists geographically is a means of engaging with and neutralising global terrorism. Much more research is needed in developing such a network for

this purpose but it is a far less violent approach to dealing with the threat of terror by Islamic Fundamentalists than resorting to an unsustainable war on terror.

During the Bush years, from the Western perspective, responses to global terrorism have been fought with yet more aggression and war instead of reflection and dialogue inhibiting the elucidation of the causes of inequality and injustice which have led to terroristic expression. These responses have only served to aggravate the issues which have created global terrorism in the first place. It has been shown in this thesis that an inability to accommodate the differences of the “Other” is the root cause of global terrorism. This is seen in the postmodern responses by two of the most distinguished postmodernist thinkers, Baudrillard and Derrida. In order to accommodate the differences, we, as peoples of the West must abandon plans to homogenise and normalise the human race via the means of colonialism, imperialism and globalisation. If we take a lesson from medieval Islam whose record shows that the Muslim religion was in many ways historically accommodating to the “Other”, to other religions, cultures and peoples²²⁰, then we would be embracing tolerance. But it’s possible to even transcend tolerance and choose Derrida’s concept of absolute hospitality to determine our life’s ethic. We must also look inward. We must be self critical and take seriously the words of Emeritus Professor Jim Ife who encapsulates the implications of the findings of this thesis when he says:

... Those of us who live comfortable lives in the predominantly Christian west are centrally implicated in the crisis in the Middle East, and in the advent of global terrorism. Terrorism is, in large measure, a response to the world we have created and before thinking about solutions we have to realise we are part of the problem.

Ife (2007: 2)

This is a deep realisation that once made permits us, in our search to eliminate terrorism, to move beyond the response of war, beyond the political imperative, toward understanding and dialogue and ethical care for all human beings.

The End

²²⁰ See Chapter Six, “Islamic Civilisation at the Forefront”