

## Reflections on Reconciliation

**The following exercises were used to stimulate discussion at the Consultation.**

This is what my experience has been . . . . . Here are insights I can contribute from my experiences to helping people understand how we can or should approach situations where reconciliation is required . . . . .

What is happening in reconciliation efforts or experiences that you are involved in when you feel most engaged? Who initiated the encounter and why? How were the “power” dynamics addressed?

What is happening in reconciliation efforts or experiences when you feel most distanced or isolated or uncomfortable? Is common ground possible?

One or two people in your group tell, briefly, a story from their experience with reconciliation efforts. Respondents listen carefully for helpful insights, assumptions or presumptions that may be problematic, or make note of questions they wish to ask the storyteller(s). What principles were you able to derive as a group from the stories?

Memorable statements: “The risk of being a peacemaker is that some will get it and some may kill you.” “The peacemaker gives dignity to the parties involved.” “Ultimately, communities are energized as God works through peacemakers.”

Some activities of a peacemaker were described as asking questions rather than making statements, giving advice, or accusing; and maintaining principle and focus but rejecting self interest. Some threats to peacemaking were described as looking for the one right formula or answer, the need for power, rushing to judgment and presumption, holding on to the need to be Right. We have no choice. As Christians we are called to peacemaking, a life of reconciliation. In this life, we will inevitably deal with feelings of powerlessness, frustration, and personal resistance (“I don’t want to be a peacemaker!”)

Jesus seemed to know the issues to speak to or against; to act on or against. Jesus seemed to read every group and individual he encountered. What models, principles, or approaches can we learn from Christ’s life as portrayed in the gospels? What exemplars from the life of Jesus do we have that offer insights for a life of reconciliation?