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Developing Transpersonal Resiliency: An Approach to Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe

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Zimbabwe has been experiencing one of the worst economic and humanitarian crises in modern times, after its people have suffered from horrific episodes of political violence. An approach to healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe aimed at developing transpersonal resiliency, called *Lament, Welcome, and Celebration* (LAWECE), was designed to be culturally appropriate through involving two distinct versions of psychological and spiritual intervention, one appropriate for traditional Shona values and one for Christian values. LAWECE involves a sequence of activities focused on both individual and community healing, starting with a lamentation process acknowledging the atrocities, followed by a welcoming process that invites all to participate (including perpetrators of the violence), and culminates with a celebratory process to consolidate the healing. Throughout there is a respect for diversity of religious and secular perspectives, congruent with its transpersonal perspective.

Keywords: *transpersonal resilience, healing and reconciliation, non-violence, political violence*

Resiliency refers to the ability to survive or even thrive in the face of adversity and is a construct imbued with transpersonal implications, as it requires being understood within the largest possible holistic perspective to be properly appreciated (e.g., as a moral virtue; Robbins & Friedman, 2011). Zimbabweans experienced one of the worst episodes of political violence in the late twentieth century. For a dramatic account of these events, see Godwin (2011), which we summarize. Zimbabwe received its independence from colonial ruling in 1980. In 2000, Zimbabwe conducted a referendum to reconsider the national constitution. Since this referendum and a controversial land acquisition policy in 2000, Zimbabweans have been subjected to wave after wave of political violence, which has crippled the nation's economic and human development. Victims of violence were silenced, while perpetrators of violence were free without prosecution, and millions of Zimbabweans suffered the consequences of one of the most horrific episodes of violence in the twenty-first century. Zimbabweans also experienced years of political impasse, and in the wake of violent 2000, 2005, and 2008 national elections, millions of Zimbabweans also endured extremely difficult economic instability, as the

country went through one of the highest hyperinflation situations ever in the world with inflation over a million percent. The hyperinflation reduced the country's official currency to a popular souvenir novelty sold to foreigners on the streets. During this period of political instability, the unemployment rate rose to 85%. What was formerly one of the most prosperous African nations, and until 2000 labeled widely as the Breadbasket of Africa, became a place where the majority of people were going constantly hungry and thousands were struggling for survival.

As a result of this, Zimbabwe can be seen as a traumatized nation. Thousands of Zimbabweans were brutalized, raped, tortured, and killed, while many more lost their homes and property. Even more suffered secondary trauma from witnessing or otherwise being impacted by the widespread atrocities. Large numbers of people were displaced by this violence (e.g., an estimated two million Zimbabweans left their country in search of better lives, creating one of the world's largest diasporas in Africa (Files, 2008). The average life expectancy plummeted from over 60 years two decades ago to now just more than 40 years, and the country has been ranked last on the globe for quality of life over the past five years (Voice of America, 2010). The combination

of harsh economic hardship, grave social injustices, crumbling of basic social services, and deep poverty has been destabilizing for Zimbabweans, in addition to dealing with the sequelae of the rampant political violence. Consequently almost no Zimbabwean has been unscathed, which raises concern for the resiliency of the Zimbabwean people. This led to recognition of the need for recovery through healing and reconciliation. In 2009, after years of suffering, a transitional government of national unity was established as a way to stop political instability and to bring Zimbabwe back to its feet. During the transition period, the Zimbabwean government formally called for national healing and reconciliation.

Many scholars (e.g., Herman, 1997; Smyth, 2002) have tried to understand and make suggestions for helping after this type of horror, while many psychologists have theorized about how to promote healing and reconciliation using general psychological principles (e.g., Kalayjian & Paloutzian, 2009; Staub, 2006), including some who have offered explicitly transpersonal psychological approaches (e.g., Cortright, 1997; Friedman, 2004). Our paper briefly documents one transpersonal approach to healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe, namely *Lament, Welcome, and Celebration* (LAWECE), which attempts to facilitate resiliency after this national economic and humanitarian tragedy. This is an intervention model that operates primarily through three techniques derived from the name of the model. Although LAWECE was designed for Zimbabweans based on that culture's unique spiritual and healing traditions (see Machinga, 2009), it has potentially wider applicability to other African societies and perhaps beyond Africa, as the bounds of such suffering are not limited to any one space or time but seem to be a continuing part of the human condition.

The Origins of LAWECE

LAWECE is a model that promotes reconciliation at individual and community levels, allowing people to live side by side by fostering community development and promoting human wellbeing. The purpose of the LAWECE model is personal healing, interpersonal relationship recovery, community rebuilding, and capacity building. Personal healing is achieved as communities join together in lamenting their experiences, while interpersonal relationship recovery is characterized by the welcoming and bringing back the human worth that has been robbed by violence.

Through the welcoming process, there is restoration of relationships, breaking the cycle of violations. Those who willingly come forward to seek reconciliation are welcomed.

The first author's interest in healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe began after hearing a call made by the country's president, Robert Mugabe, in April 2009 for such a process (Machinga, 2009). This call resonated with others' calls for a response to the tragedy in Zimbabwe, such as Gunton's (2003) call for spiritual healing and reconciliation through the churches, not just through the political realm. Various questions came into the first author's mind as she contemplated these calls: How can a healing and reconciliation process occur within such a politically polarized and unstable environment? Who could help facilitate the process? Are communities, including churches and other religious institutions, prepared to help people engage in the spiritual aspects of healing and reconciliation? What is the spiritual message related to this call? Because there are no easy answers to these questions, she created the LAWECE model in an attempt to equip Zimbabweans with culturally appropriate skills to facilitate healing and reconciliation through what she has come to see as a transpersonal process.

LAWECE stemmed from an initial planning workshop that the first author facilitated in Mutare, Zimbabwe on November 2009 with 85 participants (16 Females, 69 males). During this 4-day planning workshop, the first author recognized that healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe requires a transpersonal process that would cover archetypal and symbolic meanings germane to the Zimbabwean culture, including various collectivistic contents that are seen as intrinsic parts of the universal whole recognized within that cultural context. She also realized that the process would need to emphasize the role of alternate (i.e., including so-called higher) states of consciousness, such as transcendental experiences, as well as emphasize collectivistic issues congruent with Zimbabwean culture. LAWECE emerged from the participants' dialogues on Zimbabwean perspectives about the shared experiences of the political violence, especially as understood by both the traditional and Western-oriented religious leaders who gathered at this initial healing and reconciliation workshop, as well as from the input of attending secular experts within the healing and reconciliation field. The workshop participants came from six out of the seven

districts of the Manicaland province of Zimbabwe and represented a sizeable spectrum of perspectives that were helpful in understanding the gravity of the situation, as well as potential avenues to promote healing and reconciliation. The workshop participants came from various sectors of the community, such as faith-based institutions and non-governmental organizations. Organizations recommended participants, many of whom were counselors and traditional leaders. A qualitative survey, which incorporated both individual interviews and focus groups, was conducted. In addition to the workshop deliberations, contributions to designing LAWECE came from the first author's decade-long personal experiences of serving as a counselor and caregiver for hurting and marginalized populations in Zimbabwe.

The purpose of this planning workshop was to identify and increase awareness of the various ways in which religious and secular efforts might be able to assist grassroots people towards healing and reconciliation at local levels. In addition, there was also considerable discussion of various conditions and mechanisms that could enhance the healing and reconciliation of grassroots communities in Zimbabwe, benchmarked with good practices from three grass-root communities in the Manicaland province that had some success in this, as well as taking from other African countries' experiences with similar turmoil. An analysis of the shared success stories from the three villages showed that thriving interventions had to be both collectivistic and transpersonal in nature to work in the Zimbabwean culture. It was also consensual that spiritual beliefs provide an important resource for healing and reconciliation in this cultural context, and that these must be included in any successful intervention within Zimbabwe. The three benchmarked villages all reported to have witnessed a reduction in violence and an increase of harmony when those villages increased community efforts to stamp out violence publicly. But one unfortunate thing reported in these villages was the absence of a formalized lamentation process effective at the individual level.

At the planning workshop, it was also clear that many people were still wounded, some even broken and, above all, desperate for help. For the victims and the community leaders who gathered, restoring peace and sanity seemed to be a dream that would never come true. The survey taken at the workshop resulted in 87% of the participants indicating that people in their communities

were still suffering the adverse effects of violence, while the participants unanimously agreed that there was need for healing and reconciliation interventions. However, 60% of the participants stated that their communities did not have any intervention programs in place to help people toward healing and reconciliation, while all of the victims who gathered at the Mutare workshop reported that they were disappointed and pained about the lack of programs attending to people's experiences of suffering. Overall, the participants expressed strong wishes for opportunities to be created allowing victims to share their experiences.

The participants' consensus, in line with Hamper's (2001) analyses of psychological healing in similar circumstances, was that communities as a whole needed to first openly acknowledge the crisis in their midst before they could engage in any individual healing. This perceived need for communal grieving was seen as crucial for allowing individual victims to recognize that the community as a whole sees the crisis as shared, which fosters hope, including the beginning of restoration of self-confidence and trust within individuals. This in turn may help individual victims have the courage to address their individual despair, insecurity, and suspicion. Grieving as a community is also important for the affected individual members to feel reconnected to the collective society, thus shattering feelings of isolation and resultant helplessness.

The Three Phases of LAWECE

The LAWECE approach begins with a three to four hour community sensitization gathering. As explained in the previous section, community awareness and involvement is very important for the success of the process. The gathering is the time for the community to dialogue and discuss the significance of the healing and reconciliation. This is the beginning of rebuilding community relationships and a time for communities to identify local needs. Appropriate procedures have to be taken first to inform local authorities and local leaders of the orientation meeting and its purpose.

The basic frameworks involves several phases meant to free both victims and perpetrators from the consequences of their painful experiences through enhancing a sense of security for letting go of the past. These also enable people to "overcome crippling or destructive emotions and behaviors and thereby lead fuller, more satisfying and socially constructive lives" (Frank & Frank, 1991, p. 43). For Evangelical

Christians, as one example, the use of Biblical material to combat anxiety and arouse hope may have therapeutic effects, while forgiveness, letting go, forbearing, remorse, apology, justice, and acceptance are important and central principles that promote the healing and the reconciliation from that perspective. For those with more traditional Shona (the majority tribal tradition) backgrounds, as a second example, the release of suffering may be better experienced through use of culturally congruent rituals and rites. LAWECE can be seen as transpersonal in helping “people beyond psychological wounding and the defenses against the wounding” (Cortright, 1997, p. 69) through awakening in people a restoration of trust and enabling positive transformation, renewing wholeness and vitality. Furthermore, LAWECE is transpersonal as it “integrates insights from religious traditions with psychological understanding of the human condition” (Caplan, Hartelius, & Rardin, 2003, p. 149), while it also accommodates the integration of insights from the Zimbabwean cultural traditions for facilitating healing and reconciliation in the aftermath of political violence. Cortright (1997) pointed out: “Our being is both psychological and spiritual in nature. Both spiritual and psychological traditions speak to what we are, to what is wrong with the human condition, and to the transformative possibilities open to us” (p. 25), which the three phases of the LAWECE model explicitly address. Through the lament phase, the emotional pain and suffering of victims and communities are acknowledged, and feelings are validated both spiritually and psychologically. The welcoming phase explores what went wrong with the human condition and especially leads perpetrators to make efforts to integrate emotionally and spiritually those aspects of their identities that led them to commit violence. This is a phase that helps perpetrators to accept responsibility for their actions and make decisions to live differently. The celebration phase involves participants and communities in embracing the transformative possibilities open to them, thereby breaking ground for new ways of relating to each other and reconstructing their communities for the better. These phases are described in more detail in the following discussion. In addition, there is a facilitator guide previously mentioned, as well as participant manuals, which provide a more comprehensive explanation of the whole model.

The Lament Phase

The lament phase of the model uses a form of uncovering technique. Through this process, there is a focus on noticing whatever arises in one’s consciousness,

encouraging the ability to be with one’s inner feelings, images, sensations, and felt senses. Without this phase, these may be suppressed or repressed but, through this healing, they can be revealed. Lamentation provides the time to be with the lived experiences of victims or perpetrators to try to uncover their actual experiences, even if near unthinkable in terms of the depth and breadth of atrocities. The participants have to be present for each other during the lament phase. This is not something new to traditional Zimbabwean culture, as community leaders and members have always been present together whenever individuals faced catastrophes (e.g., the chief’s quarters or *palaver* has always been a place of sharing and presence to each other as a community in this way). Similarly, from the Christian perspective, one of the roles of the pastor is being the good shepherd who attends to the needs of the sheep. Through the lament process, attention is given to both the spiritual and the psychological experiences of victims as actually lived. Cortright (1997) discussed Gestalt awareness from a transpersonal perspective: “Health comes from experiencing Being directly, when a person stops covering it up. What prevents this is living in fantasy (our wounds and defenses), thus, Gestalt encourages engaging the wounds and defenses directly, to become fully one’s experience” (p. 105). This is similar to what happens when victims and perpetrators go through the lament phase in LAWECE. If the healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe is to be effective, there is need to intentionally allow people to lament in a loving, empathetic, and non-judgmental environment.

Using the palaver gatherings, survivors are guided to lament (Dobbs-Allsopp, 2002). They are guided to verbalize their pain and experiences. Dobbs-Allsopp affirmed lamentation as a significant process in human life when he stated, “When grief is named, grief itself becomes owned, valorized and thus consolable and healable” (p. 37). In fact, from a Shona cultural perspective, a denial of lamentation is a denial of a significant Zimbabwean tradition. This is because, in the Shona traditional culture, the lamentation genre has always been part of living. Shona people lament when faced with crisis, which is strongly embedded in the culture of the Shona people. When crisis happens, the Shona people do what is called “*ungudza*” in the vernacular Shona language, meaning lamenting. Lamenting is done either as individual families or as larger communities. In the face of crisis, there are individual and communal

rituals for mourning, groaning, and consulting the elders and the spiritual world (the ancestral spirits and God).

The Welcome Phase

A fundamental assumption of LAWECE is that no human being is beyond redemption. Right relationship with self and the other is made possible through divine grace or similar traditional concepts, and not solely from human effort. Anyone willing to be delivered from destructive activities should be supported and given the opportunity to transform, no matter how heinous they might have been. Even though this may be difficult, it is important to note that, for authentic healing and reconciliation to occur, perpetrators must also be positively engaged. Although in Zimbabwe, evidence of human rights violations have been mostly ignored by officials, thereby exempting perpetrators from legal accountability, it is important to note that in one way or another the perpetrators have been victims too. As such, they also need to be redeemed, liberated, and welcomed back into the community, even though most of the perpetrators in Zimbabwe have been allowed to believe that they can continue without any reprimands. Space is provided to those perpetrators who feel remorseful and have the desire to reconcile and act differently. The welcoming phase is an attempt to break the cycle of violations by welcoming all those who come forward to seek reconciliation and hoping that no more deliberate hurting of others will occur. Even the most vicious perpetrator shares in humanity and deserves both forgiveness and human acceptance. It is in the willingness to embrace the pain of betraying and being betrayed that our hearts begin to let go of the desire for revenge. As Daly and Sarkin (2007) stated, “It is important to tell the community how one feels about his or her betrayal at their hands and give the community the chance to hear and agree for its failure to protect or condone any violence” (p. 58). Thus, the door is open for the perpetrators to come and share their stories too and become part of the solution. This is the stage that allows an individual to come back into the community or family, to fully re-humanize and to heal spiritually. In some symbolic way, the individual leaves behind the offenses and crimes committed or endured in the past. Perpetrators acknowledge wrongdoing, make restitution, and are instructed to change their behavior. This is done at family, village, and/or clan levels. Depending on spiritual guidance, some survivors use traditional or other faith-based ceremonies to ask for forgiveness.

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Welcoming phase ritual is all about reintegrating into community. According to Herman (1997), recovery is marked by the extent to which one reconnects with his or her social milieu.

The Celebration Phase

This is where the reconnection takes place in LAWECE. This is time to celebrate or commemorate transformation. Reconciliation makes both the victim and the oppressor new creations, as “reconciliation brings people to new places where they have not been before” (Schreiter, 1992, p. 60). This journey to reconciliation takes participants to moments of new awareness, where suffering is acknowledged and there is the willingness to let go and deliberately decide to act differently. Through this phase, the goodness in all people, including the perpetrators, is honored and celebrated. Smyth (2002) stated, “The experience of healing is to know that we have been made whole, even though we still are wounded people” (p. 329). When reconciliation is celebrated, it involves accepting responsibility for transformation and asking for transpersonal guidance enabling forgiveness of one another. From the Zimbabwean tradition, embracing of the pain in some public way can bring healing. The community plans a special day and time where the people celebrate healing. This is important because, as stated by Herman (1997), survivors must “not be defined by the perpetrator” (p. 190). This is a celebration of the release of the perpetrator by the survivor, which also releases the survivor—a tremendous accomplishment that is worth celebrating. Local leaders, politicians, and other stakeholders are invited to witness such newness.

Transpersonal Features of LAWECE

For the LAWECE model to fit into Zimbabwean traditional culture, it had to first be based on the recognition that this is a collectivistic culture in which people are generally not seen as isolated individuals, as in most Western cultures. Instead, people are seen as profoundly interdependent, which is already transpersonal in the sense that the people are seen as going beyond (or *trans*) a sense of isolation endemic to the modern West. In addition, spirituality plays an important role throughout the culture, leading the first author to recognize that any successful approach to healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe had to take spirituality into account, but not a parochial spirituality vested in only one of the many competing religious traditions. For example, Zimbabweans are broadly divided between those who retain Shona spiritual beliefs and those

who embrace Western Christian religions. As such, LAWECE was designed to use two distinct approaches, one for each group—so as not to exclude anyone from the process of healing and reconciliation. Each version of the LAWECE model draws its power from its association with certain beliefs, be it traditional or Western religious (i.e., including various types of Christianity, such as liberal, conservative, Catholic, Evangelical, etc.). At the planning workshop, all participants belonged to either of these two broad categories. From this workshop emerged LAWECE as a uniquely Zimbabwean perspective for effective healing and reconciliation, which begins with shared experiences of pain by the communities as a whole. This focus of LAWECE also takes into account the various psychological orientations held by different stakeholders, especially affected victims and perpetrators who differ considerably in the types of consequences from the tragedies, as well as across other diverse divides among affected Zimbabweans. LAWECE was designed to offer flexible opportunities to heal and reconcile by blending various spiritual frameworks across the many multicultural divides within the nation or, in other words, it was designed in an ecumenical way congruent with being a transpersonal intervention.

One of the aspects of LAWECE that in particular makes it transpersonal is that it uses a polyphasic perspective (Lumpkin, 2001), explicitly recognizing multiple states of consciousness as valid and even necessary. Most Western cultures are primarily monophasic, deriving their individualistic worldviews almost exclusively from a single state of consciousness, namely what is usually designated as waking consciousness. However, Zimbabweans, like many in traditional collectivistic cultures, honor multiple states of consciousness. Consequently, LAWECE employs various alternate (i.e., different from ordinary waking) states, cultivated through culturally congruent rituals and contemplative practices. LAWECE operates from the assumption that, apart from the rational or ordinary conscious state of being, there are also transpersonal aspects of what can be called the unconscious or even the superconscious that may be significant for a successful healing and reconciliation process after such events as dire as what transpired in Zimbabwe. Again, due to the religious divide in Zimbabwean culture, two versions of LAWECE are used, a Western Christian religious and a traditional Shona version, which differ in language and practice. But there are core ingredients of the healing and

reconciliation process that are shared by both versions, and there is a facilitator's guide to integrate these efforts. Transpersonal insights have also been explicitly applied to LAWECE in order to address the most crucial and meaningful dimensions of human experience, especially "the human capacity to heal and reconcile, after atrocities, [which] transcends individualistic limitations" (Friedman, 2004, p. 121).

Although LAWECE is primarily designed for a collectivistic culture, paying attention to individuals is also important. A broad cross-section of the population in Zimbabwe was exposed to violence, but individual responses and psychological reactions were markedly different. Thus, it is important to acknowledge individuals' unique experiences of pain, along with the need for collective healing and reconciliation. The participants at the planning workshop agreed that both collective and individual lamentation processes had to be the first part of any intervention process, if people were to heal and reconcile. Consequently, LAWECE encompasses both individual and community lamentation through a reiterative process that is culturally sensitive to various expressions of spirituality, incorporating transpersonal fundamentals, such as rituals encouraging transcendent states of consciousness—and these are conducted in ways that are applicable to both traditional Shona and Western Christian religious perspectives, as well as applicable within secular settings through using a transpersonal approach that can bridge parochial divides (i.e., one of the meanings of the prefix *trans* is to bridge across). In specific, LAWECE is transpersonal in that its approach towards healing and reconciliation provides a neutral way that is not embedded within any singular religious, spiritual, or even secular tradition, but rather one acceptable to diverse views in a holistic way. This resonates with how LAWECE incorporates the person as a whole (i.e., body, emotions, mind, and spirit) within the context of community by recognizing the unique cultural setting. It is designed to help people feel and function better, both as individuals and as communities. Through use of transpersonal approaches, LAWECE addresses the farther reaches of human nature, not just the mundane, and is oriented towards higher growth and the actualization of transpersonal potentials. This is culturally congruent with the Zimbabwean Christian tradition, as well as its rich Shona tradition (Machinga, 2009), where it is important to rise above the self and identify with the larger values and goals

of society, which ultimately produces considerate and selfless human beings who treat others with dignity. LAWECE also explicitly incorporates a number of general psychological principles for healing, such as Frank and Frank's (1991) four-factor model of healing, namely (1) using an emotionally-charged confiding relationship, (2) within a healing setting, (3) employing a compatible framework, and (4) appropriate therapeutic ritual. The confiding relationship involves the facilitation of a helper, such as a pastor or traditional religious leader, within the support of a small group setting. LAWECE also cultivates a healing setting that allows victims and perpetrators to both tell their stories, one that is a safe and secure place where empathy and compassion are possible (e.g., for religious people, the healing conversations are often conducted in church premises or other sacred setting). The framework used is transpersonal, as it offers participants an opportunity to embrace the knowledge and insight that already reside within them and their communities in an open spiritual atmosphere devoid of judgment, even toward perpetrators of violence. Political violence victims experience horrific pain and suffering as a result of serious physical, psychological, and/or spiritual injuries, such as loss of mental health and physical wholeness (e.g., amputations), loss of homes and properties, and loss of loved ones, but the perpetrators also suffer various traumatizations as well. The suffering of both is often accompanied by shock, denial, isolation, guilt, and feelings of worthlessness, helplessness, and sadness. As a result, the aftermaths of violence threatens all individuals and society as a whole by robbing people of their sense of humanity. Because of the severe harm that political violence causes to communities and individuals, a transpersonal approach provides a solid basis for healing and reconciliation, as it "addresses the whole person, body, emotions, mind and spirit, in the context of community and culture" (Caplan, Hartelius, & Rardin, 2003, p. 167). Last, many rituals are employed to facilitate healing and reconciliation through LAWECE. LAWECE therefore stands as an effort to integrate the inner life of the mind and the spirit with the outer life of relationships and action in the world, which suits well the Zimbabwean culture. This model may also work well within any communal-oriented society that is going through a healing and reconciliation process, as the model reflects the "indivisibility of individuals and community by defining individual healing from a community heals perspective" (Daly & Sarkin, 2007, p. 69).

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From the workshop participants in Mutare, it was clear that healing and reconciliation happens within the larger context of communal, cultural, and religious-spiritual unfolding. So, working with individuals alone, while disregarding the elements of spirituality (understood both from Christian and Shona perspectives), is something that will not yield positive outcomes. As Schreiter (1998) asserted: "Reconciliation is more a spirituality than a strategy. Reconciliation raises profound issues and questions" (p. vi). In the Zimbabwean Shona tradition, God is seen not only as a vast impersonal consciousness, but is viewed as a Divine presence in control of human fate and the answer to human issues. Therefore, developing an inner, personal relationship with this Divine presence helps victims to overcome the effects of the violence and traumatic experiences. Apart from the psychological factors that may help people heal, issues of spirituality have a significant bearing on the success of a healing and reconciliation process among the Zimbabwean population. As Cortright (1997) stated:

An inward focus on prayer, call, surrender, aspiration, faith, opening to the Divine...are the godward movements that bring the seeker into deeper connection with the inner soul... Connection to the Divine and to one's soul, [is] experienced variously as a descent, deepening, opening, or ascent into love, consciousness, ... power, purity, peace, and joy. ... Any or all of these soul qualities may manifest. The infusion of these qualities into oneself has a transforming effect on one's outer, surface being, an effect which has cognitive, emotional, and physical results, often characterized by a reorientation toward life and toward the Divine. (p. 135)

The Christian religious version of the model is designed to help connect the person to self, the other, and the Divine by allowing space to open up for such transformative experiences. In Zimbabwe, religious institutions have an important role in enabling such connections to happen during the healing and reconciliation process. The Christian religious version of the model serves to remind of the importance of spirituality toward the reconstruction of communities in Zimbabwe after political violence. Likewise, the traditional Shona religious version of the model calls upon the whole community to bear responsibility and to turn around its way of life. Healing and reconciliation

process calls communities to assemble and respond as a single body to the existing challenge. Thoughts and feelings from the Mutare workshop portrayed that any healing and reconciliation intervention ought to be directed by the communal and cultural identity of the community. Interventions cannot be applied outside cultural and normative moral understandings of the community. Helmick and Peterson (2002) stated, "Healing and reconciliation of torn relationships can only be fully understood in the context of community process" (p. 206). Within the Zimbabwean context, resiliency is unlikely to happen without some form of community support and involvement as, while healing should be sought at the individual level, it is also dependent upon the social context.

In Zimbabwe, however, it is not uncommon to find that traditional mechanisms that enhance social and emotional resiliency have been destroyed by the violence. Nevertheless, it is important, where the traditional mechanisms are still functional, that facilitators take people through the healing and reconciliation using these traditional mechanisms. Local support should also be used, especially in a context where these may still exist and that they value human dignity. Where local support mechanisms are no longer available, developing new models could be an option, instead of denying people services and support needed for their healing and reconciliation journeys. While silence and suppression of feelings have been the norm for many victims and affected communities in Zimbabwe, this denial may, in fact, be counterproductive for the future generations of Zimbabweans. Trained community leaders and other organizations may help reach out to such people using LAWECE's principles. Helmick and Peterson (2002) stated, "There is need for commitment to be alongside people in their healing journey and not lead or push people" (p. 197). The role of traditional community leaders and civil society in working with people to heal needs to be encouraged so that communities can translate and apply LAWECE as they find applicable. Culturally, when atrocities happen in communities, truth, acknowledgement, and justice have always been important aspects needed when bringing people together. These cannot be separated from the healing and reconciliation process, illustrating why LAWECE covers both the Christian religious and the traditional Shona version of the healing and reconciliation process. LAWECE now continues to be used in Zimbabwe, within

grassroots communities, as one method to help restore resiliency to a people and a nation devastated by violence, yet struggling to find healing and reconciliation.

Conclusion

The most significant benefit of the LAWECE approach is its ability to avail safe space for deep personal inner work within the context of community healing. During this process, participants listen and learn together. They gain positive skills to co-exist with people who have caused wrong or hurt without overlooking their crimes. Through LAWECE, relationships are changed from those that hamper peaceful living to relationships that promote healing, reconciliation, and peace. LAWECE provides opportunities to employ nonviolent solutions to conflicts. Those who participate in LAWECE develop skills for managing their pain and also to find ways to stop the cycle of violence within communities.

We have discussed LAWECE as an approach to facilitate healing and reconciliation at the grassroots level in the aftermath of political violence, a process to enhance resiliency. It is clear that healing and reconciliation are greatly needed still in Zimbabwe, especially after a decade of polarized politics and political violence. We have shown how LAWECE, as a transpersonal approach to healing and reconciliation, is suited for collectivistic cultures and is applicable not only within Zimbabwe but perhaps also within other collectivistic societies that have suffered similar trauma and need a way to enhance resiliency of individuals and communities. This approach may be adopted for implementation in African countries that have suffered from the effects of political violence. The coming together of people in communities has been presented as an important piece of the healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe, as has the importance of an ecumenical approach that is transpersonal, not adhering to any one religious or spiritual view. Spirituality, psychology, and culture must be integrated in order to achieve positive transformation, wholeness, and vitality. LAWECE provides a model of one way that a transpersonal approach can foster such integration, as "there is no single healing and reconciliation process, but what is called for is a blend of transforming activities at community level, while attending to individuals' and community needs" (Hamber, 2001). Lastly, we believe that by including the essential three themes of transpersonal psychology identified by Hartelius, Caplan, and Rardin (2007),

namely going beyond the ego, using integrative/holistic methods, and cultivating human transformation, LAWECE emerges as a distinctly transpersonal approach applicable to religious, both traditional and Christian, as well as non-religious individuals and communities in Zimbabwe and other collectivistic societies.

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