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12. Hearing from the Players

Introduction

Of the many people who have participated in our seminars, several have kindly agreed to share their experiences and ideas. These are presented below in the interest of extending the interpersonal dialogue. They have each been asked to take us into their worlds, to let us know how crowd dynamics touch them personally. There has been no attempt made to try to harmonize what they say with the overall perspective presented in this book. Indeed, the overall message of the collaborative approach is that we must speak candidly and listen with an open spirit. Structures need to be put in place whereby stakeholders in demonstrating crowd dynamics encounter one another in dialogue. Until that happens, written accounts like those presented below provide a glimpse into how crowds are experienced ‘on different sides of the fence.’

The context is 2002, closely following the seminars and events described above. They come before the historical and social scientific research and subsequent reflections that generated a distinct Mutual Respect Paradigm developed in Part One. As such, they provide historical indicators of why such a paradigm is needed; they supply hints of what might be entailed and what pitfalls to avoid. The different voices from the perspective of very diverse stakeholders also highlight how the same phenomenon—a protesting crowd being confronted by police—is understood in such different ways. Some allude to the Québec City Summit of the Americas, the descriptions and reactions are important for historical context. They provide a benchmark, if you like, by which to measure what happens in the future.

Julia Fleming speaks about her fear during the demonstrations in Quebec City, her experiences with the Crowd Seminar at Saint Paul and her hope for the future of the dialogue. Carl Stieren comes from a lifetime of demonstrations and puts current demonstrations in Ottawa and his participation in the seminar in the context of history and his overall crowd experience.

Gary Nelson is a veteran police officer. He also has extensive experience with conflict resolution and alternative dispute resolution. He speaks personally about his policing career and reflects on the impact of recent crowds on his life.

Leonard Stern not only tells us about the media's roles but also provides food for thought and possibly a warning about the potential for bureaucratization and choreographed pseudo-events—both of which detract from effective protest.

Peter Coffin was an Anglican Bishop with experience working for social justice in places like the Philippines where he witnessed crowds in a context very different from Canada. His conclusion highlights the importance of meeting for dialogue.

Raymond Laprée was a professor in the *Animation Sociale* program at Saint Paul University. He stresses the importance of theoretical understandings to move us ahead in our construction of social concepts and relations.

Their contributions are largely unedited and come from their hearts. What they write is their personal perspectives and must not be construed to represent 'teachings' or, even, common learnings coming out of the seminars. The seminars themselves seek to reveal individual and personal experiences behind the positions commonly taken by different communities who have a stake in this issue. From these personal experiences the participants themselves work creatively together to develop possibilities for a better future. These essays are representative of just some of these communities and some of the communities within communities.

Healing Dialogue to Rebuild Active Democracy

by Julia Fleming

In 2001 I had the opportunity to be a voice during the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City. I was an individual and also part of a credible organization that collaborated in developing a week-long conference (during the week prior to the FTAA meetings) that brought together individuals, politicians, specialists as well as many diverse non-governmental organizations, faith groups and labour representatives from all across Canada and around the world. Our common ground was our great concerns with the fundamental motivation of international trade agreements. The deals and decisions that lead to top down profits to further corporate agendas by the development of disturbing policies that threaten the health, environmental sustainability, local economies, democracy and basic community and human rights such as clean water.

I could not believe how much preparation took place in the full spectrum of society to have the FTAA meeting occur. Millions of dollars were poured into the creation of the most extensive security plan Canada had ever initiated within its own borders. The sheer volume of equipment mobilized from both inside and outside of Canada seemed like the preparations for a war. The older section of Quebec City was closed off. The summit was designed to have ministers from all across North and South America except Cuba to come together and discuss a variety of issues concerning the FTAA agreement. Yet, this operation also inspired more than 60,000 people from Canada and across the world to gather and communicate their opposition to the oppressive international trade agreement policies.

I was able to see the security operation in full force during the summit, yet the police presence in Quebec City had started months earlier. Through the media, articles exposed one of the police tactics building Quebec City's second fortress wall, this time to 'protect' the government from its own public. This divisive wall inevitably stirred a reaction in the public, leaving many feeling marginalized, created a climate of distrust and no room for opposing opinions or democratic discussion. I felt this tactic contributed to the development of a conflict far before the actual event. This fence controversy inspired thousands of people to mobilize and gather to be a physical reminder to the politicians that they were not acting with our approval or in the best interest of Canadians and global citizens.

This summit was a life changing experience. Personally this was the closest I have ever been and want to be to a war situation. I felt the choice of security tactics played a large role in escalating violence and fear on all sides, with little attempt to use non-violent de-escalation techniques. Thousands of chemical tear gas canisters, along with water cannons, pepper spray, rubber bullets, attack dogs, unconstitutional searches and excessive abuse were all tactics that were used and I feel promoted conflict. For a week I was on the streets and in public initiated conferences. I witnessed tens of thousands of peaceful protesters and only a few hundred individuals with more of an aggressive style of dissent, for example throwing the tear gas canisters back at the police lines and dismantling the fence. Yet of course, these actions dominated the media more than the messages of the 60,000 other people lining the streets kilometers thick. Also the police somehow felt these aggressive few, warranted the use of thousands of tear gas canisters (8000 was a figure I remember hearing at the seminar), which choked the entire city. I personally experienced the scare of an unmarked police car nearly running me over, stopping and then a male officer patted me down with no reason he felt necessary to communicate to me. At this point I was just walking with a girlfriend down the street quite far away from the center of the protest. Throughout the course of the few days I saw all the forceful tactics I mentioned above at use and still can remember the sensation of burning eyes from the gas. I met people who shared their experience of having the citizens' independent media center smothered in tear gas to interfere with reporting. In another building, mainstream reporters were in a lock down with no external access for several hours. I saw seniors being evacuated from senior homes, overcome with the toxic gases. A weary volunteer medic shared her shocking experience of the citizen's medical center being overtaken by police at gunpoint. She recalls the heart pounding experience of having the clinic fill with tear gas, she scrambled to take whatever medical supplies she could get a hold of as she removed a patient out to the back ally. She was treating the patient for an emergency tracheotomy, as a result of a rubber bullet. A member of parliament was shot with a rubber bullet. In addition, support centers to provide food, shelter and medical support for the 60,000 new arrivals were shut down. These many examples of the misuse of power and police violence I will never forget. Is this the way a crowd is managed in a progressive democratic country? Is this the reaction from the government and security forces to opposing political views from voting

citizens demonstrating dissent? Is this the Canadian way? During this week I truly witnessed the ingredients of fear, anger and absolute lack of trust and accountability of behalf of my government and my 'public' police force. This was part of the motivation behind choosing to attend and speak about my experience at the seminar in May 2001 presented by St. Paul's University on Crowd Management and Conflict resolution.

Trust is the number one ingredient to effective dialogue. The unfortunate reality is there are millions of people around the world who have witnessed or been victims of police and military violence and political abuse. Unfortunately we cannot change history but we can learn and move forward to create effective change and dialogue which is critically needed. I feel that the largest challenge for this initiative is rebuilding the trust to effectively bring people to together and open up to a progressive and honest dialogue. Personally being an 'activist' or I prefer an average out-spoken Canadian citizen, I was very skeptical of the seminar, especially because it was so soon after my experience of Quebec City. The fact is I had very little trust. I would not give over my contact information; I was watching my back and what I said, as if it was going to be added to my local police file of photos and video of non-violent actions and trainings I have been involved with. The fact that some of the police officers greeted me by knowing my name and the colour of my clothing during the last Ottawa action did not comfort me.

Yet all said and done, I am very glad I attended the seminar. As I went through the days, personal barriers came down and I met real people behind the masks, people I never thought I would be sitting in the same room with. At the beginning I was a little defensive, then I became more of an active listener, continuing to speak my truth of my experience. The result, I felt a very positive exchange occurred and common ground and understanding was met on both sides of the 'fence.' I felt the possibilities and need in continuing the debates and dialogue. I feel the reason why it was so effective was because of the diverse cross section of society, which was the key. It is only effective by offering a neutral space (including funding) which includes not only security force and activists but also accountable politicians local and federal, human rights observers, corporations, medics, both provincial and community based volunteers, bystanders, members of labor and faith organizations and of course the media (both independent and main stream) who play a huge role in developing wide spread public perceptions. This debate of crowd management style and actions needs public exposure and

inclusion. With all this wealth of experiences and perspectives coming together, facilitated though focused dialogue, great results can manifest.

I feel this is a very good starting point in building effective political and public inter-relations, policing and activism that will strengthen democracy and accountability. The veils of mistrust can be slowly dissolved. We can choose to change the destructive patterns and move forward from old lessons.

I feel these seminars have the potential to offer an international template and are the foundation to further understanding of the complicated dynamics and rebuilding of trust between citizens, police, media and politicians, which inevitably will bring issues to the surface in a reflective process. I wish you all the best during this adventure, we really need to heal many wounds and this is a process we must engage in.

Bridging the Gap: Conversations among Demonstrators and Police on the Right to Dissent

by Carl Stieren

The invitation to a meeting at St. Paul University had two strange words in its title: ‘Crowd Management.’ Hearing those words, my mind flashed to the writings of Gustave Le Bon, that conservative 19th Century French political theorist who reckoned that crowds had a tendency to do evil things. The use of the word ‘crowd,’ as Le Bon did, winds up tarring democracy by the same brush as the worst crowds—using one term which could today lump together a racist lynch mob in the U.S. South with Gandhi’s Salt March to the Sea. Those two groups are far from the same type. And surely there is also a difference between the one million nonviolent peace demonstrators who gathered in New York City in 1982 to support the United Nations Second Special Session on Disarmament, and the French crowds who called for guillotining of opponents during the French Revolution.

I didn’t go to the first seminar of the series at St. Paul’s, but I did go to subsequent ones, starting in the summer of 2002. What was new was to meet police representatives who were not in uniform and were not on camera. Instead, they were in a place where they could tell us what they thought or perhaps even what they felt. By the time the later seminars got under way, the words in the title of the series had changed to ‘Collaborative Management of Crowd Dynamics’, something that was better, but really more like a compromise hammered out by Canadian diplomats—awkward and unpronounceable, but offending no one.

There are real differences, even in what words mean and when they are used, that separate police and demonstrators. In the worst case, we can wind up with differences such as the following:

Description by demonstrators	Description by police
demonstration	crowd, mob
holding the line	refusing to move
solidarity	conspiracy
expressing righteous indignation	having a riot

For me, the chance to build bridges and open channels of communication could not only help reduce violence but might even save lives in future crises. For, as my linguistics professor at the Illinois Institute of Technology used to say, there are three levels of communication: formal, informal, and scientific.

If communication is blocked or becomes impossible on any one level, it will move to another level. Thus, when parents in the United States from the 1930s to the 1950s were too embarrassed to talk about sex on a formal or informal level, they gave their children the Van de Velde marriage manual, a scientific explanation of the reproductive act, something that even a sexually explicit novel could have done better.

Communication may become blocked or even impossible on the formal level during a demonstration. When a policeman's 'Don't move any further!' doesn't get across and neither does the demonstrators' 'We are going to cross the line and thereby commit nonviolent civil disobedience,' communication has broken down. At that point, the old alternative used to be to move to scientific or legal level and read the Riot Act. Today, it's 'You've got 60 seconds to leave this area.' Following that, communication ceases, and force or violence may occur as police spray tear gas or beat protesters. Ironically, the arrest of a co-operative suspect can be almost nonviolent. Instead of such behaviour, there was escalation and provocation by the police during the November 17, 2001 G-20 demonstrations in Ottawa when police went into the crowds to apprehend specific individuals. During these attempted arrests, some of which were unsuccessful, at least one police dog got loose from its leash (accidentally, one police officer told us) and went after a suspect.

How can we bridge the gap between demonstrators and police, a gap that has become so confrontational since the World Trade Organization meetings in Seattle and the onset of globalization? Specifically, how can Canadian society in the post-September 11 era, with Bills C-35, C-36, and C-42 now on the books, allow for peaceful dissent during international conferences in Canada? If the police, the politicians, and the courts decide to interpret these bills as 'Internationally-Protected-Persons-Über-Alles,' there may be no hope for democracy.

Were there disappointments in the meetings? Of course. The failure of the police to live up to their agreement to keep their actions peaceful during the G-20 protests was the biggest one. Yes, the police blame the single

demonstrator breaking windows in a McDonald's Restaurant on Rideau for their donning their Darth Vader gear and releasing tear gas, and they blame the snake march of a small group of demonstrators. I somehow find that like saying that one man, Gavrilo Princip, caused World War I, or that his Black Hand group in Belgrade was the cause. There's a lot more to it than that, and the Austrian and German Empires—and the police in Ottawa on November 17, 2001—had/have a lot to answer for.

Were there positive outcomes from the contact group meetings? Absolutely. I can think only of one member of a police force who shall not be named speculating to me in the hallway, 'Carl, what if we had at Kananaskis what they have on July 1 on Parliament Hill? Two huge televisions screens, with a representative of the G-8 on one screen debating a member of the demonstrators on the other?' I could only say, 'If only!'

Should we encourage Vern Redekop and Shirley Paré to continue this experiment? Certainly. Should the governing board of this project be more representative of both demonstrators and ordinary members of civil society? I think that's essential to keep the process from either becoming or being seen as tilted toward the side of the police.

Collaborative Management of Crowd Dynamics

by Gary Nelson, Retired Police Officer

Reflections:

Having completed over thirty seven years of police work I felt that I had grown accustomed to conflict as normally every call the police respond to involves some form of conflict. Violence becomes part of every police officers day, but I had never given up hope that a difference could be made. In the aftermath of the conference in Quebec City in 2001, I nearly gave up hope. I never expected or dared to dream that such an event could occur in our peaceful/peacemaking country. Many people were injured, many people felt victorious, however, I suspect that many more were disappointed that this occurred in Canada. I know that I was not alone when I expressed my sorrow and disbelief in seeing a wall erected in such a beautiful city in Canada. Those that were bent on destruction and violence made their point. Many of them will be held accountable through the most democratic justice system in the World, but surely everyone that participated in this event was not bent on destruction and violence? I listened to stories of people who were demonstrating with their children and were afraid for themselves and their children. I also listened to stories of police officers who were afraid that they might not get home safely to their families. How is it those two groups were afraid of each other and forced to face one another in such a manner?

Policing Environment:

Generally speaking, conflict impinges on police work at every turn: between community members, between police and community, and within the Police Service. Most of the calls for police assistance in the community feature some form of conflict. Most crimes involve conflict. Often, police intervention generates a conflict between police and community. Some conflicts have a short duration and some are long and drawn-out. Some are intense, violent and visible, while others simmer beneath the surface.

The vast majority of Police Officers have become officers in order to help others and do, what the majority view as, what is right for society. Considering this, they are otherwise normal community members who have their share of hopes, beliefs and dreams. Because of their constant exposure to conflict, police officers are generally able to deal with conflict,

albeit, there are instances when the standard reaction by police can be somewhat problematic. Conflicts can take the form of disputes over rights or events, underlying conflicts over interests and deep-rooted conflicts over identity. Whatever the form of conflict, it can create problems for the entire community and if not properly dealt with, this conflict can be costly in both time and money. Furthermore, some of the hidden costs to conflict come in the form of harmed relationships because of physical or emotional wounds. Larry Hill, Deputy Chief of the Ottawa Police Service, has shown leadership in his path to understand and allow community members to be heard. This has provided the opportunity for police to directly hear the concerns from community members and likewise communicate to community members the perspectives from police on community conflict. Does this not reflect favourably in our initiatives on establishing partnerships with the community in problem solving policing? One of the basic principles of communicating effectively is to listen to understand. To avoid community-based conflicts which may from time to time get out of hand, we must all listen to understand.

Since the mid 1980s, there has been tremendous growth in emphasis and understanding of both community-based policing and crime prevention. It has been recognized that long-term effectiveness is based on getting at the root causes of fundamental community problems.

If we are to rely on adjudication to determine that what we did was right, then we are utilizing the wrong end of the conflict resolving spectrum because the decision making body of adjudication does not allow for relationship building, it is merely a process for identifying who was right and who was wrong. A relationship building exercise would utilize the negotiation end of the conflict resolution spectrum in which the conflictant parties have more control over the process and the outcome. It is also less formal and is based on preserving relations. Where long term relations are seen as desirable, this end of the spectrum would appear to be the ideal context for resolving conflict. At the opposite end of the spectrum where the courts render decisions, the parties have no ownership in the outcome. This requires the outcome to be enforced by some other party and the conflict is not resolved. However, rights must be preserved and the adjudication end of the spectrum is necessary in relation to persevering rights.

In view of the recent and pending 'G' conferences, we must be mindful that conflict management is about continuous improvement, learning, growth

and also about having the courage to do what is right. Police officers often find themselves weighted down with the concerns of the quiet majority. It is my belief that we must show courage in order to build a strong link to the community in these hard and changing times. The main focus of crowd management training is developing an understanding that enables us to do something or decide things. Conflict resolution training involves the transfer of skills and knowledge in such a way that people accept and use those acquired skills. Crowd management offers a change in the way police go about their business. We all know that change is an ongoing process in everyone's life, that it is sometimes uncomfortable and it is a well-known fact that people tend to resist change. A less well-known fact is that people don't tend to resist change as much as they resist being changed.

Dr. Vern Redekop and Dr Cheryl Picard, both academics, have had a large influence on how I try to deal with conflict and lead my life. It is now my intention to pass these teaching on to others through various venues.

As a guiding light the question I continually ask myself is 'would I lead my life differently if I could'?

Covering Conflict: A Media Perspective

by Leonard Stern

The Ottawa Citizen

An important ethical principle in journalism is that reporters report the news rather than manufacture it. On occasion this code has been violated. Most famously, in the heyday of yellow journalism, William Randolph Hearst dispatched a staffer to Havana to cover the Spanish-American war. When the man noted that there was no war yet, Hearst replied, 'You supply the pictures and I'll supply the war.' A more recent case: A photographer for a Canadian newspaper was lurking outside the apartment building of a noted pedophile who had just been released from prison. Another tenant asked what was going on and the photographer told him. When the pedophile emerged, unaware he was being stalked, the tenant punched him in the head. A photograph of the vigilante assault appeared on next day's front page, along with a story to the effect that tenants were enraged a sex offender had moved in. The article neglected to mention that there would never have been any story had the photographer not revealed the pedophile's identity in the first place.

These exceptions aside, respectable media organizations try not to shape, distort, or otherwise interfere with the events they are supposed to cover. News gathering, once considered a trade, is now a profession. The day of the high school dropout who works his way up from copy boy to reporter is over. At large metropolitan daily newspapers, new recruits more often than not have graduate degrees. Along with higher salaries and increased social status is a growing sense of professional pride and responsibility.

Manufacturing or sensationalizing events is simply unacceptable.

The noisy, often violent street demonstrations that mark the anti-globalization movement—perhaps the most significant protest movement since the Vietnam War—pose a serious challenge for thinking journalists. Covering public demonstrations of any kind is a tricky business. The basic problem is this: Even the most upright journalist who would never spin the facts to make a better story cannot help but notice that his or her presence influences the way actors in a crowd behave. Anti-globalization protesters who a moment before were milling about looking bored will, upon the approach of a television camera, spring to life as though on cue, waving

signs and shouting 'No Justice, No Peace!' When the camera leaves it's as though a stage manager shouts 'cut!,' and the protesters return to whatever they were talking about before the interruption.

No doubt the police also perform for the media. When practicing crowd control, security services employ methods that vary in their degree of physical coercion. The presence of media probably makes police adopt softer methods than they otherwise might. The notorious image of an RCMP officer dousing university students with pepper spray at the 1996 APEC demonstrations in Vancouver served as a lesson in bad publicity. It is conspicuous, nowadays, that there are often no reporters around during moments when police brutality is alleged. At the November, 2001, G20 meeting of finance ministers in Ottawa, a number of anti-globalization activists claimed that, after being arrested, police roughed them up or engaged in gratuitous intimidation. True, the activists may well have invented some of these claims in an effort to demonize police as tools of state oppression. But it is also conceivable that these abuses occur beyond the range of television cameras precisely because police now understand what does and doesn't play well on the evening news. Evaluating the competing claims of protesters and police is difficult. In the end the media satisfy no one. Protesters see us as agents of the right wing corporate establishment while police see us as liberal, left wing muckrakers.

In truth, reporters in my experience are fairly adept at restraining personal, political biases. These are conscious biases, and as such are easy to set aside while on assignment. More problematic, at least in the context of street demonstrations, is the journalist's instinctive attraction to human conflict. The most compelling stories, as playwrights and novelists know, involve some form of conflict. Because physical violence is the most dramatic expression of conflict, these stories are the ones that make the front page. But does the predilection for conflict constitute a bias, one that could lead the media to behave irresponsibly? It would be instructive, I suspect, to analyze news coverage in the days leading up to a demonstration at a summit of the World Bank or International Monetary Fund. Do the media treat the upcoming protest as a legitimate political event or do they frame it as a violent spectacle performed by the protesters? The media's understandable preoccupation with conflict might create the impression that violent confrontation is inevitable. By draining protests of their political content, by seeing them only as theatre, the media could be unwittingly

acting like a casting director. The crowd, frustrated because its concerns are not taken seriously, accepts the role that has been assigned to it.

Through my participation in the Crowd Management initiative at Saint Paul University I have come to believe that crowd behaviour is very much influenced by legitimacy needs—and that crowds often resent the media for our power to confer or withhold legitimacy. With this in mind, when the G20 meeting came to Ottawa, I spent an entire day with various activist groups, interviewing members at length, in an effort to give them an honest hearing. It was disappointing. Although union leaders and other semi-official spokespeople talked a serious political agenda, raising issues of poverty, the environment and child labour, the majority of front line demonstrators—the ones who had been bused in from out of town—had either come for the party or to voice truly marginal ideas. Many in the crowd, for example, told me that the September 11 terrorist attacks had been orchestrated by the CIA (to provoke a ‘racist’ crusade against Muslims) or by the American ‘military-industrial complex’ (which would supposedly profit from a convenient war in Afghanistan). The crowd was seeking legitimacy, but I was unable to provide it.

Those who theorize about crowd dynamics and who practice crowd management do not generally concern themselves with whether a given crowd is protesting a real or perceived injustice. The fact that it is real to the crowd is sufficient. If demonstrators converged to riot against a Beatles reunion, it would matter little to police as they tried to keep the peace whether the Beatles were really getting back together. But to members of the wider community, who are alarmed and inconvenienced by street closures and security fences, these are not irrelevant questions. The media has a public obligation to investigate and analyze the motivations of the crowd.

In some instances, unfortunately, this may hinder efforts to manage crowds peacefully. If the crowd is judged to be without legitimate grievance—to be a nuisance—the community’s patience will wear thin and the security apparatus will be pressured to exert a heavier hand. Those who envision the media as partners in collaborative management of crowds might, in the interest of harmony, prefer the press to extend a certain generosity. After publishing an article detailing the bizarre conspiracy theories among demonstrators at the G20, I was accused of reckless journalism. Organizers of the demonstration said I ought to have restricted my reporting to what they themselves had said in their polished speeches. To me that is asking

a bit much. Activist leaders wanted to claim the crowd as their own (as evidence of a mass movement, or ‘people power’) and yet expected the news media to ignore what the crowd was saying.

Still, the concept of collaborative crowd management, as being developed at Saint Paul University, holds great promise. Even the simple, preliminary step of gathering activists and police in the same seminar room, on neutral ground, to see each other for the first time without their respective uniforms, softens adversarial reflexes. But is unclear to what extent collaborative crowd management—whereby demonstrators, targets (politicians, say) and police jointly plan events—will bureaucratize public protests. One challenge will be persuading crowds that the exercise is more than an attempt to co-opt them. As for the media, journalists are wary of what historian Daniel Boorstin has called ‘pseudo-events’—events that are not spontaneous but manipulated and planned. The idea of collaborative crowd management was borne out of a commitment to inclusion, safety and civility. But the interest and attitude of media workers will depend on whether demonstrations choreographed along the collaborative model are perceived, or not perceived, as pseudo-events.

Reflections of a 'Bystander'

by The Rt. Rev. Peter R. Coffin, Former Anglican Bishop of Ottawa

It has been a long time since I have been involved in a street demonstration opting instead for other ways of engaging in issues for which I feel some passion. I might, therefore, be termed as a 'bystander' in relation to demonstrations though it is becoming more difficult not to be involved with a variety of issues that they evoke. This has become increasingly more apparent with those around globalization throughout the world and particularly in Canada.

The issues that have taken people to the street have become eclipsed by what happens when they get there. Media coverage and the behavior of some demonstrators and some charged with 'crowd control' as well as some bystanders drawn in have turned the 'sideshows' into the 'main show' and this is unfortunate in the extreme. One of the results has been 'terminal identification.' Simply stated it is the feeling that if someone is not for us they must be against us. To see and maybe even appreciate the positions of various parties is to be 'soft' and therefore biased towards a particular one. Polarization is inevitable and not to align is seen, by some, not to be an option. Or is it? It is a dangerous place to be and one runs the risk of being vilified if one says that they understand or appreciate, even if not unreservedly, the positions of, say, the police or the demonstrators or some other 'stakeholder.'

I would contend that the uncritical 'typing' of parties and a blanket laying of blame is simplistic and probably unfair and unhelpful. To some that may seem like a 'cop out' or being 'soft' and maybe even a heresy but there are deep issues at stake here that require consideration if we are to respect the rights, freedoms and responsibilities that we hold dear. I have some questions.

What really are the issues? Are we talking about 'crowd control' and tactical questions or are there deeper things at stake in this conversation? Who are the stakeholders and can they come to agreements and in ways that do not violate each other? Is there a possibility of collaboration that allows for valid and peaceful dissent and deals fairly and appropriately with those whose behavior compromises the common good and hijacks the good motivations of others and reduces them to the status of those 'needing

to be controlled'? Is dissent interpreted as a loss of order and therefore something to be 'controlled'? Have the objectives of crowd control changed given a perceived and possibly inappropriate estimate of threat and, if so, who makes that determination? Could a collaborative approach by all of the stakeholders provide a better and more accurate assessment and a more positive outcome? Can we deal with each other in a way that ensures our rights, freedoms and responsibility to dissent, or not, without particularly destructive levels of alienation which only serve to exacerbate anger and distrust to almost unresolvable levels? Is there something in the global, regional and national political climate that has changed and has formed or informed dissent and ways of dealing with it? Is the presenting issue of demonstrations and 'control' not simply a harbinger of something more and worthy, if not essential, to this conversation?

As a citizen and as a reluctantly involved bystander I cannot let the media alone influence my concern for the issues around dissent in general and demonstrations in particular. I make no apology for my respect for our police. This is not something conditioned by my experience of police in other parts of the world for that would be damning with faint praise. My personal experience is that they do serve and protect our citizenry and though not exempt from the need of accountability our police forces are, for the most part, made up of people called to a noble and serving vocation. I also have deep respect for peaceful demonstrators and those who take the just cause of others in other ways as well. While they may not be given much credit, due to the widely publicized antics of a few, they do, in fact render a public service by exercising democracy which often involves taking the cause of those who are marginalized and otherwise have no voice. That seems to be a responsible thing to do in a world where many are disenfranchised. I am concerned for those, like shopkeepers for example, who, in the course of dissent have their livelihoods disrupted and compromised. They are understandably angry and are very much stakeholders who need a voice. And I am concerned when damage appears to have been done and people retreat into fixed and defensive positions and a blame game that pits citizen against citizen and makes conversation and 'rapprochement' even more difficult. I am concerned about those who might be called 'loose cannons' who compromise the best of endeavours and hog the spotlight and define the public perception. Surely it is naive and even dangerous, on all kinds of

levels, to allow them to unduly influence the conversations and agreements that need to happen and can happen, maybe with some brokering and ways of accountability, between responsible citizens.

I work with a religious organization with a long history and a fair share of not getting it right and sometimes doing wrong despite what we would regard as a good cause. We have come to a realization of what we need to do in order to get back on track with integrity. We meet! This does not always mean that we achieve a resolution but we have come to know that it takes us a whole lot further than if we do otherwise. We have also taken some lessons, long overdue, from brothers and sisters of the First Nations, and that is patient and respectful listening.

A Reflection from the Academy

by Raymond Laprée, Professor Saint Paul University (retired)

Translated from the French original by Susan J. Roche

René Girard's approach regarding violence, its rapid escalation and subsequent control by a symbolic act of purification of unhealthy spirits is an interesting seminal hypothesis. Nevertheless, it remains a literary perspective on the human tragedy involved. Anthropological reflections based largely on a particular interpretation of the mythical stories also come into play. Vern Redekop enriches and brilliantly articulates the ideas of the great philosopher Girard, combining this approach with the theory of human needs satisfiers as well as the most recent management concepts, in a process applicable to concrete situations of conflict. Various people from law enforcement agencies involved in public security in Canada and even abroad recognize there is foundation for the implementation of these ideas. They as well as members of pressure groups, who challenge police barricades during large-scale demonstrations, have made equal contributions in the consolidation of the fundamental Girard-Redekop ideas. Thanks to this concurrent effort, we can now count on an original, universal explanation with regard to crowd behaviour. This is definitely the most significant break-through since Gustave LeBon's time-honoured theory on the psychology of crowds.

Saint Paul University will benefit greatly from this intellectual contribution developed at its core and which, from now on, will enrich teaching in the Master's Programme in Conflict Studies (Faculty of Human Sciences). In this university context, conflict theory and in particular conflict resolution and even the healing of wounds will continue to develop along collaborative lines while taking on other schools of thought.

For example, it would seem to me that Georges Dumézil's sociological studies have something to say about the prevention of the causes of conflict or their interpretation. This researcher, looking into the foundations of Indo-European culture, has shown that the societies studied flourished for as long as the 'functional tripartition' was in harmony. The decline and fall of the Roman Empire, for example, could be explained by the subordination of the priestly and production functions to the warrior function. In light of this theory, it would be interesting to study the role of the popular masses in the fall of the Soviet Empire at the end of the last century, as well as current world-wide terrorism and the subsequent spin-offs into war.

As for the parallel that Redekop draws between Girard's ideas and the human needs theory, it seems to me apt to add to this perspective Gilbert Durand's ideas on the anthropological structures of the imaginary. While the 'functional tripartition' of Dumézil would benefit from it, opposition among humans appears 'natural' as does their harmonization. The whole notion of struggle for social justice could be grafted there. We would realize, for example, that demonstrators who shout angrily in the street are necessary to wake our sleeping conscience, when, due to the unequal distribution of goods in the world, three times more victims die of hunger every day than died in the attack on the World Trade Centre. Is not ONE person in one location worth as much as ONE person in the other location? Yet, instead of mobilization, the arsenal of war is brought out! The same veiled violence became evident at home during the 2001 Christmas season. The shelters for the homeless announced they no longer knew where to house the ever increasing number of 'users,' while a few days beforehand, the greater part of Federal budget adjustments had been allotted to the Department of National Defence.

Again let us stress that the concept of 'collaborative management' used by Redekop can be effectively converted into a valuable apprenticeship only by including scholarly reflection on the psycho-sociology underlying group dynamics.

In conclusion, let us mention the following rather unique phenomenon: In developing their respective ideas, the authors Girard, Dumézil and Durand have drawn their inspiration largely from the great myths of humanity. The profound symbols of these grandiose stories bear proper names, those of the gods 'of a thousand faces' (Joseph Campbell) found in all cultures or civilizations. It is not entirely by chance that a university whose mission statement is firmly committed to research of individual and social significance through the plurality of the religious phenomenon should become the place of a renewed discourse on 'Conflict Studies.'

Certain players who make up the active forces in our society have already begun to benefit from this through workshops on crowd dispersal management given by one of the community services at Saint Paul University. It is to be greatly hoped that this participatory movement in the permanent reconstruction of peaceful conditions in our communities and in society will grow.