

Session 1 - Journeying Towards Shalom

In the first session on Monday (12 Sept) small groups discussed three questions:

1. Participants were asked to share a story of successful peace building and/or reconciliation at family, community or national level.
2. What general lessons can we learn from these stories?
3. As we journey towards Shalom, what can we, members of the Micah Network, do to practice integral mission with a minimum of disunity, chauvinisms, fundamentalisms, greed and petty 'empire-building'?

Question: As we journey towards Shalom, what can we, members of the Micah Network, do to practice integral mission with a minimum of disunity, chauvinisms, fundamentalisms, greed and petty 'empire-building'?

"Quotable quotes"

"Working towards Shalom requires passion; it is not just a job"

"You cannot do integral mission from a safe distance: it requires costly incarnation"

"Build bridges not walls"

"Integral mission means addressing the emotional, physical and other needs of people in conflict"

Peace-building and reconciliation require that we:

- be humble, be vulnerable, willing to admit that we do not have the answers and come with a servant heart
- are aware that true forgiveness (the opposite of revenge) originates from God and is the beginning of reconciliation
- see our own need for reconciliation, both within ourselves and without, and admit our own contribution to conflict
- consider historical aspects and understand the broader issues before taking action
- understand the local context and listen to local stakeholders
- pray and listen to God for guidance as all situations are different
- approach those living in conflict as the body of Christ, with its variety of gifts, not as individuals
- always consider whether our contribution could, unintentionally, make things worse for the most vulnerable (such as women and children), destroying their coping strategies
- need to be transparent in our actions, particularly in cross cultural situations, and we need to model our organizations and approach on Jesus' attitude to power
- are called, by Jesus, to confront evil with good and with love
- as outsiders can only facilitate, that ultimately people in conflict need to solve their own problems to experience true 'liberation'
- have passion, patience and perseverance and realize that our contribution is like sowing seeds that will take time to come to fruition
- may expect signs and wonders on the way.

