



forgiveness: making a world of difference

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introducing Pathways

The situation in Northern Ireland raises many difficult - sometimes controversial - issues for Christians. However, we believe that God's people need to engage with his world and with the community.

In another situation that raised many difficult and controversial matters, the prophet Jeremiah called on God's people to search for the ancient path - the good way - and to walk in it. This series of PATHWAYS booklets is our contribution to that search for our time.

We invite others to join with us in understanding God's word for Northern Ireland.

This booklet, *Forgiveness, Making a World of Difference*, contains four reflections on forgiveness first presented at ECONI's 2002 conference and ask what difference forgiveness might make to a world of conflict? what lessons we in Northern Ireland can learn from the experiences of others? and challenge us to see the power of forgiveness in the resolution of conflict in Northern Ireland.

The main paper in this collection is written by Mark Amstutz, Professor of Political Science in Wheaton College, Illinois, USA with contributions from John Brewer Professor of Sociology at Queen's University, Belfast; Cecil McCullough, Professor of New Testament at Union Theological College, Belfast; and Duncan Morrow the Chief Executive of the Community Relations Council.

ECONI 2003
ISBN 1 874324 66 2
Cover design by Claire Martin
Printed by Dataplus

FORGIVENESS: MAKING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

four studies on the
meaning of forgiveness by

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FORGIVENESS: A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

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forgiveness: God's promise for an unjust world

In her profound study titled *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt, the noted Jewish political thinker, observes that human communities depend upon two moral practices for their survival and vitality – forgiveness and the making and keeping of promises. According to Arendt, forgiveness is the sole remedy for what she terms “the predicament of irreversibility.” We can study the past, but we can’t undo it. We can learn from history, but we can’t change it. Forgiveness, she observes, is the only remedy for the inevitability of history. The making and keeping of promises, the second element of communal life, is the means by which humans bind themselves to others. Whereas forgiveness provides the means to overcome past injustices, promise keeping is the remedy for the chaos and unpredictability of life.¹

I want to talk about the first of these two human practices. I do so because forgiveness is a most difficult moral virtue, even for those of us who proclaim divine forgiveness and promise to follow our Lord by forgiving others. Although Christians claim that the heart of the gospel lies in the unlimited love and grace of Christ, believers frequently act as though justice were more important than love, that retribution were more significant than mercy. In part, this may be because pursuing moral rules and ethical principles may be less demanding than receiving or granting mercy and forgiveness. But since all of us are sinners, we inevitably

inflict injuries on others, just as we, in turn, become the victims of others' offences.

Another reason for addressing this topic is my growing conviction that, contrary to the conventional wisdom, forgiveness is a moral practice that offers promising resources for addressing past politically motivated crimes and human rights abuses. Although forgiveness has been maligned, if not altogether neglected, in public life, I want to suggest that this moral practice offers a means for the healing of individuals and for the restoration of communal bonds. Normally, the law provides a basis for prosecuting crimes in developed political societies. But when the wrongdoing is a by-product of civil war or regime injustices, retribution becomes a difficult, if not impossible undertaking. Indeed, in many transitional communities government is frequently weak and undeveloped and the main challenge is to restore the authority of the state. In such circumstances, prosecuting wrongdoing may contribute minimally to accountability and the consolidation of an emerging constitutional order.

Forgiveness is a means to confront serious moral wrongdoing, not a way to address strategic errors or to cope with the unintended evil consequences of individual or collective actions. The interactive process of forgiveness occurs when offenders acknowledge culpability and express remorse and when victims renounce vengeance, demonstrate empathy, and release offenders' debts. The foundation of this moral practice is an ethic of love. Forgiveness is the willingness to identify with the offender in spite of what he or she has done. It presumes that people can hate moral wrongdoing while still loving the sinner. When people forgive, they ignore the natural inclinations to get even and through the power of love, pursue the restoration

of human relationships in spite of past wrongdoing. Theologian Lewis Smedes has written that, “Love makes forgiving a creative violation of all the rules for keeping score.”² Since forgiveness seeks to create a new beginning out of the ashes of injustice, the practice of forgiveness frequently comes into seeming conflict with the requirements of procedural or substantive justice. Despite its seeming unfairness, however, forgiveness offers humans something that they would not otherwise receive: victims are liberated from hate, vengeance, and a backward-looking victimisation; and offenders, by acknowledging culpability and expressing remorse, are freed from guilt and deserved punishment.

Arendt was one of the first theorists to explore the potential role of forgiveness in politics. She argued that forgiveness was essential to communal life because it provided a means “to undo the deeds of the past.” Although she credited Jesus with the discovery of this ethic, she believed that forgiveness, despite its religious origins, should not be restricted to the spiritual realm.³ In his path-breaking study, *An Ethic for Enemies*, theologian Donald Shriver argues that forgiveness need not be limited to the personal domain. Indeed, he claims that forgiveness is a legitimate ethic in domestic and international politics.⁴ More recently political philosopher Peter Digeser offers another important model of political forgiveness.⁵ He defines forgiveness as a process that involves a number of preconditions, including a relationship between transgressors and victims, a moral or financial debt owed by one party to another, and a party with the authority to relieve an offender of a deserved debt.⁶

Like Shriver, Digeser does not make remorse or repentance a part of his model. He omits these and other subjective elements because he seeks to develop a theory of political forgiveness based solely on purposive human

actions and not the motivations or sentiments of people. Although forgiveness is commonly viewed as a means to heal victims' anger and resentment, Digeser views political forgiveness solely as a purposive act that leads to the release of collective debts. He argues that offenders should receive what is their due, but claims that retroactive justice is not the only, or even most important, value in public life. On some occasions, other values – such as the promotion of reconciliation and the establishment of domestic peace – may override the claims of corrective justice. As a result, forgiveness in political life may be morally justified under appropriate circumstances.

In what follows I want to explore the nature and potential role of forgiveness in public life. My analysis is divided into several parts. First I examine the nature of forgiveness by identifying some of its core elements. Secondly, I identify and assess some key conceptual hurdles to the idea of political forgiveness. In particular, I take up the claim that forgiveness is contrary to justice. I will argue that while forgiveness is inimical to retributive justice, it is essential to an alternative perspective, namely restorative justice. In the concluding section, I discuss a number of reasons why the ethic of forgiveness should be incorporated into the life of political communities.

the nature of political forgiveness

Using Shriver's and Digeser's perspectives, I conceive of political forgiveness as a public act that lifts the deserved debts of offenders. Although forgiveness may be granted for a number of reasons, the fundamental moral justification for such an act is that it contributes to the healing of offenders and victims and to the restoration of human relationships. Forgiveness is therefore a way of seeking to overcome victims' justified anger and resentment and to repair broken

communal relationships. To be successful, political forgiveness will depend upon a number of preconditions, including: consensus about past wrongdoing, remorse and repentance, renunciation of vengeance, empathy, and mitigation or cancellation of a deserved penalty. Let me briefly touch on the nature of each of these.

1 consensus on truth

Forgiveness is possible if individuals and groups can agree on the nature of, and culpability for, past wrongdoing. As José Zalaquette, a leading Chilean human rights scholar and member of Chile's truth commission, has observed, truth must be deemed an "absolute value."⁷ A useful way of developing a shared, official account of the past is to establish a public truth commission. Although trials, religious institutions, and non-governmental organisations can all contribute to this task, government-sponsored truth commissions have been an especially effective way of discovering and disclosing knowledge about former regime crimes and injustices. Consensus on truth will necessarily imply agreement about which persons or communities are chiefly culpable for past offences. Shriver argues that when individuals and groups cannot agree that some past action needs to be forgiven, "forgiveness stalls at the starting gate." This is why he suggests that forgiveness must begin with "memory suffused with moral judgment."⁸ Thus, if political forgiveness is to occur, culpable individuals and groups need to acknowledge their offences.

2 remorse

Contrition is also a desirable precondition for forgiveness.⁹ To be authentic, repentance requires not only a change in attitude but also an implied promise that wrongdoing will not be repeated. It also assumes that offenders must be prepared to provide restitution of confiscated property and to

provide financial reparations for victims' injuries and losses. Although forgiveness may be fulfilled without offenders' remorse, repentance greatly facilitates the process of forgiveness and reconciliation. In September 2002 the leaders of Japan and North Korea issued mutual apologies that reduced the historic animosity between both states. North Korean leader Kim Jong Il expressed regret for his government's kidnapping of eleven Japanese persons in the late 1970s; for his part Japanese Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, apologised for his country's abuses against the Korean people. He indicated that his government recognised that Japan had "caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of Korea through its past colonial rule and expressed feelings of deep remorse and heartfelt apology."¹⁰

3 renunciation of vengeance

Persons and groups that have suffered wrongdoing have a natural inclination to retaliate. But vengeance does not lead to justice or to the healing of victims' injuries. Rather, it perpetuates hate and enmity and provides the breeding ground for even greater evil. If the cycles of violence are to be halted, victims must refrain from retaliation and renounce vengeance.

4 empathy

Victims must follow Saint Augustine's admonition to hate the sin and love the sinner. This means that people must treat enemies and offenders with dignity and respect despite the offences that they have committed. Thus, if forgiveness is to occur, transgressors and victims must cultivate empathy and compassion toward each other, viewing all persons as worthy of respect. Although expressing empathy in interpersonal relationships is challenging, it is especially difficult to practice such attitudes collectively since political communities tend to exacerbate human passions and evil.

5 mitigation of punishment

Although forgiveness does not require the full cancellation of punishment, debt-reduction is generally a by-product of the forgiveness process in which victims (or their agents) respond compassionately to offenders' repentance and remorse. It is important to stress that while human forgiveness results in the reestablishment of a moral and social equality between victims and offenders, it does not fully eliminate offenders' moral guilt.¹¹

core issues in political forgiveness

Whether forgiveness is possible in political life will depend partly on how this practice is conceived and how it is reconciled with the demands of justice. Before addressing the question of justice and forgiveness, however, I want to briefly examine four conceptual issues – four theoretical hurdles, if you wish – that have historically been used to call into question the role of forgiveness in public life. These include the following: (1) whether forgiveness applies only to individuals or also to collectives; (2) whether victims are the only persons entitled to forgive; (3) whether communities can fulfil the conditions of forgiveness; and (4) whether the quest for reconciliation, in the aftermath of deep political conflicts, is a legitimate political goal. After briefly examining these philosophical issues, I will take up the most significant challenge to forgiveness – namely, whether it can be reconciled with the demands of justice.

First, as noted earlier, scholars of transitional justice commonly view forgiveness solely as a personal virtue, applicable only to inter-personal relations. Since forgiveness is an aspect of personal morality, an individual, using his or her own conscience, may forgive. Priscilla Hayner, a specialist on truth commissions, captures the conventional wisdom on political forgiveness when she observes that forgiveness and

reconciliation are “deeply personal processes.”¹² Government may be able to show mercy and pardon, but only victims can forgive offenders.

Although forgiveness has, historically, been associated almost exclusively with the personal and sacred realms, its classification solely as an aspect of private morality is untenable. To begin with, since forgiveness aims at healing ruptured relationships, it has social and political dimensions. Moreover, because forgiveness is concerned with the restoration of human community, theologian Gregory Jones rightly notes that it is impossible to “neatly divide issues of forgiveness and justice into spheres of the personal and private and of the political and public.”¹³ As a result, just as individuals can be the victims or perpetrators of moral wrongdoing, so, too, groups and communities can also be the victims of collective evil or bear communal responsibility for perpetrating wrongdoing. This means that a people or nation that has perpetrated offences against another group can enter into a forgiveness process by acknowledging wrongdoing and expressing contrition in the hope that victims will respond with empathy and compassion.

The important role of official apology was illustrated in 1989 when President George Bush, with the support of Congress, apologised for the World War II internment of Japanese people. In a letter sent to victims, Bush acknowledged the government’s wrongdoing, and expressed remorse on behalf of the American people. Victims also received modest financial reparations as an expression of the government’s contrition.¹⁴

A second element of the conventional wisdom about forgiveness is that only victims can forgive. According to this view, since forgiveness involves the abrogation of a debt, only the individual or group that has suffered wrongdoing has the right to offer release from deserved punishment.

This is why Omar Dullah, the South African Minister of Justice, when introducing the government's decision to establish a truth commission, observed: "We cannot forgive on behalf of victims, nor do we have the moral right to do so. It is the victims themselves who must speak."¹⁵ Charles Villa-Vicencio, a South African scholar of religious studies, echoes this view when he observes that, "We can forgive harm done to us... but it is not in our power to forgive harm done to others."¹⁶ Although the notion that forgiveness is solely a victim's prerogative is intuitively compelling,¹⁷ this claim needs to be qualified if it is to be sustained.

To begin with, victims are not a single, coherent group of people. Rather, wrongdoing results in different levels of suffering, which leads to different types of victims' groups. At a minimum, three groups of victims are possible: primary – those who have suffered direct injury; secondary – family and friends of primary victims; and tertiary – political society itself. Since decisions among these three groups need not be complementary, conflicts may arise between primary victims who wish to forgive and a government that opposes such action. Conversely, secondary victims may oppose forgiveness while a government may offer amnesty or pardon. In short, forgiveness is not the sole prerogative of primary victims; others who have been indirectly affected at the secondary or tertiary levels also have a claim on the justice, forgiveness and reconciliation process. This is why Trudy Govier and Wilhelm Verwoerd argue that government leaders, as representatives of political communities, are entitled to offer and receive collective forgiveness.¹⁸

The third important issue is whether communities are moral actors. Since collectives are not coherent, integrated persons, they do not have a mind, a conscience, a personality, or feelings. Additionally, collectives do not experience

sensations such as grief or pain. Groups, nevertheless, can and do make decisions and carry out actions that influence their own members' lives as well as the well-being of other groups. If communities are to participate in the process of forgiveness, they must have moral standing. And to have moral standing they must possess moral agency – that is, bear moral responsibility for the communal behaviour of the collectivity, whether it is a group, community, or nation. While collectives are not themselves moral persons, their actions can be thought to possess moral agency if the actions are carried out by legitimate authority, are rooted in freedom of action, and are based upon decision makers' moral judgments.

When governments confront past regime crimes, leaders must frequently assume the role of representative agents since they were not directly involved in the wrongdoing, either as victims or offenders. Chilean president Patricio Aylwin played such a role when – at the March 1991 public disclosure of Chile's Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report – he publicly apologised to the victims and their families and asked for forgiveness for injustices perpetrated by state agents. This is what President Aylwin said on this occasion: “It is Chilean society that owes a debt to the victims of human rights violations. This is why the suggestion in the report for moral and material compensation is shared by all sectors. This is why I dare – as President of the Republic – to assume representation of the entire nation in begging forgiveness from the victims' relatives.”¹⁹ A similar expression of remorse was offered by Gen. Martin Balza, Argentina's army chief, when he publicly acknowledged in 1995 that the country's armed forces had used “illegitimate” force in combating terrorism during the 1970's “dirty war.”²⁰ Since Balza's admission of institutional culpability was conveyed in a spirit of contrition, it had a healing effect on Argentine society, especially those families that had lost

loved ones during the bitter covert war that led to more than 10,000 “disappearances.”

A fourth issue is whether reconciliation is a legitimate goal of political communities. Liberal democratic theorists have historically given little attention to reconciliation and the moral and cultural reconstruction of deeply divided societies. Indeed, some liberal theorists claim that the pursuit of reconciliation is inimical to democratic theory and practice because the pursuit of shared ideals and common goals can potentially threaten individual rights. Historian Timothy Garton Ash, for example, notes that reconciliation is a deeply “illiberal” idea because a liberal society is one in which people learn to live with unresolved conflicts.²¹ Political theorists Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson similarly observe that a procedural democratic framework is likely to be far more hospitable to human rights than the intentional pursuit of social harmony.²² Since many liberal thinkers view reconciliation as a problematic goal, it is not surprising that they should question the merits of forgiveness as a means of overcoming the legacy of political violence, human rights abuses, and pervasive animosity among groups contending for power.

For liberals, the effort to build and restore political order is legitimate, provided it is a by-product of justice. According to them, the proper strategy is best defined as “no justice, no peace,” or, “first justice, then reconciliation.” During a visit to The Hague War Crimes Tribunal in 1997, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright expressed this perspective in demanding prosecution of war criminals from the Bosnian War of the early 1990s. Albright observed: “Justice is essential to strengthen the rule of law, soften the bitterness of victims’ families, and remove an obstacle to cooperation among the parties. It will help ensure that our [American] forces can depart Bosnia without the fear that renewed

violence threatening U.S. interests might one day return. It will establish a model for resolving ethnic differences by the force of law rather than the law of force.”²³

Is Albright’s claim valid? Is the “first justice, then peace” strategy politically sound? Is it biblical? Despite the importance of legal justice, the strategy, I believe, is conceptually flawed and politically unrealistic. It is conceptually flawed because the “first justice, then peace” approach is based on the dubious assumption that justice precedes order, that human rights are possible apart from domestic peace. And, it is an unrealistic and unworkable strategy because the conditions of strict legal justice can never be fully fulfilled. In effect, by making peace and reconciliation conditional on the prior fulfilment of justice, the strategy ensures that the pursuit of national unity and communal reconciliation are relegated to a subsidiary status.

Biblically, the “first justice, then peace” strategy is also problematic since the Scriptures give a prominent place to both justice and peace. An important prophetic message of the Hebrew Bible is God’s condemnation of oppression and injustice; at the same time, the Scriptures also repeatedly call for peace and reconciliation. From a biblical ethics perspective it is therefore appropriate that the dual strands of peace and justice should be kept together and should be given equal priority. Theologian Miroslav Volf argues that a biblical account of forgiveness is one that gives primacy to the “will to embrace” but also to the pursuit of justice. “Forgiveness,” he writes, “can be properly understood and practiced only in the context of the stance which gives primacy to reconciliation but does not give up the pursuit of justice.”²⁴

Historically, of course, political theorists and government leaders have given precedence to justice and liberation over peace and reconciliation. As a result Christian thinkers and

political leaders have, not surprisingly, similarly neglected peacemaking and the social and political restoration of deeply divided societies, giving far more emphasis to the struggle for liberation. Most significantly, however, the singular emphasis on justice has led believers to accept force as a legitimate policy instrument in the struggle against injustice and oppression.²⁵ But when the Christian faith is used solely to define the quest for liberation and to neglect the demands of social solidarity, Christianity can become an instrument of violence and thereby compromise its own integrity.

Finally, the most fundamental criticism of forgiveness is that it is contrary to public justice, and more particularly to human rights. According to political liberalism, forgiveness is an unacceptable ethic because it sacrifices the just claims of victims at the altar of forgiveness and community reconciliation.

justice and forgiveness

Critics of forgiveness claim that such a practice is unjust because offenders do not receive their due. As Smedes correctly notes, forgiveness is an outrage against “straight-line, dues-paying morality.”²⁶ In particular, critics argue that forgiveness undermines legal justice by neglecting the strict and impartial enforcement of the law. They argue that since the credibility of a criminal justice system is presumed to be based on the certainty that unlawful behaviour will be prosecuted and punished, failure to punish serious wrongdoing not only undermines the authority of judicial institutions, but also weakens deterrence by fostering a culture of impunity. Thus, when government authorities disregard, condone, or absolve criminal behaviour (through legal amnesty or executive pardon), the rule of law is compromised and the consolidation of democratic procedures is jeopardised. This is why Susan Jacoby, in her study *Wild Justice*, argues that legal accountability is likely

to contribute far more to the creation of a humane political community than the restoration of human relationships rooted in forgiveness. She writes that legalism “affords a far more hospitable environment for the spread of liberty and decency than does hopeful reliance on the loving potential of the human heart.”²⁷

Of course, whether or not justice is consistent with forgiveness will depend in great measure on how public justice is defined. I therefore turn next to a brief exploration of this idea. I will do so by contrasting two conceptions of justice – retributive and restorative. Since the retributive tradition demands strict adherence to criminal justice, even when confronting political violence, it is opposed to political forgiveness. By contrast, the second tradition – restorative justice – is not only receptive to this collective virtue but presumes that peace and reconciliation will depend in part on individual and collective forgiveness.

retributive justice

According to the theory of retributive justice, offenders must be held accountable for their wrongdoing. When public officials refuse to hold criminals accountable for their crimes, they commit impunity and thereby destroy the moral and social fabric necessary to sustain civil society. From an interpersonal perspective, retributivism assumes that evil must be identified and punished before human relationships can be renewed and restored. According to this perspective, when perpetrators commit an offence against other persons, they destroy the fundamental moral and legal equality among human beings. To repair ruptured relationships between victims and victimisers and restore their moral equality, offenders must be diminished through public condemnation and victims must regain the former moral status. Retribution is the process by which this fundamental equality is restored.

The retributive justice paradigm is thus based upon the belief that a humane political community can be sustained only if wrongdoing is identified and punished, for only if past offences are held to account can a community confidently pursue and advance its future collective well-being.

Retributivists offer a number of reasons for prosecuting and punishing serious wrongdoing. They claim, among other things, that (1) justice demands that perpetrators should pay for their offences, (2) the rule of law can be maintained and consolidated only if offenders are prosecuted and punished, (3) trials are desirable because they reduce the possibility of revenge, (4) trials can help uncover the truth about past regime abuses, and (5) trials are an effective way to settle legal claims. The notion of retributive justice is problematic, however, especially when applied to society-wide injustices and regime wrongdoing. Some of its shortcomings include the following: first, it is backward-looking, emphasising accountability at the expense of social and moral reconstruction; second, it neglects victims' healing and communal reconciliation; third, it tends to oversimplify culpability by dividing society between perpetrators and victims, offenders and the innocent. Finally, it tends to devote a significant share of scarce public resources to a backward-looking strategy of prosecution and punishment. Constitutional lawyer Bruce Ackerman argues that a forward-looking strategy of constitutional development is likely to be far more effective in promoting human rights than trials. He writes that "a few crude, bureaucratically feasible reforms will do more justice and prove less divisive than a quixotic quest after the mirage of corrective justice."²⁸

restorative justice

Given the inherent limits of retribution in transitional societies, a growing number of scholars and public officials

have emphasised an alternative approach known as restorative justice. Unlike legal retribution, which seeks to punish wrongdoing, restorative justice seeks to repair broken relationships and heal the wounds of victims and offenders alike. Whereas retribution focuses chiefly on objective wrongdoing, restorative justice emphasises the transformation of subjective factors that impair community, such as anger, resentment, and desire for vengeance. According to political theorist Elizabeth Kiss, restorative justice emphasises the restoration of people's human dignity, accountability for offenders, creation of preconditions for human rights, and promotion of reconciliation.²⁹ Since both retributive and restorative justice emphasise legal accountability, the distinctive feature of the latter is its concern with the healing of victims and the renewal of relationships.

Undoubtedly, the most important effort to apply the restorative justice paradigm to collective crimes is the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC, a 15-member commission created by the South African Parliament to investigate gross human rights violations of the apartheid era, was based on a principled belief that truth telling and the public acknowledgement of wrongdoing would contribute more to the consolidation of democracy than trials. As viewed by leaders, traditional legal and political strategies rooted in retributive justice were unlikely to contribute to unity and national reconciliation. What was needed, according to South African leaders, was a multidimensional strategy that demanded truth, helped restore the nation's moral-cultural system, and contributed to the consolidation of the new constitutional order.

In his book on the TRC, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Commission's chairman, claims that it would have been unwise, indeed impossible, to impose retribution, or what he

terms “the Nuremberg trial paradigm.”³⁰ Due to South Africa’s limited political and economic resources, it was imperative that it used its authority and financial resources with care in the consolidation of new democratic order. In Tutu’s view, applying retributive justice would have placed an undue burden on the nation’s courts and would have given little emphasis to the restoration of victims and the promotion of political reconciliation. As a result he strongly supported the alternative strategy of restorative justice – which he believed would effectively confront the evil of apartheid while focusing on reconciliation. For Tutu, restorative justice was the preferred strategy because it promoted communal solidarity and social peace by restoring broken relationships, healing victims, and rehabilitating perpetrators. Most importantly for Tutu, restorative justice was consistent with the African social tradition of *ubuntu* that placed a premium on social harmony and community.

As conceptualised by the TRC, the restorative justice approach involves a number of distinctive features. First, it calls for a redefinition of crime that focuses on personal injuries and human suffering rather than on impersonal rule breaking. Second, it emphasises reparations for victims in order to facilitate their restoration into the fabric of communal life, while also encouraging the rehabilitation of perpetrators based upon full accountability for past offences. Third, it encourages direct conflict resolution among victims, offenders, and the community. And finally, it calls for “a spirit of understanding” between victims and offenders, without mitigating or undermining offenders’ moral and political culpability.

Restorative justice thus provides a radically different approach to regime crimes and human rights abuses. Whereas retributive justice regards forgiveness as contrary to

primary and secondary victims' interests and to the emerging constitutional order, restorative justice is hospitable to the idea of forgiveness, provided compelling moral reasons are given to justify such action. From the restorative perspective, authentic political forgiveness is not only consistent with full accountability but also contributes greatly to the renewal and restoration of society. Since forgiveness gives priority to the healing of victims and to the restoration of relationships, it can greatly contribute to political reconciliation. Such renewal is most likely to occur when offenders acknowledge culpability, express contrition for their injuries, and offer symbolic or tangible reparations as expressions of remorse. For their part, victims must renounce vengeance, express empathy towards offenders, and release them from some or all of their deserved debts.

reasons for forgiveness

But why should individuals and groups forgive? What moral reasons might justify releasing offenders from their deserved penalties? In this last section, I provide a number reasons why forgiveness might be incorporated into the political decision making process, especially in confronting society-wide wrongdoing of former regimes.

First, forgiveness can free individuals and peoples from the tyranny of excessive and corrosive memory. Since memory is essential to individual mental health and to the viability of humane political communities, the challenge in overcoming a legacy of widespread violence is not to deny or forget the past. Rather, the goal is to use history in a constructive manner – in effect, to remember redemptively. But peoples that have suffered systemic wrongdoing frequently become captive to past injustices, defining their collective identity in terms of the abuses that they have suffered. But an identity and political program defined chiefly

by the past is unlikely to foster a forward-looking moral vision for a society. So long as past offences dominate the consciences of people, their desires, plans, and hopes will be governed by the past. They will be incapable of contributing to the moral and political reconstruction of society. Lewis Smedes has observed, “As long as our minds are captive to the memory of having been wronged, they are not free to wish for reconciliation with the ones who wronged us.”³¹

Although remembrance can result in emotional tyranny and vengeance, it can also, paradoxically, form the basis for forgiveness and reconciliation. As a result, healthy societies need a balance between memory and hope. Israeli scholar Amos Elon has wisely noted that, although history and collective memory are inseparable elements of culture, the past “must not be allowed to become the dominant element determining the future of society and the destiny of a people.”³² He suggests that Israeli political life, which is so dependent upon memory, could benefit by “a little forgetfulness.” What is needed, he writes, is a shift in emphasis and proportion so that a new equilibrium between memory and hope can be achieved in Israeli political life.

A second argument for political forgiveness is that it helps peoples reclaim their true identity as human beings and as members of political society. In the aftermath of wrongdoing, groups are frequently classified as those responsible for crimes and injustices and those who suffered wrongdoing. But so long as a community remains deeply divided into the innocent and the guilty, the offenders and the victims, the healing of political community is unlikely to occur. Most significantly, when past wrongdoing becomes the key source of people’s individual and collective identity, it can impede personal healing and the restoration of social relationships. Victimisation can intensify political conflict, impede

accommodation, and ossify the political process. The deleterious effects of victimisation are evident in the motto of an Argentine human rights organisation known as HIJOS. Its motto is: “We don’t forget; we don’t forgive; we don’t seek reconciliation.” The great advantage of forgiveness, then, is that it seeks to overcome the legacy of alienation, division, and victimisation, and to offer the opportunity for enemies to embark on a shared, peaceful journey that might help individuals and groups to renew their true identity. For only if victims and offenders are restored from the debilitating and damaging effects of moral wrongdoing, can they successfully participate in the communal task of peace-building and reconciliation.

A third reason for forgiveness is that it provides an alternative to revenge, which is the natural, automatic human response to wrongdoing. Intractable political disputes frequently involve random, indiscriminate violence and foster ongoing patterns of revenge. Breaking the cycle of violence is crucial if deeply divided societies are to be restored. This is why historian Scott Appleby writes that forgiveness provides a means to halt “the vicious cycle of charges and countercharges of political victimisation.” In contrast to revenge, forgiveness is an act that frees human beings from the predictability of anger and vengeance. As Arendt has noted forgiveness is “the only reaction which does not merely re-act but acts anew and unexpectedly... freeing from its consequences both the one who forgives and the one who is forgiven.”³⁴ Political forgiveness, in short, is beneficial in the transitional justice process because it offers freedom to persons and groups from the compulsion to get even.

Finally, forgiveness in political life is desirable because some wrongs can never be righted. The torturing, killing, and abducting of people cannot be undone. Regimes cannot

bring back to life those who were killed. And although seized property can be returned to its owners, the condition of land and buildings is likely to have deteriorated. Thus, even if punishment of offenders is feasible, the restoration of victims and their property may not always be possible. Under these circumstances perhaps the only alternative for peoples who have been wronged is to forgive their offenders and thereby overcome “the predicament of irreversibility.”³⁵

The international community is filled with historic injustices that simply cannot be rectified. Indeed, the effort to resolve them is likely to breed new injustices, impede constructive, humane public policies, and further exacerbate political divisions. The plight of some 3 million Germans from Czechoslovakia’s *Sudentenland* illustrates the intractability of some of these global political injustices. In 1938 Hitler annexed this territory as part of his *Lebensraum* foreign policy. Seven years later, after the Allies had defeated the Axis powers, the Czechoslovakian people carried out a war of revenge against the Sudeten Germans, expelling more than 3 million of them and murdering more than 40,000. Although many Sudeten Germans have desired to return and to reclaim their former property, the only ones who have been permitted to do so are several thousand Jews who had been deported by the Nazis in the early 1940s. Commenting on the injustice of the Czechoslovakia’s expulsion of Germans, political ethicist Jean Bethke Elshtain writes: “Perhaps there is nothing left for the expelled and expropriated people of German descent to do but to forgive. That is the hardest thing of all to do, of course, but it may be the only way to forestall quaffing the bitter brew of injustice suffered and recompense sought even unto future generations.”³⁶

The model of political forgiveness that I have sketched is a difficult, challenging one. Indeed, it imposes requirements

on leaders that are more demanding politically and morally than those of a retributive approach. This may in part explain why few political transitions and even fewer diplomatic initiatives have exhibited this ethic. To be sure, it is increasingly commonplace for leaders to apologise for past historic injustices – such as President Clinton’s apology for the failure of the international community to halt the genocide in Rwanda, Argentine President Carlos Menem’s apology for his country’s invasion of the Falkland Islands and the deaths of Argentine and British soldiers, and Tony Blair’s apology for Britain’s failure to aid Ireland during the mid 19th-century potato famine. Although apologies such as these are an important element of a robust ethic of political forgiveness, they are not sufficient. If forgiveness is to lead to healing and reconciliation of peoples, leaders must go beyond unilateral declarations. The challenge for public officials is to establish an interactive process between victim and offender groups where truth telling, admission of culpability, empathy and compassion can be nurtured. Only then can remembrance become constructive and contribute to peaceful communities, the restoration of the political order and the renewal of political morality. Perhaps only time can heal the wounds from historic injustices. But I remain convinced that far more can be done, especially in broken, deeply divided communities, to overcome the legacy of wrongdoing through forgiveness, for this ethic is the only remedy for the inevitability of history.

Archbishop Tutu has aptly captured the extraordinary promise of forgiveness in political life in the title of his book – *No Future Without Forgiveness*. I think Tutu’s claim is correct.

FORGIVENESS IN A SOCIOLOGICAL CONTEXT

by John D. Brewer

Let me begin by saying that I am a sociologist. I might be a Christian but my personal thoughts on forgiveness are not what are relevant here. Instead I would like to place the notion of forgiveness into a broader sociological context. There are two reasons for locating it broadly. First, so that forgiveness can be seen to be relevant to people of other faiths or none at all, and, secondly, so it can be rendered into concrete social behaviours rather than left to reside in conscience or doctrine.

It was once estimated that of the 110 armed conflicts around the world between 1989-99, only 21 were settled by peace agreements and most of those didn't survive. Peace processes need active public support if they are to last. Let me suggest that there are two reasons why they are mostly fragile. First, peace processes are left to the politicians and the transition to post-violence is treated as an issue of good governance only, and, secondly, peace processes are left to lay theologians to debate the necessity and meaning of forgiveness.

Let me deal with governance first. Issues of good governance are, of course, an essential component of post violence societies. Constitutional reform is a necessary part of the transition. The stability of peace accords depends in large part on people's experience of governance after the violence has stopped and the way resistance to the new forms of governance is managed.

But good governance is not the sole issue. Changes in governance alone are no guarantee that violence will end. The Basque region of Spain, for example, received devolved government nearly a quarter of a century ago but ETA continues its sporadic violence. Successful peace accords require more than good governance, or at least, governance issues in post violence societies have to be understood broadly to cover a range of social issues that shape the success of the transition.

One of these social issues is forgiveness. It is quite right to make this an important condition in the transition to post violence. The problem for me as a sociologist is that forgiveness resides in the quality of the individual's theology or conscience. And there it appears to remain as a running sore on peace accords if people of right conscience or right theology are lacking. Forgiveness also leaves many people neutered. People who want to assist the transition to post violence but can't yet in their hearts bring themselves to forgive or seek repentance can feel stymied.

I think that governance and forgiveness need to be located in a much broader context. It appears to me that societies making the transition to post violence face a series of issues that extend beyond governance and forgiveness but which provide a broader context within which both can be made to operate successfully. That is to say, institutional reform only works when governance is understood broadly to involve a series of other social issues as well. Forgiveness doesn't need to wait for changes in conscience or theology, but in the absence of both can be outworked by people dealing with a series of social issues that characterise the transition to post-violence.

Let me now briefly outline this social dynamic that lies behind the successful transition to post-violence.

The mere fact of violence in the past creates for post-violence societies a series of common social problems. Peace is a virtue but it comes with its own problems. This is deeply ironic. There is a naïve assumption that where violence is a consequence of problematic politics, once a permanent settlement is reached conflict is thought to irrevocably and swiftly disappear. But peace comes with a price in the form of a legacy of social issues that are as important as governance issues and forgiveness as priorities in peace accords.

these issues are:

- the tension between truth and reconciliation
- the tension between justice and peace
- experiences of victimhood
- the problem of remembrance and memory
- the social reintegration of former combatants
- the development of ‘citizenship education’ for the new society

And of course, these social issues keep their emotional intensity and immediacy when the communal violence remains sporadic or becomes diffuse by transforming into criminal violence or occasional flash point protests, as happens in Northern Ireland. Let me say a sentence or two about each issue.

the tension between truth and reconciliation:

In the transition to post-violence there is a desperate need to know the ‘truth,’ but truth tends to be relative – truth-from-a-perspective. This wish for the ‘truth’ is part of people’s healing and is a necessary element of reconciliation. On the other hand, the ‘truth’ can re-open wounds and hinder or slow the process of reconciliation because the ‘truth’ may be used from one standpoint to damn some group. In short, ‘truth’

can be incompatible with 'reconciliation.' Post-violence societies therefore need to manage two problems: finding the balance between the need to know what happened in the past and moving forward, and encouraging people to see the truth from someone else's standpoint.

the tension between peace and justice:

All too often, 'peace' can be understood narrowly to mean the ending of violence and fails to address wider issues of 'justice.' The wish for the shooting and bombing to stop is natural enough. However, peace incorporates well-being and a sense of flourishing, and narrow notions of 'peace' can misunderstand the range of issues that post violence societies need to address around the question of 'justice,' such as considerations of social redistribution, the introduction or restoration of equality and fairness in the allocation of scarce resources, and the opening up of life chance opportunities that were once closed to some groups or people.

experiences of victimhood:

Violence produces victims; sometimes the victims are from within one group or class but mostly from all sections. Victimhood produces grieving relatives, dominated by their hurt and loss, and it produces survivors, maimed physically or psychologically by their involvement in the violence. They can take their victimhood into the future as a burden of grief, loss and physical or psychological pain. Post-violence societies need to find ways in which the experiences of the victims can be honoured without these experiences being used to justify resistance to reform.

the problem of remembrance and memory:

The problem of victimhood leads to another issue: how to remember and commemorate the conflict in such a way as to permit people to move forward. When memories continue

to divide people, post-violence societies have a shadow that causes continual strain. Post-violence societies need to find ways of handling divided memories and to develop forms of remembrance that honour all people, victims and perpetrators, combatants and civilians, and in ways that release people from the burden of the past.

the social reintegration of combatants:

Just as victims need to be integrated into the peace process, former combatants need to be socially reintegrated. Ex-prisoners need to gain education and employability skills, and to receive practical and other support, but in ways that avoids dishonouring victims.

the development of 'citizenship education' for the new society:

Violence can sometimes be all that young generations have known, and marked social cleavages can leave most people without the citizenship skills for living in the new post-violence society. Division may have solidified to create worlds within worlds where people do not integrate or learn the skills for living together. Citizenship education programmes are needed in post-violence societies that assist people in shifting their identity away from enmity and which assist people in living together.

what does this have to do with our concerns for forgiveness?

I want to end by making four points:

I believe these issues offer a challenge. A challenge to a Church that often preaches about forgiveness but tends not to practice it, or at least, to restrict its practice to insistence on right doctrine or right conscience; and a challenge to politicians who disgrace the Bible by using the issue of

forgiveness to impede reconciliation.

I suggest that these are the issues by which forgiveness is outworked and can allow people to do something positive for the peace process while they await what others consider the right conscience or right theology.

These issues provide a broader context to governance by illustrating the range of issues that need to be addressed on top of constitutional reform.

Finally, they offer an agenda by which you and I, NGOs, the churches, youth organisations and all manner of groups in 'civil society' can get on with peace while institutional reform proceeds and as others wrestle with the theological meaning of forgiveness.

REFLECTIONS ON FORGIVENESS, RECONCILIATION AND CONFLICT

by Cecil McCullough

To help us think about the processes of forgiveness and reconciliation in our own situations, I will reflect on some examples of reconciliation (or lack of it), which I have observed in situations where I have lived (Northern Ireland, Lebanon and New Zealand).

All conflicts come to an end, but that end may not necessarily be just or lasting. Usually conflict ends when one side wipes out the other, which becomes unable to go on fighting. This happened to the Native Americans in North America, the Southern forces in the American Civil War, and to the defeated nations of the First and Second World Wars. The violent ending of conflicts in this way often contains the seeds for the next conflict, or at least for lasting bitterness.

Sometimes a third-party enters the ring and separates the contestants, as for example in the Balkan crisis when originally the forces of the Soviet Union kept the warring sides apart. Syria attempted this in Lebanon in 1975 and it is happening today in Kosovo and Afghanistan. This may have the effect of fossilising a conflict, which often breaks out again when the 'big crow' leaves.

A third way to deal with conflict, and hopefully end it, is to keep it at as low a level as possible by a balance of terror and hope that wears both sides out. Each incident triggers its own revenge and the hope is that the fear of revenge will deter attacks. This was part of the rationale behind the Cold War and plays an important role in conflicts in the Middle

East. Its weakness, of course, lies in the fact that hatred can become so deeply entrenched that each side is prepared to accept terrible pain in order to inflict pain on the enemy.

The fourth, and perhaps messiest but, in my view, the only permanent way to deal with conflict is to restore the balance between the communities through negotiation, before either side is destroyed. This, in effect, is to transform a military conflict into a political one. If this is to happen, then the issue of past injustices will come up – How can these be faced? When should they be faced? Do they have to be faced at all?

As I said I have experience in two main areas (apart from Northern Ireland). These are – the Middle East, particularly Lebanon, where I spent eight years, and New Zealand, where I spent four. The experiences couldn't have been more different!

In Lebanon there were two main areas of conflict: the Civil War inside the country and the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. These two areas of conflict were closely intertwined.

the lebanese civil war

A detailed analysis of the causes of the conflict would be impossible here. In brief, in 1967 there was a negotiated settlement after a short but nasty Civil War. It resulted in power sharing, and a model of power sharing was adapted which many thought would be a good model for Northern Ireland. However, little attempt was made to deal with past injustices and, above all, nothing was built into the system to allow it to adjust to changing circumstances. By 1975 it was creaking at the seams as several pressures threatened to tear it apart. Firstly, Muslims were increasing in numbers and Christians decreasing, thus threatening the delicate balance of power; secondly, the Palestinians had been expelled from

Jordan and were living in camps in Lebanon. They were mainly Muslim and were not only upsetting the demographic balance, but they were also heavily armed and so threatened the State forces of law and order; thirdly, the rich/poor divide was becoming wider with very little help for the very poor.

When the armed conflict began it followed the retributive pattern of an 'eye for an eye.' An act of terror by one side was matched by an act of terror on the other side. A bus was blown up on the Muslim side, in retaliation a Christian village was raided and people killed. In retaliation to that, a Muslim camp was destroyed and the inhabitants had to flee for their lives. This spiral of terror continued for over twenty years. Many efforts were made to bring it to an end, but with no lasting effect. Eventually it did come to a halt, with both sides worn out and the country destroyed. After the conflict reconciliation was centred on rebuilding the country and the economy. Very ambitious development plans were drawn up, (including dumping the rubble of the destroyed Downtown buildings into the sea to form a 'Manhattan' type commercial area), and former enemies worked side by side in these massive projects. The peace has now lasted for almost 10 years and while there is plenty of political fighting there seems to be little desire to go back to armed conflict.

the palestinian/jewish conflict

Little need be said about the causes of this conflict. Suffice it to say that it too is following the pattern of creating a balance of terror by retaliation. It has been long forgotten who started the 'eye for an eye' cycle and it is very difficult to see how it can be stopped. With total American support for one side and sheer desperation on the other, it seems unlikely that war weariness and unacceptable economic cost will cause the conflict to peter out. In this situation talk of reconciliation is premature – it simply becomes another weapon in the war.

new zealand

The conflict here was caused by the arrival of European settlers. There was little overt violence by the standards of the day, but Maoris lost vast tracks of land and resources, their tribal system was broken up and their culture destroyed. Nowadays many young Maori males are defying the traditional control of their elders and they have formed American style (often criminal) gangs. This burning sense of injustice and wrongs done to them came to a boiling point in the sixties and has continued ever since.

The method chosen to try to bring reconciliation and right wrongs was the setting up of the Waitangi Tribunal. Representatives of the British Crown and Maori chiefs signed the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. Little attention was paid to it, but in 1975 a Tribunal was set up to “examine any claim by a Maori or group of Maori that they have been prejudiced by laws and regulations or by acts, omissions, policies, or practices of the Crown since 1840 that are inconsistent with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and make recommendations to the government.” In this way, the people of New Zealand hope to promote reconciliation between all races on the islands.

As in all reconciliation processes, there are difficulties. Not all Maoris accept the legitimacy of the Treaty of Waitangi and see it as a vestige of colonialism. There are two versions of the Treaty, one in English and the other in Maori, and much ink has been used up comparing the two. Furthermore, the Tribunal can only consider land and resources that are still in the possession of the Crown, not those in private hands. Nevertheless it is an important attempt to address very real grievances in an organised way.

conclusions

The timing of a reconciliation process must be very carefully considered. If started at an inappropriate time, it can add fuel to the flames of war rather than douse them.

The process must be appropriate to the culture of the area. The processes in Lebanon and New Zealand are very different indeed from each other; and in turn, they are very different from the process in South Africa.

Any reconciliation process is seldom a straight line of success.

Let me leave you with some questions for consideration that may help you to think about and play a part in the conversations regarding a reconciliation process for Northern Ireland: Are we ready for a peace process in Northern Ireland? If not, what conditions would have to apply to make us ready? If so, then taking into account our history, culture and our economic situation what should the main characteristics of that process be?

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON FORGIVENESS?

by Duncan Morrow

Sometimes language flatters to deceive. The very value of language, making human life possible by easy symbolic interaction, is turned on its head. So it is with forgiveness. Few words carry so much unacknowledged freight. Because for as long as forgiveness remains an object of our study rather than the decisive question and answer for all of our lives, we cannot grasp just how far we have to travel to turn our study into something useful. And the need to travel far is surely the unspoken motivation for our exploring this theme. So before we talk about 'it' we need to stop and bring it to mind with an appropriate degree of trepidation.

First of all, forgiveness is not an 'it' at all. There is no 'thing out there,' an object to be owned, mastered, manipulated or directed. Forgiveness does not live as a commodity to be purchased or as a project to be completed. It lives in the existential choices and decisions of victims, and ultimately of perpetrators, to receive each other back into each other's lives in spite of real, and sometimes unbearable, injury. 'Forgiveness the thing' is therefore only a word describing what results when people forgive and are forgiven. The question is never 'how can I get it' but 'how can I receive it.' Forgiveness is a descriptive noun for many linked yet unique experiences in relationships, possibilities to restore lives, which could not be restored, often appearing to those who experience its impact as something like a miracle. Through forgiving and being forgiven we are untied, usually without desert or merit, from the seemingly insuperable

demands on our lives of our actions or the actions done to us by others.

In the end, forgiving and being forgiven is always grace and never law. This is what makes it so difficult for politics. It is not made any easier by the coercive power of any state, no matter how hard, but floats entirely unaffected beyond its reach. This is not to say that political leadership cannot bypass the demands of forgiving and forgiveness, indeed most do, but it is to say that the state cannot actually ensure that it takes place.

In a conflict, forgiveness always comes from outside the zero-sum game. It stands in absolute contrast to the logic of retribution, escalation and revenge from which there is no escape without victory at the expense of our opponent. Ultimately, giving and receiving forgiveness is a judgment on the futility of the game itself.

So instead of searching for a handy formula for forgiveness, we need to be infected by its reality in the world. Or to put it another way: we need to let forgiveness find us. One of the secrets of forgiveness is that it is first received and only then given. For Christians, this is not a difficult starting point. Indeed, everything we believe about forgiveness comes from the experience of being ourselves forgiven, children of God in spite of everything not because of it. So for a start, letting forgiveness find us, means allowing the stories of God the father and of Jesus to enter into our lives, changing everything we touch and see. Jesus' words from the cross, asking forgiveness for his executioners, even before they know what they are doing, is no time bound story of first century Palestine but the existential reality of all of our lives. My own hunch is that Peter's experience of forgiveness following his denial of Jesus is the foundation stone of the post-resurrection church.

When we talk about ‘international perspectives on forgiveness’ we run the same risk of looking for the wrong thing in the wrong places, only more so. We run the risk that we are looking for the same low cost answers, short-cuts or formulae as usual, albeit this time more desperately. But there is also a real sense in which such a search can be of enormous value. By widening the circle, by letting light shine in from other settings, we can be startled by what was possible for people in situations of existential choice beyond our own imaginings. Through sharing we can enter the world of stories, pictures, keys to our own predicaments, which give us the possibility to believe again that we too can forgive and be forgiven.

So we go international to return to our lives, our responsibilities and ourselves. There is no magic formula out there either. Otherwise I’m pretty sure it would be a major export industry. We can tell each other stories, witness if you prefer, to what we see and saw in the lives of others. I leave you with two stories which have influenced my own story. In the midst of all those ‘Negro spirituals’ is a remarkable and repeated voice which I find agonising and penetrating. Often without rancour, though usually in great agony, the songs call me back to earth to face real human suffering and to believe that forgiveness is still possible. In our time, this is the unavoidable call of Martin Luther King, a man whose rarity has made him such a focus for attention that he is in danger of collapsing under the weight.

The second also relates to politics. All over the world, people call for forgiveness or ask it on behalf of others. But to face it ourselves is much harder. Willi Brandt at Auschwitz, a Social Democrat who spent the war opposing Nazism in Sweden, is a case in point. Even more profoundly for me, Anwar Sadat’s visit to the Israeli Knesset in 1977 still speaks volumes to me.

Of course we all have our own stories, and it is important that we tell them. Not to moralise or to demoralise, but to bring us back into possibility without which we are condemned to waiting, locked in our hurts and injuries and tied to our traumas without hope of early release.

notes

¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p.237.

² Lewis B. Smedes, *Forgive and Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), p.81.

³ Hannah Arendt, op cit., pp.237-239.

⁴ Donald W. Shriver, Jr., *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). Shriver's model of political forgiveness involves four elements: truth telling and acknowledgment of culpability, renunciation of vengeance, empathy, and restoration of social relationships.

⁵ P.E. Digeser, *Political Forgiveness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

⁶ P.E. Digeser, op cit., pp.20 & 35. In addition to these three elements, Digeser's model of forgiveness includes four other features: (4) forgiveness must be conveyed explicitly and directly to debtors by persons competent to offer it; (5) motives and feelings must be disregarded in the act of forgiveness; (6) since receiving one's due is important, moral reasons must be given for not pursuing "just deserts;" and (7) forgiveness may contribute to the restoration of relationships among antagonists.

⁷ José Zalaquette, "Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation: Lessons for the International Community," in Cynthia J. Arnson, ed., *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p.348.

⁸ Shriver, op cit., p.7.

⁹ Scholars disagree on the priority of repentance in forgiveness. David Little, for example, argues that a key element of forgiveness is repentance. His forgiveness model, derived

from Jesus' Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, involves five elements: (1) a transaction between two or more persons; (2) a shared acknowledgement between the offender and victim about (a) culpability for wrongdoing and (b) a fitting punishment; (3) contrition and repentance on the part of the offender; (4) a merciful response by the victim, including the annulment of (2b); and (5) obligation of the forgiven offender to forgive others. See David Little, "A Different Kind of Justice: Dealing with Human Rights Violations in Transitional Societies," *Ethics & International Affairs*, 13 (1999), p.71. Other conceptions of forgiveness, such as Digeser's and Shriver's, do not require repentance. Theologian Alan Torrance, in "Theological Reflections on the Advocacy of Forgiveness and Reconciliation in the Socio-Political Realm" (unpublished), suggests that Christian forgiveness is not dependent on prior repentance. He claims that evangelical repentance (*metanoia*), which involves the "transformation of the orientation of our minds," is not carried out to condition forgiveness but to express love. Thus, the Christian faith calls on believers to forgive unconditionally.

¹⁰ *New York Times*, September 18, 2002, pp.1 & 10.

¹¹ Miroslav Volf, following Nicolai Hartmann, argues that human forgiveness, unlike divine forgiveness, does not remove moral guilt. "To receive forgiveness," observes Volf, "is at the same time to admit to the deed and accept the blame." See Miroslav Volf, "Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Justice: A Theological Contribution to a More Peaceful Social Environment," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* vol. 29, no. 3 (2000), p.875.

¹² Priscilla Hayner, "In Pursuit of Justice and Reconciliation: Contributions of Truth Telling," in Cynthia J. Arnson, ed., *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p.375.

¹³ L. Gregory Jones, *Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), p.267.

¹⁴ For a discussion of the official repentance of the United States to Japanese internees, please see Elazar Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000).

¹⁵ Quoted in Alex Boraine, *A Country Unmasked: Inside South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.41.

¹⁶ Charles Villa-Vicencio, "Getting on with Life: A Move Towards Reconciliation," in Charles Villa-Vicencio and Wilhelm Verwoerd, eds., *Looking Back, Reaching Forward: Reflections on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa* (London: Zed Books, 2000), p.209.

¹⁷ Some of the reasons for the victims' prerogative to forgive include the following: first, because victims have suffered from offenders' wrongdoing, they have the primary moral right to lift any deserved punishment; second, since wrongdoing leads to victims' anger and resentment, such feelings can be transformed only by the voluntarily action of victims themselves; forgiveness cannot be imposed by external parties; and third, since forgiveness entails a transformation of relationships between victims and offenders, such changes can only occur if victims participate in the reformation process.

¹⁸ Trudy Govier and Wilhelm Verwoerd, "Forgiveness: The Victim's Prerogative" (unpublished paper).

¹⁹ "Statement by President Aylwin on the Report of the National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation," in Neil J. Kritz, ed., *Transitional Justice: How Emerging Democracies Reckon With Former Regimes*, vol. III, ed., Neil J. Kritz (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1995), p.171.

²⁰ See Marguerite Feitlowitz, *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.223-224.

²¹ Timothy Garton Ash, "True Confessions," *The New York Review of Books* (July 17, 1997), p.37.

²² Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, "The Moral Foundations of Truth Commissions" in Robert I. Rotberg and Dennis Thompson, eds., *Truth v. Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp.35-36.

²³ Quoted in Gary Jonathan Bass, *Stay the Hand of Vengeance: The Politics of War Crimes Tribunals* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p.284.

²⁴ Miroslav Volf, "Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Justice: A Theological Contribution to a More Peaceful Social Environment," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* vol. 29 (2000), p.874.

²⁵ See Miroslav Volf, "The Social Meaning of Reconciliation," *Interpretation* 54 (April 2000), pp.160-164.

²⁶ Lewis B. Smedes, *op cit.*, p.124.

²⁷ Susan Jacoby, *Wild Justice* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), p.345.

²⁸ Bruce Ackerman, *The Future of Liberal Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p.72.

²⁹ Elizabeth Kiss, "Moral Ambition Within and Beyond Political Constraints," in Rotberg and Thompson, eds., *Truth v. Justice*, p.79.

³⁰ Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), p.19.

³¹ Lewis B. Smedes, "Stations on the Journey from Forgiveness

to Hope,” in Everett L. Worthington, Jr., ed., *Dimensions of Forgiveness: Psychological Research and Theological Perspectives* (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 1998), p.352.

³² Amos Elon, “The Politics of Memory,” *The New York Review of Books* (October 7, 1993), p.5.

³³ R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), p.195.

³⁴ Hannah Arendt, *op cit.*, p.241.

³⁵ *Ibid.* p.237.

³⁶ Jean Bethke Elshtain, “Fear, Forgiveness, and the New World Disorder,” *Religion and Values in Public Life* (Fall, 1994). P.7.

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way is, and walk in it, and you
will find rest for your souls.'**
Jeremiah 6:16

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