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Foreword

Archbishop Desmond M. Tutu

IT PLEASES ME to open this symposium, offered by the Sir John Templeton Foundation, for which I have so much fondness, on Forgiveness and Reconciliation.

People have tended to think of forgiveness as something nebulous, something esoteric, something that was all right for people so inclined, but that tended to happen only between individuals and had really no significance for the body politic.

It's turning out to be different.

We've also been told that, on the whole, the kind of people who would ask for forgiveness would probably be sissies: weak, not amounting to a great deal.

You notice these days that forgiveness, confession, and so on are coming into their own. We've heard the president of the United States publicly confessing to faults and asking for forgiveness. The prime minister of Israel and the German chancellor have gone together to a concentration camp and carried out a kind of ritual of confession and forgiveness. Perceptions are changing. People are beginning to think of forgiveness and reconciliation as spiritual values that have more significance than they had previously recognized for life as it is lived.

We tend to believe that we live in a cynical, hard world, a world that pooh-poohs spiritual values. I said how we thought that it was sissies, the weak ones, who asked for forgiveness. Let me give you a counter example.

In South Africa we had a bit of trouble in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Someone accused one of the commissioners of being implicated in a criminal activity. President Mandela, after the commission had tried very hard to deal with the matter internally, appointed a special commission under Judge Richard Goldstone, who had been the prosecutor in a tribunal relating to Bosnia and Kosovo.

Judge Goldstone, aware of its importance for the commission, acted very quickly to deal with the matter. He produced his report, which he handed over to our President Mandela. And the president, being the kind of person he is, knew that the commissioner who had been accused must have been on tenterhooks and very anxious. And so the president got in touch with him to say that in fact the commission had exonerated him.

I then got in touch with the president's secretary and I said, "Do you know what? Tell the president that I'm upset. I am the chairperson of this commission. And if there was anybody who had to be told first what the Goldstone Commission had said, then it was I. Tell him I think he botched on etiquette." Just a few minutes later, Nelson Mandela was on the telephone. And he said, "Mpilo, you're quite right. I'm sorry."

That was exceedingly humbling that he, the head of state and someone who is a colossus, should actually get on the phone so very quickly and apologize to trifling little me. It was a deeply moving thing but I think it demonstrates how it is, that the bigger you are, the easier it gets for you to acknowledge when you have made a mistake.

It isn't the easiest thing to do. People get upset about the fact that someone like P. W. Botha, or whoever, has not apologized. You say to them: "You know, some of the most difficult words I know in any language are 'I'm sorry.'" We find it difficult to say them even in the intimacy of our own bedrooms, as between spouses. You can imagine what it must mean for someone to do so in the full glare of publicity.

I really want just to say to you that I have gone through the crucible of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and have been devastated by the extent of the evil revealed in that process. As when somebody can say:

“They undressed me. They opened a drawer. And they shoved my breast into the drawer, and they slammed it several times on my nipple, until a white stuff oozed.” Or: “We abducted him. We gave him drugged coffee, and we shot him in the head. And we burned his body. And as his body was burning, because it takes so long for a human body to burn, we had a barbecue on the side. Turning two kinds of flesh—cow flesh on one side and human flesh on the other.”

I have looked into the abyss of human evil and seen the depth to which we can in fact plumb. But paradoxically one comes away from it exhilarated by the revelation of the goodness of people. You encounter people who, having suffered grievously, should by right have been riddled with bitterness and a lust for revenge and retribution. But they are different.

One of our liberation movements attacked a golf course, and several people were killed, white people. One woman was so badly injured that she had to have open-heart surgery. She returned home and because of her injuries her children had to bathe her, clothe her, feed her. She said to us, “You know, I can’t walk through the security checkpoint at the airport because I think there’s shrapnel in me, and if I were to walk through, all kinds of bells and alarms would go off.”

She came to the commission and she said, “This experience, that has left me in this condition, has enriched my life.” Enriched my life! And then she said, “I’d like to meet the perpetrator. I’d like to meet the guy who threw the hand grenade! I’d like to meet him in the spirit of forgiveness, which is wonderful! I’d like to forgive him.” But what was mind-boggling was when she added, “I hope he forgives me.”

And we went on to have a hearing on something called the Bisho Massacre, when the ANC marched on Bisho, which used to be the capital of one of the homelands. The homeland army had opened fire and killed several people. We wanted to find out what had happened and generally what was afoot at the time.

The hall in which we held the hearing was packed to the rafters with people either injured on that occasion or people who had lost loved ones. The first witness was the head of the Ciskeian Defense Force. It probably wasn’t *what* he said so much as *how* he said whatever it was that he said, but the tension in the room rose. I mean it was tangible. You could feel the

anger of the people just multiplying. And then we had the next batch of witnesses, four officers, one white and three black.

They came onto the stage, and the white guy became their spokesperson. And he said, "Yes, we gave the orders for the soldiers to open fire." Ho! It was combustible! And then he turned to the audience, this angry audience, seething, and he said, "Please, forgive us. Please accept my colleagues back into the community."

And do you know what that audience, that angry audience, did? It broke out into deafening applause. And afterwards I said, "Please let us keep quiet because we are in the presence of something holy."

We have been incredibly privileged to have been part of a process of seeking to heal a traumatized people. Many times I have said, "Really, the only appropriate response is for us to take off our shoes, because we are standing on holy ground."

And so one comes away from the experience of some of the most gruesome evil, exhilarated at the fact that people can be so good, that people can be filled with such magnanimity, that people can have certain incredible gifts of generosity.

And so, my friends, I thought that after all this I was retiring. And yes, maybe I am retired actually. But I believe that one of our vocations now is to remind people: "Hey! You are made for goodness. You are made for the transcendent. You are those who soar, you are made to reach out to the stars. The sky's the limit!"

Now you may think that, oh, he's just waxing crazy, as we've always thought Tutu to be crazy. But have you noticed something about us?

Who are the people the world thrills about? It's not the militarily powerful. It's not even the most successful economically, though the world goes gaga about a Mother Teresa. Ah, yes!

She was about that size that you could put her in your back pocket and no one would miss her. She wasn't particularly successful, was she? She went around trying to make people be concerned about poverty. She wanted to serve the derelict in Calcutta and elsewhere. And you can't speak of success. I mean, she would have a very tough time remaining in a class that asked, "How about the success of things you have done?"

And yet the world says, "Isn't it wonderful to be alive when there was

a Mother Teresa!” Think of the world saying that, this cynical world, this hard world.

You remember Tiananmen Square. There was a minute little student, with a little paper bag, standing in front of a tank and making the tank veer. And then as it changed direction he went and stood in front of it again. Didn’t our hearts thrill to know that there are forces that are more potent than the military?

Nelson Mandela isn’t exactly the greatest orator in the world. (That’s between you and me. Don’t let us tell him!) And yet the world is almost about to turn him into an idol. The world worships him. No, let’s not use extravagant words. The world admires him. Why? The world admires him because the world says, “This is what we think we ought to be, to be those who embody forgiveness, reconciliation, who embody goodness.”

And so friends, God bless you. For you know, God is actually saying, “Yah! I’ve got into a lot of trouble creating this lot. Sometimes I ask myself actually why I ever did get myself into this.” But then God looks at you, and God says, “Aren’t they neat? Aren’t they something? They justify the risk I took.”

We are made for goodness. We are made for love. We are made for friendliness. We are made for togetherness. We are made for all of the beautiful things that you and I know.

We are made to tell the world that there are no outsiders. All, all are welcome: black, white, red, yellow, rich, poor, educated, not educated, male, female, gay, straight, all, all, all. We are meant all, all to belong to this family, this human family, God’s family.

Introduction

Raymond Helmick, S.J., and Rodney L. Petersen

RELIGION, WE HAVE ALL LEARNED, plays sometimes a destructive, sometimes a constructive role in our societies' life and in our conflicts. It is at its best when it speaks of forgiveness and reconciliation, the themes of this book.

Ours is a study in political penitence. Its horizon is not the confessional, but public policy and conflict transformation. The book grows out of a symposium entitled, "Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religious Contributions to Conflict Resolution," held at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, in October 1999 and sponsored by the Sir John Templeton Foundation. It is a part of the ongoing Campaign for Forgiveness Research stimulated and made possible by the Templeton Foundation. It was our good fortune to be able to begin with Archbishop Desmond Tutu's reflections on his experience in heading the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the aftermath of South Africa's agony of apartheid.

If ideas like "forgiveness" and "reconciliation" are moving out from the seminary and academy into the world of public policy, there is a need to understand, first, how these terms have been used and defined in the past. In the first section, "The Theology of Forgiveness," the chapter by Rodney L. Petersen explores the terminology, rhetoric, and dialectical nature of forgiveness that shape our perception of the term. This exploration is

developed in relation to several concrete experiences of forgiveness in human relations. Forgiveness, we are all learning, is not just about the words we use. It is also about the deep resonance between mind and heart—an existential reality that calls us beyond analysis and technique to the life of immediate relationships. When we are willing to go here life becomes more intense, even dialectical, as we are drawn into different histories of woundedness, growth, and integration.

Miroslav Volf deepens our understanding of the meaning of forgiveness and the ways in which forgiveness is related to categories of reconciliation and justice. He notes the surprising resurgence of religion at the end of the twentieth century but takes issue with those who see in this resurgence a relation to religiously legitimized violence. He contests the claim that Christian faith fosters violence and makes the carefully qualified argument that a more “costly discipleship” rather than less religion is required. By pointing to the critical role played by a variety of institutions and approaches to conflict settlement, Volf lays siege to the idea that religion, and Christianity in particular, is by nature violent through his critique of Maurice Bloch and Regina Schwartz. Christian faith, through its death to self-centered desire and universalist tendencies, provides the space required for harmonious peace. This argument, running in tandem with R. Scott Appleby’s “ambivalence of the sacred,” finds in Christian faith as deeply practiced the will to embrace the other, making possible forgiveness and meaningful reconciliation.¹ The impetus for such will comes, in Volf’s opinion, from a communion of love embedded in the intertrinitarian relations of non-self-enclosed identities that constitute Christian theology.

The internal meaning of this theology is drawn out by Stanley Harakas, who completes our theological analysis of the terms of forgiveness by taking us through the history of Orthodox Church understanding.² Harakas writes of the tension between relational and legal approaches to forgiveness and reconciliation. In doing this he outlines important anthropological

1. R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000).
2. For an analysis of Orthodox reflection in relation to public policy, see Hildo Bos and Jim Forest, eds., *For the Peace from Above: An Orthodox Resource Book on War, Peace, and Nationalism*, produced by the World Fellowship Syndesmos of Orthodox Youth (Bialystok, Poland: Orthdruk Printing House, 1999).

assumptions in the tradition with respect to human nature. Second, Harakas draws attention to three dimensions of God's forgiveness—transcendent, imminent, and present—as they relate to sacramental understanding and human practice. Finally, he illustrates how the sacramental aspect of forgiveness provides the ontological ground for the possibility of the practice of forgiveness and meaningful reconciliation. It is a theology of forgiveness that gives deep meaning and shared reality to the practice of forgiveness.

Religion is never practiced in a vacuum, and theology, the analytical aspect of religious belief and practice, is best done when engaged with human affairs. The second section of our book picks up such engagement with public policy. Raymond G. Helmick begins by drawing attention to the strange alienation between the Christian churches and their own constituencies, most evident since the end of the Wars of Religion. The alienation exposes the churches easily to cooptation for purposes alien to themselves, as people tend not to trust them to define their own agendas. In what we have called, since that time, “The Modern World,” trust has been granted instead to three elements that have shaped modern consciousness: science and its resulting technology, the celebration of reason in the Enlightenment, and political liberalism. But as the devastation and violence of the twentieth century have sapped faith in this secular trinity of values, interest in the wisdom traditions, including the religions, has grown anew, though without lessening the suspicion of religious institutions. Helmick would challenge the faith communities, in the context of the separation of church and state, to put into practice their professed commitment to human rights, justice, and peace. This comes as our societies have moved from a politics of interest to one of identity since the late twentieth century.

Joseph Montville writes from the perspective of one working with this new conception of religion in a world divided by conflicted identities. Having coined the term “track two diplomacy” for those forms of diplomacy that occur apart from or outside regular government, Montville has continued to foster this through the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C.³ In his chapter Montville begins by

3. Vamik D. Volkan, Demetrios A. Julius, and Joseph V. Montville, eds., *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships: Concept and Theories*, vol. 2 (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1991).

noting the intersection of religion and mass psychology and focuses attention on the ways in which the sacred can intensify or mitigate violence. He draws upon the evolutionary analysis of religion by R. Scott Appleby and the role of religion in shaping identity, worked out by Marc Gopin, for his argument.⁴ Montville illustrates how several of the world's religious traditions offer ways to foster human rights, justice, and the means for peace-building.⁵

Our next author, Douglas Johnston Jr., picks up this theme in a practical vein and illustrates it through the work of the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD) and by way of his own study, coedited with Cynthia Sampson, *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*. Recognizing the precarious lives that many people lead in the context of violence, Johnston acknowledges the psychological and social function of religion and tries to harness this for peace building. This argument is further established in recent work by the pioneer advocate for peace studies, Elise Boulding. Similarly, Johnston argues that the positive role of religion is often underreported or ignored. He maintains that the members of faith communities, if trained, might contribute tremendously to conflict transformation. Johnston offers several helpful illustrations in southeast Europe and in central Africa that relate to the constructive work of ICRD.⁶

Donna Hicks picks up a theme evident in the chapters by Helmick and Montville, the important relationship between religion and identity. She outlines the central role identity plays in maintaining and perpetuating interethnic conflict. Existential threats to identity have been described as one of the main sources of intractability in such conflicts by creating a zero-sum view of the relationship with the enemy, where one's very existence seems inextricably linked to the negation of the other. Hicks argues that the current conflict resolution and reconciliation processes have not directly

4. Appleby, *Ambivalence of the Sacred*; Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

5. Montville draws attention here to the work of Gopin for Judaism, Carl Evans for Christianity, and to Abdulaziz Sachedina for Islam (*The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2000]).

6. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, eds., *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Elise Boulding, *Cultures of Peace: The Hidden Side of History* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2000).

addressed the issue of identity. Her chapter attempts to clarify the issue by carefully examining the process of identity development and what happens to that process under conditions of threat and conflict. Finally, she proposes adaptations to the current methodologies that are being used in interethnic conflict resolution that could directly address the issue of identity and examines the possible role of forgiveness in creating the conditions that promote genuine reconciliation through the reconstruction of identity.

Issues of religion and identity, and the chilling way in which they enter into and define conflict, run through this section of our book. Such surveys as that by journalist William Shawcross, *Deliver Us from Evil*, of contemporary war zones illustrates this; moreover, Donald Shriver, crafted pioneering work on the interface between forgiveness as understood in the church/faith communities and the public policy community, both embroiled in the contemporary search for conflict transformation.⁷ Shriver argues that the solution to such conflict lies in our capacity to forgive. His chapter in this volume raises pertinent questions about our desire to forgive and to practice forgiveness. The illustrations that he offers take us not only to his larger study but also to the more recent litany of testimony laid out by author Michael Henderson.⁸ They also point to the real effect that conflict mediation, the intervention of international norms and activity, can have on diminishing regional conflict as pointed out by Ted Robert Gurr.⁹

The third section of this book draws us to a more particular analysis of the relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation with perspectives

7. William Shawcross, *Deliver Us from Evil: Peacemakers, Warlords, and a World of Endless Conflict* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000); Donald W. Shriver Jr., *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
8. Michael Henderson, *Forgiveness: Breaking the Chain of Hate* (Wilsonville, Ore.: Book Partners, 1999). Henderson's work and the stories he shares draw heavily upon and support the work of the Foundation for Moral Re-Armament, Caux, Switzerland. The booklet by Bryan Hamlin, *Forgiveness in International Affairs*, Platform Four (London: Grosvenor Books, 1992), published in association with *For a Change* magazine, illustrates the principles of moral re-armament and forgiveness in international affairs.
9. Ted Robert Gurr, *Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2000). In distinction from his 1993 book, *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace), which presented a disturbing picture of spreading ethnic violence, this volume documents a more recent decline as states have apparently abandoned earlier strategies. The spread of international norms, rise of political democracy, and the interventionism on the part of international actors may all be factors in the current setting.

that are quite diverse but represent primary voices in the academic and theological community. These include fields of clinical psychology, regional conflict mediation, social science, and global youth ministry.

We begin with clinical and social psychologist Everett Worthington Jr., who also serves as director of the Campaign for Forgiveness and edited the previous volume in this series.¹⁰ Worthington alerts us to important scientific work in forgiveness studies in a chapter that clarifies terminology and proceeds to suggest ways of reducing unforgiveness. In this, his work draws, in part, on the restorative justice thinking of Howard Zehr.¹¹ In addition to justice, punitive or restorative, Worthington also discusses conflict resolution, and social justice as a means to reduce unforgiveness. The value of such suggestive methodologies is that when Worthington turns to other areas of personal and group conflict, patterns of unforgiveness reduction form pathways toward possible forgiveness in relationships and societal interventions. Along the way we are alerted to a rich and growing field of research.

A social science approach also frames the second chapter in this section, that by John Paul Lederach, but Lederach is clear that in his opinion reconciliation processes do not lend themselves to social technology. Rather, the qualities that lend themselves to the practice of reconciliation tend more toward attitude and character than toward technique. As such, Lederach outlines five qualities of practice that lend themselves to reconciliation, the centrality of relationships, the challenge of accompaniment, a space for reconciliation created by humility, community as the place for reconciliation, and the recognition that time and even barrenness—not unlike wandering in the desert—are places to which one may have to go before reconciliation can be achieved.

The chapter by Ervin Staub and Laurie Anne Pearlman draws together the worlds of social science and experience with its focus on “healing, reconciliation and forgiving after genocide and other collective violence.” It asks us to reflect on the effect of collective violence on victims and perpetrators. Having raised initial questions about the need to forgive in order to

10. Everett Worthington Jr., ed., *Dimensions of Forgiveness: Psychological Research and Theological Perspectives* (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 1998).

11. Howard Zehr, *Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1995).

find healing, the focus of this chapter is on the conflict in Rwanda and the lessons that are raised for forgiveness and reconciliation from that situation. Qualities that contribute to healing include empowerment, truth, testimony and group ceremony, justice, understanding, exposing, acknowledgment, cooperative work, attention to children, and political responsibility. Other factors are considered as well if healing is to occur among victims and perpetrators.

Rwanda represents for many an open illustration of the effects of collective violence and need for healing. In his chapter, John Dawson lists many of the different areas of social existence that stand in similar need of healing. Dawson's perspective on forgiveness and reconciliation is set within a distinctly Christian narrative, but the illustrations he raises have clear universal applicability. As has been the case in each of the three sections of this book thus far, at least one author in the lot has drawn us to the point of human fallibility, or sin and its corrosive effects in relationships: Stanley Harakas, Donald Shriver, and now Dawson. Dawson's understanding of peacemaking in the twenty-first century finds its agenda in the litter of abuse and violence that has dominated western civilization. He sketches out areas that require healing and offers some powerful examples in the course of such categorization. His chapter will not let the reader alone without first taking stock of one's own willingness to be involved in the work of reconciliation, if not always as precisely defined by Dawson.

The final section of this book, "Seeking Forgiveness after Tragedy," highlights the remarkable work of a number of practitioners currently working with religion, public policy, and conflict transformation.

Writing first in this section is Audrey Chapman. Her chapter investigates the role of truth commissions as a means toward societal forgiveness and reconciliation. Acknowledging the context in which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of South Africa did its work, her conclusion is that such commissions assist a society in coming to terms with its past, without which no new society is easily birthed. In the face of the TRC's acknowledged inadequacies, most appear to have concluded that it moved South Africa in this direction. Toward this conclusion, Chapman presents interpretations of forgiveness as a commitment to a way of life and practice (Jones), a commitment of the will (Suchocki), that which entails liberation

from the past (Müller-Fahrenholz), and as applicable to the secular realm and public policy (Shriver). Her requirements for reconciliation include discernment of the truth, open and shared acknowledgment, letting go of the past, justice, a commitment to restored relationships, and the establishment of a new social and political covenant.

Olga Botcharova carries the work of forgiveness through “track two diplomacy,” as defined earlier by Montville, into southeast Europe. Having scored the political community’s failure to provide leadership in the region, she suggests three factors that block a successful peace: a failure to attend to the need for healing, suggestions for resolution that are foreign to local requirements, and strategies that appeal to ruling hierarchies but not to members of a given society. Botcharova follows other authors in this volume in arguing for the role of a deep diplomacy made possible through religious and other organizations in civil society. She illustrates ways in which this has happened through the Center for Strategic Studies and in the Balkans. In moving toward reconciliation she argues for the central role of forgiveness as graphically displayed in her diagrams.

Author Anthony da Silva takes us to three case studies in India, coming to terms with forgiveness and reconciliation as understood by Gandhi. For purposes of comparison and contrast, *satya* (truth) and *satyagraha* (truth force) and *ahimsa* (nonviolence) are presented and set in relation to reconciliation. Reconciliation through nonviolence is said to have much in common with the four dimensions of forgiveness noted by Shriver: moral judgment, forbearance, empathy, and the restoration of relationships.

With author Geraldine Smyth we are carried back to Europe and face the Northern Ireland Troubles. She writes of the quest for peace in Ireland as it has grown from the stories of loss and bereavement into a vision for the future. Her chapter creates a bond between personal suffering and the public efforts by all parties to find and hold the peace. With a certain irony in relation to all we hear about religion’s incitement to conflict, Smyth argues that the Christians and their churches have mitigated the violence that could have been through their calls for nonretaliation and forgiveness. Awareness, a willingness to forgive, healing and reconciled relations, and a commitment to new community mark dimensions of her story. Such steps give tears and flesh to the theories outlined elsewhere in this volume.

Andrea Bartoli bears a similar message from Mozambique through his report on the work of peace facilitation through the Community of Sant'Egidio. He argues that a religious contribution made the political discourse flexible and, in the end, helped to implement a successful conclusion to the conflict. Having presented a brief history of the conflict, Bartoli discusses the role of religious actors in the conflict and the willingness of different sides in the conflict to use a multiplicity of channels toward its resolution. The facilitation of communication through the Community of Sant'Egidio was described as a form of "pastoral diplomacy." It permitted a shift in relations from enmity to partnership and cooperation, a normal role for third-party actors in facilitating mediation.

Finally, by turning to the article by Ofelia Ortega, we are drawn to one of the most protracted conflicts in the Western Hemisphere, that between Cuba and the United States. Without dealing with that larger relationship directly, Ortega asks us to wrestle with otherness and difference as essential for the healing and reconstruction of community. The violence that we encounter in a variety of relationships is said to be always shaped by the complex character of a culture. Ortega writes of the difference between a culture of death and a culture of life. Her piece makes helpful reference to such programs of the World Council of Churches as the "Ecumenical Decade—Churches in Solidarity with Women," the "Peace to the City Campaign," and "Decade to Overcome Violence." Each of these has been an effort to marshal the moral conscience of the churches and their adherents to commit themselves to a culture of peace.

Our afterword, by George Ellis, carries us back to the themes seen in our foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Ellis marks out the concentric circles in which forgiveness runs even in the face of what he terms the pleasure of resentment. He adds further documentation to places where forgiveness has functioned in a remarkable peacemaking fashion. In light of such examples he advocates the systematic study of forgiveness for the role it can play in personal as well as community health. Linked to programs of education and development, forgiveness, and the possible reconciliation that it affords, becomes the way into a future unfettered by cyclical violence.

Ellis's afterword brings us to one of three concluding points to be made in this introduction. First, this book begins, and thus ends, with the continent

of Africa and, in a way, with the *kairos* moment in South Africa the day that Nelson Mandela left Robben Island, opening the way to the National Unity and Reconciliation Act of July 16, 1995, and the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. As we move along into the twenty-first century there is a certain symbolism here. It is to say that the themes tied up in the title of this book, “forgiveness and reconciliation: religion, public policy, and conflict transformation,” carry a special meaning as they are allowed to play out with sepulchral or jubilant tonality in this continent that symbolizes so much of human endeavor. It is possible that here we will learn whether our interest in forgiveness is restorative or merely one more road down the path of denial, the “forgiveness bypath” noted by some.

Second, in addition to showing us something about ourselves, this book has carried us through four sections dealing with theology, or the ontology behind our terminology, public policy, psychological and social theory, and social policy implementation. Central to this work of implementation are voluntary associations as they operate freely in civil society. Organizations such as the Mennonite Central Committee, Community of Sant’Egidio, World Vision, and others that might have been included have promoted and made possible this plurality of expression upon which democratic society depends. The community at large is the embracing association within which other associations live, the state being one of these. The state in this perspective is the creature and servant of the community, not its creator. The state is not omnipotent or omniscient. In other words, there is a valid place for “track two diplomacy” apart from its utilitarian value, for the state is nurtured by a volunteerism born of a larger vision. From this perspective religious organizations, frequently those that birth other non-governmental associations, have an important part to play in the emerging civil order.¹² Such ideas, grounded earlier in the work of Ernst Troeltsch, have found their way into the twentieth century through John Courtney Murray, Hannah Arendt, and Abraham Heschel.¹³

12. See James Luther Adams, *Voluntary Associations: Sociocultural Analyses and Theological Interpretation*, ed. J. Ronald Engel (Chicago: Exploration Press, 1986).

13. Abraham Heschel, *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity*, ed. Susannah Heschel (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996), 235–30.

Finally, to come full circle, “there is no future without forgiveness.” These words by Desmond Tutu tell us not only something about ourselves and our societies, but also something about history itself. *Forgiveness* is a word that makes for freedom. This is as true in southern Africa and the Balkans as it is in the Western Hemisphere. Forgiveness makes it possible to remember the past without being held hostage to it. Without forgiveness there is no progress, no linear history, only a return to conflict and cycles of conflict. This is a very old lesson.

His brothers came and fell down before him, and said, “Behold we are your servants.” But Joseph said to them, “Fear not, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.” (Gen. 50:18–21)