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Struggling With Forgiveness

Gretchen Gundrum

Forgiveness is a complicated subject. We've been told to forgive without limit—seventy times seven times. We've been told that it's good for our health—Google it! But even Jesus didn't tell us how to do it. Perhaps that task has always been ours to figure out.

Forgiving by *fiat* doesn't work. When my brothers and I were young squabblers, Mother would intervene, listen briefly to the grievances of both sides, tell offending parties to cease and desist, insist on apologies where appropriate, and have us kiss and make-up. We complied obediently but our hearts didn't always come along. Resentments continued to smolder, along with a few thoughts of revenge. Our grievances were still alive.

Some people hold on to grievances for too long. Resentments generated by misunderstandings, betrayals, and injustices that happened years ago still play out in the mind, sometimes with the same intensity. The word *resentment* means "to feel again." Our physiological responses—the release of adrenalin and cortisol, rapid heartbeat, fear, and anger—flood

our consciousness in replays of the event that originally precipitated them. We are right back in that moment. These memories take up space "rent-free" in our psyches, keeping us stuck in the past. We can't get on with our lives. There is no true peace within. How



many family gatherings have been poisoned because of unforgiven resentments? Siblings meet for the first time in 30 years over their mother's casket—all that lost time. All the pain. Deep rifts in families, neighborhoods, businesses, political parties, and churches, mount daily. How does this stop?

Expectations & Patterns

According to Dr. Fred Luskin,

author of *Forgive for Good*, grievances arise when we want something and make an unenforceable rule about getting it—a rule we simply don't have the power to make happen. Our expectations don't get met and we deal with the problem ineffectually by thinking about it too much.

The negative thought pattern becomes an ingrained habit. We persevere, going over and over the event to the point where it begins to interfere with our lives and our relationships. The expectations are usually not expressed directly to the offending party.

When others don't meet our needs, we may take it too personally, blame the offender for how we feel—instead of taking responsibility ourselves for our feelings—and create what Luskin calls "a grievance story." This leads

to a victim stance, not a place of inner freedom. The author further reminds us that if we

cling to even one unenforceable rule, we leave ourselves open "to suffer every single time the rule is broken."¹ We feel angry, de-

These memories take up space "rent-free" in our psyches, keeping us stuck in the past.

“Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive.”
~C. S. Lewis

pressed, sad, and helpless. This is how we get trapped by and in our grudges. Our task instead is to acknowledge our pain and understand its cause. When that happens, we can claim responsibility and take action for a better outcome.

It's important to ask yourself honestly if you're willing to begin the process of healing. We often know we should forgive, but getting there takes a while. Perhaps we can only begin by *being willing to be willing to try to forgive!* There's grace involved in this process. It's not wise to force it. Clearly, there are degrees of injury in the forgiveness process—from recovering from a trivial misunderstanding to confronting an egregious offense. Talking with a wise friend or spiritual guide can help to discern personal responsibility and right action. Some grievances may even be too difficult to dispel. Those must be left to God's own time.

Steps Toward Healing

While grievances are created through a process, forgiveness is itself a process that releases them.

Here are some steps toward healing:

☉ First, be clear what your feelings are about what happened.

☉ Second, decide what was unacceptable to you.

☉ Third, share your experience with one or two trusted people. Luskin believes this helps to sort things out and determine how best to cope. Sharing with too many runs the risk of getting stuck in the victim role.

If you feel at an impasse with someone, it might be helpful to ask yourself if you have any unexpressed or unfulfilled expectations about the interaction. Learning how to express wants or desires directly instead of expecting someone else to read our minds or having fixed ideas about outcomes will go a long way to improving

“... become a hero instead of a victim in the story you tell.”

interpersonal communication.

Try to stand in the other's shoes and tell the story as you think they might. This technique alone can illuminate how we may have over-personalized something and taken offense where none was intended. We may even find that we haven't erred on the side of over-personalization, and then be even clearer about how to seek justice.

Time to Forgive

Forgiveness takes time and patience. We need distance to

gain perspective and see our part in something, and also to see how injustices have been done to us. In *Don't Forgive Too Soon*, Dennis, Sheila, and Matthew Linn highlight the justice piece involved in forgiveness. They also stress that forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation. We can forgive others without direct contact; not all relationships can or should be restored to their original condition.

Forgiveness is also not forgetting. If some terrible harm has come to you from the hands of another, you can forgive the person without ever condoning or minimizing the evil that occurred. Where there is scar tissue on the soul it serves as a reminder and a protector to avoid those that would do us harm.

Dr. Luskin has a comforting definition of forgiveness: “The feeling of peace that emerges as you take your hurt less personally, take responsibility for how you feel, and become a hero instead of a victim in the story you tell. Forgiveness is the experience of peace in the present moment.”²

Jesus told us to pray for our enemies: a simple daily prayer for someone who's troubling us, while hard to do, can bring peace. Finally, forgiving ourselves may be the hardest part of the forgiveness process. God forgives us, so why can't we? ~

¹ Fred Luskin, *Forgive For Good*, 52

² *Ibid*, 68

Reconciliation: Re-Weaving a Social Fabric that Heals

Carl Stauffer

In the market place of ideas, the concepts and language of reconciliation have become quite popularized and at the same time diluted. Coming out of the turmoil of the South African political transition of the 1990s, it became abundantly clear to me that the term reconciliation was easily hijacked to serve the particular interests of any number of socio-political groupings.

For some, reconciliation was used to describe the political process of power-sharing. For others it referred to new political and legal democratic reforms that allowed former enemies to live together without killing each other. Still others would have used the term to describe a “good working relationship” with persons of another culture or race. While all of these notions have linkages to genuine reconciliation, they are only parts of the whole.

Authentic reconciliation requires us to move beyond mere social tolerance or political co-existence. It is concerned with repairing harmony in the life of a community or nation. By harmony, I mean the restoring of meaningful relationships—relationships of dignity, trust and collaboration. Harmony also infers a collective concern for the common good and a shared future view that gives hope and motivation to the idea of unity.¹

Tools for Agents of Reconciliation

There are volumes of published literature on what reconciliation is and how it is accomplished. (See *Pathways & Patterns of Reconciliation*)

Drawing from this brief overview, there are at least six critical elements that need to be considered by those who wish to be agents of reconciliation at either an individual or collective level. With each element there are corresponding skill-sets that can be developed.

1. Psycho-social Support and Trauma Healing: Violence causes disempowerment and disconnect-ness; reconciliation aims at the exact opposite—empowerment and connection.²

∞ Skills: Trauma awareness, education, debriefing and counseling skills

2. Personal and Public Griev-ing or “Lament”: The wronged and wrong-doer need a safe space

to tell their story and a public space where society “bears witness” to the harm that has been caused.³

∞ Skills: Trauma awareness, education, debriefing and counseling skills

3. Awakening Empathic Responses: The human brain is biologically “hard-wired” to make human connections and to build community through social networks.⁴

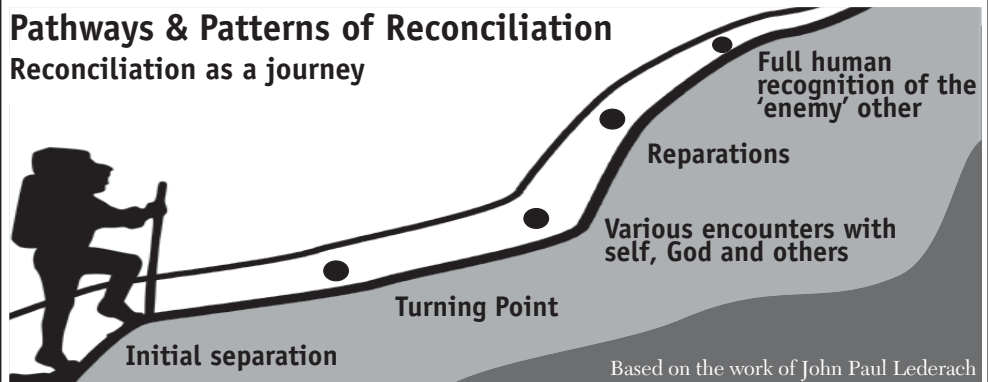
∞ Skills: Active listening, paraphrasing, summarizing, nonviolent communication and basic counseling skills

4. Facilitating Forgiveness Transactions: “An act of forgiveness must be understood as a complex process of unlocking

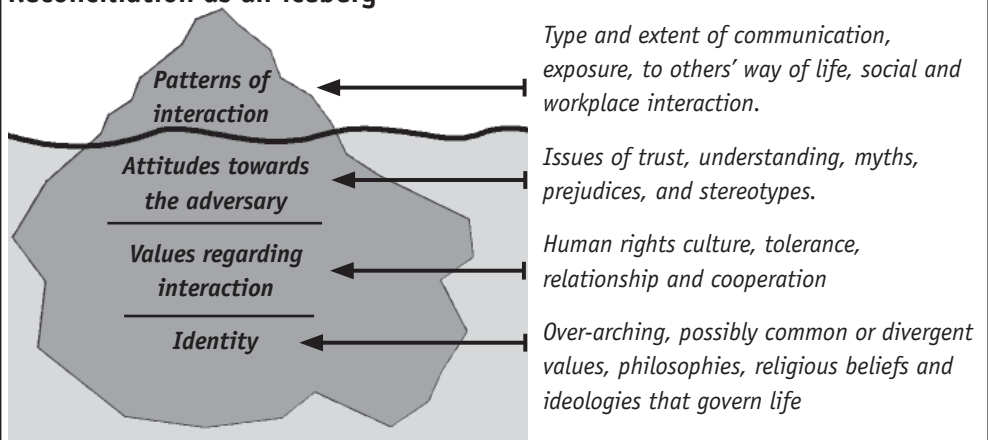
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Reconciliation as an iceberg



The most visible levels are probably the easiest to address. Behavioral transformation is the most measurable type of change. However, transforming attitudes, values and identities can be a much greater challenge.

Based on the work of Hugo van der Merwe

(‘Pathways’ continued on page 6)



David Kelly is a member of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood and executive director of the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation in Chicago.

Communities of Reconciliation: Repairing Relationships

David Kelly, C.P.P.S.

“**y**ou act as though you have no family,” the elder said to the young man. We had gathered in a Peacemaking Circle on the second floor of an old school building in the Back of the Yards neighborhood in Chicago, home of the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation, to address a robbery and assault that had happened in the community. *You act as though you have no family* was a way of saying that Rico’s actions were that of someone who had little or no respect for family or community.

Cycle of Violence

When young lives are marked by violence, they grow with a distorted sense of self. Whether that violence is the singular act of rape or the prolonged violence of child abuse and abandonment, such children develop with a damaged sense of self that inhibits their abil-



Peacemaking Circle at the Ministry of Reconciliation

ity to form positive relationships with others. They grow in isolation and are disconnected from the very community in which they live.

Studies have shown that the single greatest factor in predicting teenage criminal behavior

is “not teenage pregnancy, drug use, or truancy, but whether they had been victims of crime.”¹ This violent victimization puts juveniles at risk not only of further victimization, but for becoming violent offenders themselves. “Moreover, children who have been subject to abuse or neglect are also more likely to commit crimes as adults.”² This research provides empirical evidence for what is commonly referred to as the “cycle of violence.” Abused and neglected children have significantly greater risk of becoming delinquents, criminals, and violent criminals.

Dignity & Hopes

“Our families are torn by violence. Our communities are destroyed by violence,” wrote the U.S Catholic Bishops in their 1994 pastoral letter, *Confronting A Culture of Violence*. The fear of violence in our homes, schools, streets, nation and world is “paralyzing and polarizing our communities.” And yet, we have an obligation to respond to protect the “dignity and hopes of millions of our sisters and brothers.”³

When Terrell first came into the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center, he was easily agitated, highly aggressive and, as a result, in solitary confinement much of the time. Since he was from the neighborhood, I tried to see him as often as I could. Little by little, he began to disclose more about his life. At one point he said, “Come on, man, I am just going to end up here again. There is nothing out there for me. No one cares

what happens to me.” He grew up believing that he was not capable of being loved.

Terrell, only fourteen at the time, had very little self respect and because of it, had little respect for others. His aggressive and violent actions were a result, not of being an evil person, but of being harmed by the very people who were supposed to be his caregivers. As Carl Bell, a noted psychologist, says, “hurt people hurt people.”

If we are to confront the violence that is so often prevalent in our communities, we need to create places where pain and isolation can begin to heal.

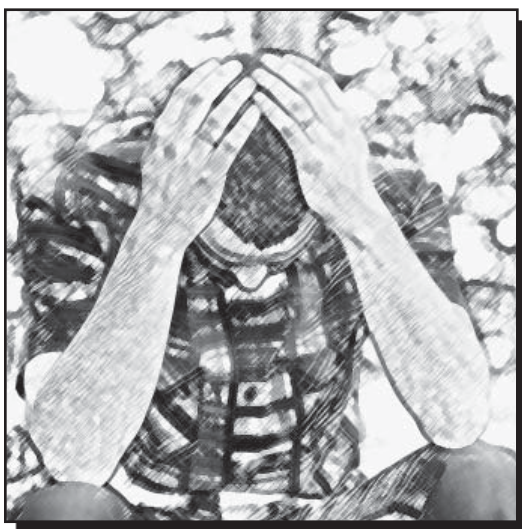
... we need to create places where pain and isolation can begin to heal.

is simplistic and wrong minded to think that we can punish our way out of violence.

Communities of Reconciliation

Robert Schreiter in his book, *The Ministry of Reconciliation, Spirituality and Strategies*, suggests three roles for the Church in reconciliation and healing. First, we are called to be a voice of the gospel message in a world that desperately needs healing and reconciling. Second, the Church offers rituals and symbols that aid in the work of reconciliation. Lastly, the Church can help foster reconciliation and healing by creating communities of reconciliation.

Communities of reconciliation allow people to come together and discover new ways of being community. Trauma isolates and damages relationships; the group re-creates a sense of belonging.⁴ The work of reconciliation—the



are communities where those who live within the confines of trauma are able to see beyond the suffering and the pain to a place where hope is possible.

Peacemaking Circles

Earlier I spoke of Rico who sat in a Peacemaking Circle to address the harm done to another young man who

had been beaten and robbed. As the two young men sat together, along with their families and community elders, they spoke not only of the incident, but of who they were. Attention was given not just to the crime, but to the relationship that had been deeply damaged. As they spoke beyond the facts, they came to see one another differently. Ultimately, the young man who had done the harm was moved to tears as he heard the impact of the robbery and beating on the other young man. The victim, too, was able to hear the pain and the hurt in the life of one who caused the harm.

Peacemaking Circles, a practice of restorative justice, offer us a method and means to come together with our values and traditions to address the harm done and work to repair the relationships that are damaged by violence and crime.

Violence can be transformative – it can be a downward spiral to further harm and violence or it can be a time of profound change. It can be an opportunity to re-

connect – in a different way – with those around us, with ourselves, and with God. ~

¹ Susan Herman, *Parallel Justice for Victims of Crime*, 20.

² *Ibid*, 20.

³ USCCB, *Confronting a Culture of Violence*

⁴ Judith Herman, *Trauma & Recovery*, 20.

⁵ Robert Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation*, 94.

⁶ *Ibid*, 95.

gospel message—demands that we intentionally create places where stories can be shared and relationships restored.

How does one create communities of reconciliation? First, they must be communities of safety; places where victims can allow their woundedness to be seen and shared. The Christian community is a place of hospitality and safety where wounds are explored and stories are met with care and support.⁵ Second, they are places where our memories are not only shared, but are placed alongside the stories and memories of others, and, perhaps, create a new common memory. It is not that our individual stories are lost or

forgotten, but they are seen differently as we see our story in the context of the story of the other – and ultimately the story of Christ's own suffering, death and resurrection. These communities are places where truth is told and people find that their humanity is restored, where the dignity of each is honored and uplifted. Third, communities of reconciliation are communities of hope.⁶ These

Violence can be transformative ...

Hurt & Pain

~By Ashley Houseworth (Decatur, IL)

All I see is Hurt and pain, a broken home, a broken heart, and a broken soul.

A lot of abuse and violence, bruises and scars and broken bones.

A lot of lies, hurtful ways
A lot of broken promises
A lot of sorry but no meaning behind it.

A lot of me and I and no one else.

A lot of motives and stubbornness and playing games.

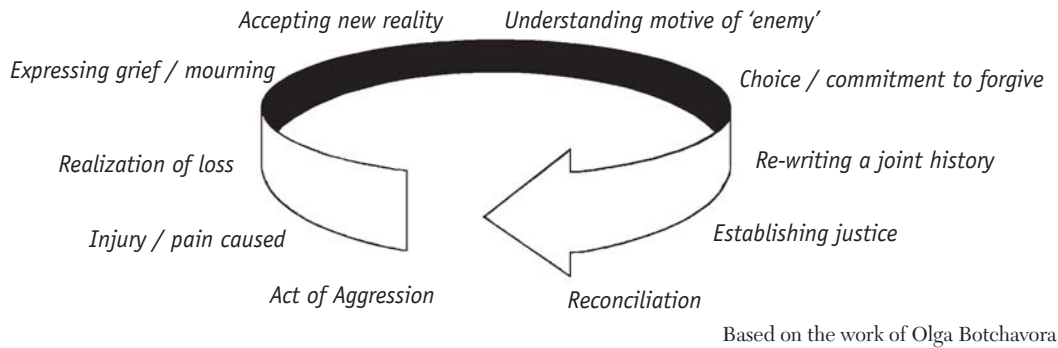
Lots of hurtful ways that hurt my children and family

A lot of regrets and guilt and shame
A lot of mistakes and hurt and pain.

(reprinted from Making Choices, www.pbmr.org
~ voices of incarcerated young people)

Pathways & Patterns of Reconciliation *(continued from page 3)*

Reconciliation as a cycle



continued from page 3

painful bondage of mutual liberation. While the perpetrators must be set free from their guilt—and its devastating consequences—the victims must be liberated from their hurt—and its destructive implications.”⁵

∞ Skills: Active listening, paraphrasing, summarizing, non-violent communication and basic counseling skills

5. Re-writing Historical Narratives: Learning how to “remember rightly in a violent world”⁶ entails dealing with the national-patriotic narratives, the historical memories, the lived experience and the current events.⁷

∞ Skills: Group facilitation, negotiation, mediation, appreciative inquiry, sustained dialogue skills

6. Engaging in Reparative/ Restorative Justice: Asks what harms have been committed, what needs have been generated, and who is obligated to make things right.⁸

∞ Skills: Victim-Offender mediation, Family Group conferencing, circle processes

In sum, the end-goal of reconciliation is like a horizon on the landscape; it provides us with the vision, inspiration and moral guid-

ance on what harmonized relations could look and feel like. On the other hand, the skill-sets attached to conflict management, resolution and/or peacebuilding provide us with the necessary instruments or tools—the means—to arrive at reconciliation. ~

¹ Catholic Social Thought provides a foundational guiding light in terms of defining the values, actions and ethics that should drive this kind of thinking and living.

² Herman, J. *Trauma and Recovery – The aftermath of violence from domestic abuse to political terror.*

³ Katongole, E., & Wilson-Hartgrove, J. *Mirror to the Church: Resurrecting Faith after Genocide in Rwanda.*

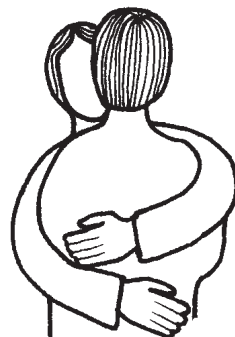
⁴ Early, C. & M. “Neuroscience of Emotion”

⁵ Muller-Fahrenholz, G. *The Art of Forgiveness.*

⁶ Volf, M. *The End of Memory – Remembering Rightly in a Violent World.*

⁷ Lederach, J.P. *The Moral Imagination – The Art and Soul of Building Peace.*

⁸ Zehr, H. *Changing Lenses.*



Rebuilding Trust

As a police commander, Brian Mitchell oversaw the 1987 massacre of 11 people in Trust Feed, South Africa. Mitchell was sentenced to 30 years in jail for his role in the attack. He was released from prison in 1996 after receiving amnesty from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

While in prison, Mitchell had a spiritual conversion. At his amnesty hearing, he expressed sorrow publicly to the families of his victims. He also shared his desire to meet with community members to make things right.

He had his opportunity at a four-hour community meeting in Trust Feed in April 1997. He stood before 500 community members and committed himself to rebuilding the community. The gathering started with prayer and singing. The community told their stories and asked questions of Mitchell. In return, he was able to make a statement and respond.

“An old man with a cane had been listening intently in the front row,” said one observer. “He walked forward with halting steps, took the microphone and praised the TRC for setting up this meeting. He also thanked Brian Mitchell for his bravery in coming to the community. He said he felt relieved that the process of reconciliation had begun. ... It seems that when this kind of face-to-face meeting occurs, when confession is made, when people acknowledge the humanity of one another, when the offer of restitution is made and carried out, then reconciliation can begin.” Mitchell is still involved in helping to rebuild the community. ~

Saving Lives

Debbie McLeland

We were told Morgan had died by a policeman who turned up at our door. Somehow I managed to keep strong, standing outside myself as the tragedy unfolded. My husband, on the other hand, collapsed, pounding his fists on the floor, crying “no, not my son, not my son.”

During the next 24 hours we learned that all eight student athletes had died that night, but we still didn't know who had caused the accident. This meant that as well as grieving our loss, we were also facing the possibility that our son might have been responsible. However, it soon transpired that the culprit was Clint Haskins who had drunk so much that night

that he had no recollection of what happened.

They charged Clint on the day of Morgan's funeral, but I asked the bishop to be sure to make it a day of celebration – not a day to get even. I was already aware that I mustn't get stuck in revenge. I'm not saintly; I was mad and angry too, but I never hated Clint. Hate is a large burden to carry.

At the hearing each family read

out a victim impact statement and it was here that I first had the

idea of putting a challenge to Clint. Across the court I asked him if he would be willing to come with me and address young people about the dangers of drunk driving. When he had an opportunity to speak, he said he would like to.

I'm not saintly; I was mad and angry too, but I never hated Clint.

Finally, three years later, after a lot of hard work, I got to see Clint. I found him to be very subdued and remorseful. We both cried and I hugged him, and then we talked about what we could do together to help people make better decisions about drinking and driving. I believed in his sincerity.

We first spoke to a room of 900 young people at the National Rodeo High School Finals in Gillette, WY, where Clint had been a rodeo cowboy. It was enormously effective. Later we spoke at the University of Wyoming where all eight of the dead, and Clint, had been students.

We've all had a lot of pain and I don't want to add to it. But I also truly believe that our presentations can save lives. ~

Excerpted with permission from www.theforgivenessproject.org. Visit the website to read more reconciliation stories.



Debbie McLeland's son Morgan was killed by a drunk driver in 2001, along with 7 cross-country teammates. She has reached out to the driver, who is set to be paroled early next year.

Reconciliation Resources

Websites

Campaign for Love & Forgiveness

www.loveandforgiveness.org

Small group conversation guides, podcasts, classroom resources and practical tools.

Catholic Peacebuilding Network

<http://cpn.nd.edu>

Network of theologians and peace practitioners. Downloadable resources and articles.

Education for Reconciliation

www.reconciliation.ie

Downloadable teacher resources from Northern Ireland.

Paulist Reconciliation Ministries

www.paulist.org/reconciliation

Resources to address needs of healing, dialogue and reconciliation in the Church today.

Books

Gobodo-Madikizela, Pumla. *A Human Being Died That Night: A South African Story of Forgiveness*. Houghton Mifflin, 2003

Hahn, Thich Nhat. *Reconciliation: Healing the Inner Child*. Parallax Press, 2010.

Lederach, John Paul and Angela Jill. *When Blood and Bones Cry Out: Journeys through the Soundscape of Healing and Reconciliation*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Orobator, A. E. *Reconciliation, Justice and Peace: The Second African Synod*. Orbis, 2011.

Movies

As We Forgive. A documentary about 2 Rwandan women who meet the men who killed their families. Discussion guide available. (53 minutes) www.asweforgivemovie.com

Forgiveness: A Time to Love and a Time to Hate. PBS documentary in 2 90-minute acts. Wide range of stories, from personal to national. Discussion guide available. www.fetzer.org/loveandforgive



Susan Francois is a Sister of St. Joseph of Peace and editor of *A Matter of Spirit*.

Weaving the Threads of Reconciliation in a Post 9/11 World

Susan Francois, CSJP

Anyone who has sought reconciliation in a broken personal relationship—whether with a spouse, parent, or friend—knows that the path is a long and difficult one. It takes risk, commitment, intention and time to rebuild trust and heal the relationship. Yet even with the challenges inherent to reconciling personal relationships, at the very least we know with whom we need to journey.

When we talk about reconciliation on a larger scale, however, the path becomes murkier. Where do you start when you seek reconciliation in the midst of terrorism and war? Is it even possible to reconcile with a terrorist? How about with the people of a nation with whom your own country is at war?

Concrete Action

Colleen Kelly has spent the past ten years engaging this murky process. “As far as 9/11, I think reconciliation is a difficult word, a difficult thought,” reflects Colleen. Her brother Bill was killed on that fateful day when he attended an event at the World Trade Center.

Is it even possible to reconcile with a terrorist?

“Who do you reconcile with? The biggest piece initially was reconciling with myself, the fact that my brother was murdered and would not be physically present on this earth.” Next came helping her own children understand what had happened not only to their uncle, but to the entire world. Then came the “very very difficult

thought of reconciling Bill’s death with the perpetrators.”

In the end, it was meeting other family members who had lost loved ones on September 11th that gave Colleen the opportunity to take concrete steps on the path towards healing and reconciliation. Together, they formed September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows to turn their grief into action for peace. “Witnessing to the suffering of others is important,”



Iraqi kindergarteners thank St. Augustine Church in MN for the gift of clean water

says Kelly, but it is important that the witness “turn into some kind of concrete action that’s aiming to better the world in some way.” The families of Peaceful Tomorrows hope to help break the cycle of violence by acknowledging the common experience of violence they share with all people affected by violence globally.

Threads of Reconciliation

Drawing upon the experience of reconciliation in Northern Ireland, researchers Brandon Hammer and Gráinne Kelly have identified five interwoven threads in the reconciliation process: acknowledgement of past hurts, development of a shared vision for the future, positive relation-

ship building, significant cultural change, and substantial structural change.¹

Building relationships is a very concrete—and human—step that can serve as an entry point to those seeking reconciliation on a global scale. Through “embracing and engaging with those who are different from us,”² we can begin the work of healing the past and moving towards the future. Together we can weave the other threads so that we begin to see a larger pattern of reconciliation emerge. We begin on the personal level in the belief that it will lead, person by person, to cultural and structural change.

Rebuilding Relationships

Luke Wilcox was a high school senior in 2001. “9/11 really altered the course of where I’m at right now today,” says the now 27 year old communications director with the Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project (IARP). The event and what followed inspired him to study foreign policy with a focus on the Middle East and Islam in order to help build better relationships between Americans and the people of the Middle East.

IARP, a nonprofit organization based both in Minneapolis and Iraq, works to rebuild the relationship between Iraqis and Americans by creating opportunities for citizens of both countries to meet and work together. “As Americans working with IARP, we start by accepting responsibility for a lot of the death and destruction in Iraq,” says Wilcox. “We try to be led by and listen to Iraqis.

It is important to listen to the people who have been hurt by the relationship.”

Water for Peace, an IARP project, partners U.S. schools and faith based organizations with schools in Iraq that do not have access to clean water. Today, 7.6 million Iraqis still do not have access to clean water. The U.S. partner holds awareness and fundraising events to purchase a water sanitation system for the Iraqi school. Through emails, photos and Skype conversations, the U.S. and Iraqi groups build personal connections across the miles. IARP also offers opportunities for Americans to write a letter to an Iraqi through their Letter for Peace program.

Why Not Love?

In Afghanistan, a group of young people who have known only war and ethnic division are also seeking another way. “We are tired of war and we share with our brothers and sisters everywhere a common aspiration for peace,” wrote the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers (AYPV) in a statement posted on their website. “We desire recon-

ciliation. We wish to converse as equal, fellow human beings, without the need for guns and bombs.”

For more than a year now, these young people in the Bamiyan region of Afghanistan have

“We wish to converse as equal, fellow human beings ...”

invited people from around the globe to join them in conversation on their Global Days of Listening. The listening days are held via conference call, video feed and Skype on the 21st of each month. Anyone can sign up to listen in or talk with the young people. “There’s a whole range of depth that happens on the calls,” says Amy Watts, an American who has helped schedule the calls. “But even the stuff we might say is more typical ‘getting- to- know- you conversation’ can have a deep impact on someone who has never spoken with someone from the country we’ve been at war with for a decade now.”

“This encouragement that you give us just by calling is so important to Afghans,” said Farzana, one of the youth on a recent Global Day of Listening call, “because all that Afghans have seen in the past years has been violence. We need this to encourage one another.” The AYPV also engage the global community through videos they post on YouTube featuring im-

ages from Afghanistan and their message, summed up by the tagline, “Why not love?”

For Colleen Kelly the question of who to reconcile with is still too big, but love and personal relationships seem to be where the journey both begins and ends. “For me the thing that can never be destroyed is the love I have for my brother and the love he had for me,” she says. “It’s all about your relationships, the people you love and who love you, and your relationship with God. Everything else just falls away.” ~

To learn more and become involved visit:

- ☞ www.peacefultomorrow.org
- ☞ www.reconciliationproject.org
- ☞ www.globaldaysoflistening.org

¹ “A Working Definition of Reconciliation,” www.brandonhammer.com

² Ibid



Afghan youth speak to people around the globe from an internet café

Prayer for Reconciliation

*In the midst of conflict and division,
we know it is you who turns our minds to thoughts
of peace.*

*Your Spirit changes our hearts,
enemies begin to speak to one another.*

*Those who were estranged join hands in friendship
and nations seek the way of peace together.*

Let Your Spirit be at work in us.

Give us understanding and put an end to strife.

Fill us with mercy and overcome our denial.

*Grant us wisdom and teach us your way to
forgiveness.*

Call us to justice. Grant us peace.

Adapted from the Preface to the
Eucharistic Prayer for Masses of Reconciliation II

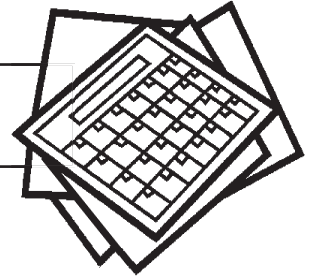


Participate!

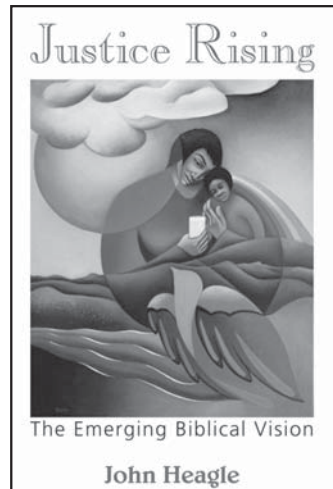
We have programs & events around the U.S. & in the Northwest!

- ☑ Justice Cafés
3rd week of the month
across the U.S. & Africa
- ☑ IPJC Movie Night
Nov 9th, Dec 14th, Feb 8th
- ☑ John Heagle: Justice Rising
Dec. 3rd, 2011
Spokane, WA
- ☑ One God, Three Faiths
Seattle, WA
Nov 4th Temple Beth Am
Dec 5th St Joseph
Catholic Church
- ☑ IPJC Latina Conference
Nov 5th
Spanish Speakers @
Seattle Center
- ☑ Catholic Advocacy Day
Olympia, WA
Feb 15th, 2012
- ☑ Just Video Contest for
High Schools
Deadline Mar. 30th
- ☑ Women's Justice Circles
Grass Roots Organizing
All year - anywhere!

Calendar of Events



Justice Rising: The Advent Call to Solidarity



Presented by John Heagle
Sacred Heart Medical Center
Providence Auditorium, Spokane, WA
Saturday, Dec. 3, 9 am - 12:30pm

\$15 registration by Nov 23 - visit www.ipjc.org to register online, or by mail; \$20 at the door

Join us to:

- ☞ Break open the Scripture in new ways
- ☞ Reflect on what it means for justice to pour into our hearts, soak into the ground of our being, and evoke a personal and communal response
- ☞ Prayer, ritual and presentation

John Heagle is a Catholic priest, counselor, teacher and author. His latest book is, *Justice Rising: The Emerging Biblical Vision*, November 2010

Designate IPJC with United Way

All our programs & resources come to you at NO or very low fees. Please be generous in support of IPJC. Write in "Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center" on your pledge form.



In Memory of Deacon Bob Huber 1955 - 2011



Teacher, preacher, prophet and advocate for justice.

We celebrate the life and ministry of Deacon Bob Huber, member of the editorial board for *A Matter of Spirit*.

Women's Justice Circles

Spanish & English

Are you in a city or community that could benefit from:

- ☞ Grassroots organizing to address poverty
- ☞ Skill building to act for change
- ☞ Leadership training for low income women

Contact IPJC: Giselle Carcamo at gcarcamo@ipjc.org or call (206) 223-1138

peace & justice center

One God, Three Faiths: Building Community Through Prayer



Join us for an opportunity to participate in prayer and learn about the Muslim, Jewish and Christian traditions, explore sacred space and share community.

Mosque & Islamic Center in Shoreline: We experienced a wonderful Interfaith gathering and Muslim prayer!
Please join us for:

Temple Beth Am Friday, November 4th 7:30-10:00 PM

St. Joseph Catholic Church Monday, December 5th 7:00-8:30 PM

Pre-register for visits by calling 206.223.1138 or email us at ipjc@ipjc.org

Movie Nights with IPJC

Join us for a social justice film,
discussion & refreshments

Time: 7-9 pm

Place: Assumption Church

6201 33rd Ave NE, Seattle, WA

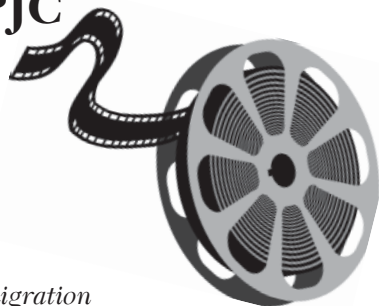
Dates

November 9th— *The Other Side of Immigration*

December 14th— *The Economics of Happiness*

February 8th— A Film on Environmental Justice

If you would like to start Movie Nights in your community or parish, contact IPJC and we will send you the **movie and discussion guide**.



Justicia para la Mujer: ¡Latinas Conectadas para el Cambio!

Saturday, November 5th, 2011 @ Seattle Center

IPJC will hold its second Spanish speaking conference for Latina women to:

- ☞ Build skills for leadership development, civic participation, and community building
- ☞ Develop an expanded Latina network to address the needs of Western Washington's growing Latino population
- ☞ Identify and address the challenges that the Latino community faces
- ☞ Foster city and state-wide collaborative opportunities

For more information, please contact Giselle Cárcamo (206) 223-1138 gcarcamo@ipjc.org

Young Adult Justice Cafés

Young adults are gathering across the U.S. and Africa for meaningful conversations on issues of global concern with IPJC's Justice Cafés!

Sample sites include:

- Thika, Kenya
- Jos, Nigeria
- Jacksonville, FL
- Westfield, NJ
- Detroit, MI
- Bellingham, WA



IPJC provides a monthly host kit with all the materials needed for a successful Justice Café: reflection, icebreaker, conversation starters & action ideas.

2011/2012 topics include:

- ☞ Oct.—Food Justice
- ☞ Nov.—Technology
- ☞ Jan.—Rights of Workers
- ☞ Feb.—Poverty
- ☞ Mar.—Education Access
- ☞ Apr.—Common Ground/Common Good

Contact IPJC to bring this program to your city!

Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center

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Reconciliation: Ritual & Reflection

Invite a small group for contemplation and conversation about reconciliation. Ask them to read this issue of AMOS prior to the gathering.

Set Up: Place a fall leaf on chairs arranged around a small ritual table. Put on the table a cloth, basket, and a few scattered fall leaves.

Song: Select a song such as *Where Charity and Love Prevail* or *Hosea*

Facilitator: In this season of fall, we witness nature's letting go in the falling leaves. This season calls us to consider letting go in our own lives in order to make room for the transformation of reconciliation.

Opening Prayer: God of changing seasons, you show us there is a time for all things: living and dying, holding and releasing. God of brilliant color, you show us leaves on trees changing, turning, preparing to let go. Help us loosen our hold and prepare to let go, surrendering what has been for what you call forth.

Facilitator: We will now spend some time in quiet reflection on reconciliation—in our own lives, nation and global community. Silently read over the following questions, inspired by this issue of AMOS. Which question speaks to your own heart? After the silence, I will invite us to join in a conversation.

"Some people hold on to grievances too long. ... These memories take up space 'rent-free' in our psyches, keeping us stuck in the past." ~ Gretchen Gundrum

☞ What am I holding on to—in personal, family or community relationships—that I'd like to let go of to make room for reconciliation?

"The work of reconciliation—the gospel message—demands that we intentionally create places where stories can be shared and relationships restored." ~ Dave Kelly

☞ How am I called to build communities of reconciliation, creating sacred spaces for stories to let go and restore relationships?

"For me the thing that can never be destroyed is the love I have for my brother and the love he had for me." ~ Colleen Kelly

☞ What deeper knowledge do I want to hold close as I seek the transforming power of reconciliation?

Sharing: [After the quiet] Let's end our time together by briefly sharing one way we are called to seek reconciliation. As you share, place your leaf in the basket.

Closing Prayer: God of changing seasons, you are with us now and in all the rhythms of our lives. Guide us as we change, grow, and seek pathways of reconciliation in our lives and communities.

(Adapted from *We Are Sisters* by Linda Haydock, SNJM and Kathy McFaul)

A Matter of Spirit is a publication of the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center

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