REVIEW ESSAY

FORGIVENESS WORKS

NO ENEMY TO CONQUER: FORGIVENESS IN AN UNFORGIVING WORLD. By Michael Henderson. Baylor University Press 2009. Pp. 214. $24.95. ISBN: 1-602-58140-1;

A JUST FORGIVENESS: RESPONSIBLE HEALING WITHOUT EXCUSING INJUSTICE. By Everett L. Worthington, Jr. InterVarsity Press 2009. Pp. 252. $12.75. ISBN: 0-830-83701-9;

FORGIVENESS, RECONCILIATION, AND RESTORATION: MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES FROM A PENTECOSTAL PERSPECTIVE. Edited by Martin William Mittelstadt and Geoffrey William Sutton. Pickwick Publications 2010. Pp. 243. $29.00. ISBN: 1-608-99194-6.

*Reviewed by Rodney L. Petersen**

The social significance of the idea and work of forgiveness can no longer be ignored or marginalized. Over the past quarter century, the field of forgiveness has come to take its place in the halls of the academy and has found its way to the civic stage of political affairs—no longer limited to the confessional or pew.

The problem of putting a date on this entrance of forgiveness into political life comes with some debate. A first appearance in the twentieth century came in the aftermath of World War II, itself a part of one of the most destructive centuries yet documented. Germany's Konrad Adenauer and France's Robert Schuman gathered at Caux, Switzerland in an effort to lay the foundation for a new European order based on forgiveness of the past and centered on cooperation and integration in the future. Second, subsequent medical and psychological research has documented what has been otherwise a part of a traditional

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and religious belief: simply put, *forgiveness works.* A policy of forgiveness when correctly followed makes for better living. There can be "no future without forgiveness" (as Desmond Tutu claimed)[1] for individuals or the world as we are coming to know it. A third point from which to mark the growth of forgiveness studies is with the iconic work of Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, marking the end of apartheid in South Africa (1994). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission which they fostered made possible at least a limited forgiveness that permitted national cohesion and bought time for enhanced patterns of reconciliation. There may be other points of departure, but they surely include these three.

Since 1994, and earlier, we have seen the flowering of forgiveness studies in the academy; in fields of psychology, other sciences and social sciences; and in public policy. The psychological studies of researchers like Robin Casarjian,[2] Everett Worthington,[3] Robert Enright,[4] and Michael E. McCullough[5] have built up the field. Community-based forgiveness with the work of Leonel Narvaez[6] and the Latin American Schools of Forgiveness and Reconciliation (Bogotá, Colombia) have helped popularize and democratize the work—along with that of others. Theological schools in Boston,[7] the work of Paul Ricoeur,[8] and the embodied theological forgiveness of Duke Divinity School Dean, L. Gregory Jones,[9] capitalizing on the earlier work of Union Theological Seminary's Paul Lehmann,[10] have provided new impetus to theological studies. Jacques Derrida,[11] Charles Griswold[12] and others have carried

1. DESMOND TUTU, NO FUTURE WITHOUT FORGIVENESS (1st Image 2000).

2. ROBIN CASARJIAN, FORGIVENESS: A BOLD CHOICE FOR A PEACEFUL HEART (Bantam Books 1992).

3. EVERETT WORTHINGTON, DIMENSIONS OF FORGIVENESS: PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH & THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES (Templeton Foundation Press 1998).

4. EXPLORING FORGIVENESS (Robert D. Enright & Joanna North eds., Univ. Wis. Press 1998).

5. MICHAEL E. MCCULLOUGH, BEYOND REVENGE: THE EVOLUTION OF THE FORGIVENESS INSTINCT (Jossey-Bass 2008).

6. POLITICAL CULTURE OF FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION (Leonel Narvaez ed., Fundación para la Reconciliación 2009 Spanish ed., 2010 English) (copy on file at the Boston Theological Institute 157 Herrick Road, Newton, MA 02459).

7. FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION: RELIGION, PUBLIC POLICY AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION (Raymond Helmick, S.J. & Rodney L. Petersen eds., Templeton Found. Press 2002).

8. PAUL RICOEUR, MEMORY, HISTORY, FORGETTING (Univ. Chi. Press 2006).

9. L. GREGORY JONES, EMBODYING FORGIVENESS: A THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS (W.B. Eerdmans Publ'g Co. 1995).

10. PAUL LOUIS LEHMANN, FORGIVENESS: DECISIVE ISSUE IN PROTESTANT THOUGHT (Harper & Brothers 1940).

11. JACQUES DERRIDA, ON COSMOPOLITANISM AND FORGIVENESS (Routledge 2001).

12. CHARLES L. GRISWOLD, FORGIVENESS: A PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLORATION (Cambridge

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the work into the field of philosophy. The field of public policy and political forgiveness is rich with resources provided by Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson,[13] Donald W. Shriver,[14] Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela and Chris Van Der Merwe[15] and others. Thanks to the work of the Fetzer, Kroc, Templeton and other Institutes, forgiveness studies flourish. This, of course, only sketches the surface of a burgeoning cross-disciplinary field of study.

It is into this rich and growing context that we must consider these three books, each of which offers substantive as well as emblematic support to forgiveness studies. Michael Henderson's book, *No Enemy to Conquer: Forgiveness in an Unforgiving World* is his latest in a series of trail-blazing books on forgiveness.[16] In this book, Henderson provides a service for all, regardless of one's entry point or orientation to the field of forgiveness. He presents insightful vignettes into the work of forgiveness, while integrating these with thoughtful reflections by world-class scholars. He includes riveting stories about peacemakers who are often in the news. For instance, he talks about "The Pastor [James Movel Wuye] and the Imam [Mohammad Nurayn Ashafa]" who learn to work together as directors of the Interfaith Mediation Center in Kaduna, Nigeria; (Henderson 6-12) two Lebanese militia leaders—Christian and Muslim—Assaad Chaftari and Mohieddine Chehab, who practice dialogue, make apology and learn to reconstruct a nation; (Henderson 8-13) and the 2002 murder in Pakistan of Daniel Pearl, which becomes the occasion for Muslim-Jewish forgiveness and the establishment of the Daniel Pearl Foundation to continue a legacy of dialogue and work toward reconciliation. (Henderson 18-24) Henderson includes reflections by Dr. David Smock, director of the U.S. Institute of Peace Religion and Peacemaking Program, and Sir Jonathan Sacks, chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth. (Henderson 24-33)

A similar pattern of stories and reflection follow in a journey that takes us through politics, communal healing, psychological restoration,

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Univ. Press 2007).

13. RELIGION, THE MISSING DIMENSION OF STATECRAFT (Douglas Johnston & Cynthia Sampson eds., Oxford Univ. Press 1995).

14. DONALD W. SHRIVER, AN ETHIC FOR ENEMIES: FORGIVENESS IN POLITICS (Oxford Univ. Press 1998).

15. MEMORY, NARRATIVE AND FORGIVENESS: PERSPECTIVES ON THE UNFINISHED JOURNEYS OF THE PAST (Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela & Chris Van Der Merwe eds., Cambridge Scholars 2009).

16. MICHAEL HENDERSON, ALL HER PATHS ARE PEACE: WOMEN PIONEERS IN PEACEMAKING (Kumarian Press 1994); MICHAEL HENDERSON, FORGIVENESS: BREAKING THE CHAIN OF HATE (Amica 2003).

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taking responsibility, making safe spaces and acknowledging the past. Along the way, Donna Hicks, Desmond Tutu, Margaret E. Smith, Rajmohan Gandhi, Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Benazir Bhutto, Barry Hart, Betty Bigombe, the Dalai Lama, Joseph V. Montville and others provide perspective. The book is an anthology of hope toward the geopolitics of mercy.

As helpful as Henderson's book is in providing case studies and expert analysis, it would be stronger still if combined with the kind of sociological, anthropological and philosophical insight of, for instance Georges Sorel, into the nature of violence,[17] or incorporated the learning gained from the mimetic theories of violence and scapegoat mechanism of René Girard,[18] or work on identity and violence of Emmanuel Lévinas or James Gilligan.[19] Greater insight into the deep reasons for religious violence continues to be needed: How is it that what encapsulates and represents our highest values can be drawn into our basest behavior? We continue to need more work like that provided by R. Scott Appleby, whose reflections on Rudolf Otto's *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* ("fearful and fascinating mystery") has provided such rich insights into the ambiguous record of religion in relation to violence.[20]

Henderson acknowledges his long dependence upon the work of Frank Buchman, who inspired the mid-twentieth century movement known as Moral Re-Armament (originally the Oxford Group, then MRA; presently, Initiatives for Change). (Henderson 114) An American Lutheran from Philadelphia, Buchman, motivated by his own need for repentance and forgiveness, had worked for moral change first through university and church groups. Then, as opportunity afforded, he and MRA became caught up in work to change the course of nations (on issues like Nazism, post-WWII recovery, de-colonization, etc.) through addressing root causes of political distrust. These, he felt, were lodged in the need for personal conviction and conversion, as he describes in *Remaking the World* (1961).[21] Buchman advocated personal work with individuals that would go deep enough to deal with root motives and desires. Asked how he helped individuals, Buchman replied with the "five C's": Confidence, Confession, Conviction, Conversion, and Continuance. To become a free person and positive change agent, one

17. GEORGES SOREL, REFLECTIONS ON VIOLENCE (Cambridge Univ. Press 2009).

18. RENÉ GIRARD, VIOLENCE AND THE SACRED (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press 1979).

19. EMMANUEL LÉVINAS, HUMANISM OF THE OTHER (Univ. Ill. Press 2003); JAMES GILLIGAN, VIOLENCE: REFLECTIONS ON A NATIONAL EPIDEMIC (Vintage Press 1997).

20. R. SCOTT APPLEBY, THE AMBIVALENCE OF THE SACRED: RELIGION, VIOLENCE, AND RECONCILIATION (Rowman & Littlefield 2000).

21. FRANK N. D. BUCHMAN, REMAKING THE WORLD ix-xx (Oxford Group 1961).

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needed to make restitution—to put right, as far as possible, any wrong done.

MRA was criticized for what, in the opinion of some, was a limited moral critique of issues that were felt to be more substantive and structural as liberal democracies were caught between the claims of the illiberal fascism of Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy on the right and Stalin's Soviet Union on the left. Similarly, forgiveness studies have been criticized as not dealing fully with violations of human and individual rights and with justice issues. This is not the place to rehearse fully the work of Buchman, but it is to say that one place to look for the origins of the field of forgiveness is with MRA. This is certainly an additional aspect related to the foundation of forgiveness studies, at least as they relate to public policy. Grounded in principles that Buchman would find familiar, Henderson successfully weaves together threads of politics, inherited identity and history, wisdom and theology. He gives us an account of how forgiveness has touched private and public life through processes of transitional justice, notably in South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, through examples provided by the Forgiveness Project (Judaism and the Holocaust), and in additional illustrative cases.

"No future without forgiveness" certainly marks an alternative to conflict—hence, the value of the detail in Henderson's studies. Henderson also illustrates the ways in which the forgiveness movement has sought to be attendant to the international movement of restorative justice, as recounted in the scholarship of Howard Zehr[22] and Daniel Van Ness.[23] It might be noted in this light that Emmanuel Lévinas was known for his comment that we become "duped by morality"[24] in our effort with the other—and this is also the case in the work of forgiveness. Georges Sorel would caution us about too quickly becoming caught up in the work of forgiveness, apart from addressing issues of serious social inequity. For example, South Africa is intact as a nation, but with levels of violence from unaddressed issues of social inequity endemic to its social structure.

Is forgiveness justice-lite? It is with such criticism in mind that forgiveness pioneer and psychologist Everett Worthington has written *A Just Forgiveness: Responsible Healing without Excusing Injustice*

22. HOWARD ZEHR, CHANGING LENSES: A NEW FOCUS FOR CRIME AND JUSTICE (Herald Press 1990).

23. HANDBOOK OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE (Gerry Johnstone & Daniel W. Van Ness eds., Routledge 2011).

24. EMMANUEL LEVINAS, TOTALITY AND INFINITY 21 (Duquesne Univ. Press 1969).

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(2009). Published through the InterVarsity Press, one can only assume that Worthington, widely published through other publishing houses, hopes here to win the attention of the college student market, a generation often marked by its interest in social and individual justice. Worthington's answer to those who find in forgiveness a betrayal of justice is lodged in a triangulation of justice and forgiveness with humility. Worthington is clear in his commitment to justice, but his effort here is to offer the Christian foundations for a just forgiveness in dealing with wrongdoers. Toward this end, Worthington opens the book with a recital of his own woundedness. In the face of this he writes, "God redeems. Redemption is the beginning and end of forgiveness." (Worthington 9) In his effort to begin to triangulate justice, forgiveness and humility, Worthington follows the psychologist Kurt Lewin, that "[t]here is nothing so practical as a good theory," (Worthington 10) and goes on to write:

> This is true in psychology when a theory is not airy-fairy speculation but is grounded in scientific observation. It is also true in theology when a theory is grounded primarily in Scripture and secondarily in church tradition and church life. In this book I share a way of understanding our responses to injustice, suffering and evil that draws from both psychology and theology. (Worthington 10)

This citation is illustrative of Worthington's methodology as set forth in his book. He draws upon a rich clinical experience and religious understanding to draw us first to the tools we need to respond to transgressions with justice, forgiveness and humility. Forgiveness and justice work together and affect each other. They come together in an "injustice gap," the tally that informs us as to the fairness or unfairness of a particular transgression, such that we are motivated to respond with justice or forgiveness. In our continual jockeying for fairness, we develop feedback loops of increasing hostility. To break the cycle, something or someone must step into the gap and absorb the pain and injustice. For Worthington, this is what Jesus did. In humility, this is an example we can follow, as we foster procedural and cosmic justice, seeking the welfare of others and finding freedom from self-preoccupation. Understanding humility is a next big task for psychological research.

In the effort to pursue justice, Worthington draws upon developmental psychologists Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan to lay out the claims, respectively, of both rational and relational justice. Affirming the importance of each, he asks what we hope to accomplish

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in punishment. After listing traditional reasons—just deserts, rehabilitation, individual and group deterrence, and incapacitation—Worthington turns to the reasons it is so difficult to arrive at social and societal justice. These he locates in the role of memory, theories of causation, and the way in which triggers and associations are raised as we endeavor to deal with the "injustice gap." As he considers the possibility of forgiveness in the context of humility and justice, Worthington scopes out a definition of forgiveness, relates this to justice, and then asks how humility can foster forgiveness and justice. To distinguish between "decisional" and "emotional" forgiveness becomes an important first step in this regard, and toward the practice of forgiveness, even when it is hard. Through the use of charts and diagrams, Worthington depicts the journey in various social and societal contexts.

This is a "how to" book. As is evident from his clinical and personal work, forgiveness is anything but "lite" in Worthington's analysis. It is work grounded in his Christian faith. Worthington writes, "Forgiveness is something that we base on God's forgiveness of humans. We forgive freely yet also pursue justice. We can only keep forgiveness and justice in balance in the humility of understanding who we are in Christ." (Worthington 98) Yet, those who do not share Worthington's particular religious presuppositions nevertheless can learn much from this book and the psychological and philosophical premises upon which it is based. The five-step REACH method that Worthington has fostered for the past quarter century has been found to be effective among individuals, groups and counselors worldwide: (1) Recall the hurt, (2) Empathize, (3) Altruistically give the gift of forgiveness, (4) Commit publicly to forgive in a way that can be observed, and (5) Hold on to forgiveness.

Although Worthington contends we are "hard-wired" for both justice and forgiveness, there are conditions that allow forgiveness to be practiced more readily in place of an avenging spirit. Following the interesting work of Michael McCullough, Worthington notes three conditions that humans may even share with nonhuman primates: (1) people want to forgive if they believe the offender is no longer dangerous; (2) they are more likely to forgive a valued relationship; and (3) they want to forgive more often if they believe the offender is worthy of their care.

In the second half of the book Worthington applies the lessons learned in the first half to cases of just forgiveness in the family, church, community and society. In models of Track I, Track II and Track III

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diplomacy, Worthington offers a guide and practical resources for both individuals and communities. He even takes us into the realm of self-forgiveness, although here reflection on the work of James Gilligan on the role of shame and the violence it breeds would have lent added strength to Worthington's remarks. Worthington's message might be, "[l]ife is not fair. But God is good." (Worthington 229) Its underlying thesis might be said to come from Mennonite peace-builder John Paul Lederach's emphasis on *Psalm* 85:10, that reconciliation is found when mercy and truth embrace and justice and peace will kiss.

One of the attractive features of the maturing forgiveness research is the number of niche studies that have been developed. For example, the question of forgiveness in Northern Ireland has been pursued by Ronald Wells; forgiveness among the Amish has been taken up in studies like those by Donald B. Kraybill, Steven M. Nolt and David L. Weaver-Zercher[25]; a legion of scholars, has taken up the question of forgiveness among the Israeli and Palestinians, among them Eva Kor and Salim Munayer.[26] It is in this light that we must consider the book edited by Martin William Mittelstadt and Geoffrey William Sutton, *Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Restoration: Multidisciplinary Studies from a Pentecostal Perspective* [hereinafter *Forgiveness*]. In this volume, Pentecostal scholars from various disciplines offer their vision for forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration. Given Pentecostalism's accelerating pace and growing presence as a Christian and religious phenomenon, particularly in those areas of the world susceptible to deprivation and victimhood, such a volume is especially welcome.

The essayists survey an array of circumstances and settings unique to Pentecostal history, its formation as a denomination in the context of racial tensions, the interaction of postmodern theological story and narrative in contrast to theological rationalism, and models of forgiveness in different North American and African settings. Three chapters will be the focus of this review: Robert Berg's chapter, "Pentecostals, Postmodernism and *The Shack*"; the article by Renea Brathwaite, "The Azusa Street Revival and Racial Reconciliation: An Afro-Pentecostal Perspective"; and the chapter by Tony Richie, "From Forbidden Fire to a Different Spirit: A Pentecostal Approach to

25. DONALD B. KRAYBILL, STEVEN M. NOLT & DAVID L. WEAVER-ZERCHER, AMISH GRACE: HOW FORGIVENESS TRANSCENDED TRAGEDY (Jossey-Bass, 2010).

26. EVA MOZES KOR & LISA ROJANY BUCCIERI, SURVIVING THE ANGEL OF DEATH: THE TRUE STORY OF A MENGELE TWIN IN AUSCHWITZ (Tanglewood Press 2012); THE LAND CRIES OUT: THEOLOGY OF THE LAND IN THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONTEXT (Salim J. Munayer & Lisa Loden eds., Cascade Books 2012).

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Interfaith Forgiveness and Reconciliation." Each of these articles, together with the entire book, offers important insight into the dynamics of forgiveness as arising in the Pentecostal community.

Robert Berg's thesis in "Pentecostals, Postmodernism and *The Shack*" is that story and testimony shape Pentecostal theology more than propositional statements and a systematic theological orientation. Berg argues that, in this way, Pentecostal theology has a strong affinity with postmodern theology rather than with the rational orientation of an older, "modern" theological orientation.[27] (Forgiveness 25) This suggests that a "more intuitive than cerebral, more immediate than analytical" (Forgiveness 27) theology might have much to do with the practice of forgiveness. He illustrates his point through his analysis of William P. Young's popular book, *The Shack* (2007).[28] In the story, the daughter of Mackenzie Allen Phillips (Mack), Missy, has been abducted during a family vacation. Evidence that she may have been brutally murdered is found in an abandoned shack deep in the Oregon wilderness. Four years later, in the midst of his great sadness, Mack receives a suspicious note, apparently from God, asking him to meet at the shack. Against his better judgment, he arrives there on a wintry afternoon and walks back into his darkest nightmare. In his journey toward forgiveness, Mack finds an African-American woman, "Papa," as God the Father; Sophia, the personification of divine wisdom; and a Middle Eastern carpenter as Jesus. What he discovers about the nature of forgiveness changes his life forever. According to Berg, Young makes the point that God as Father and Son share a nature of love and forgiveness, as found in the parable of the Prodigal Son, and that the nature of forgiveness is more complex and gradual than in rational theology—it has the power to transform life and make for cosmic change.

The Shack has been subject to systematic criticism by propositional theologians who find salvation circumscribed by an "elect" for whom Jesus procured redemption. Instead, Pentecostals (more Armenian than Calvinist in theological temper) find forgiveness provided in Jesus for all people who are invited into a relationship with him. Pentecostals read *The Shack* for testimony. Berg adds that the more one reads *The Shack* for "rationally configured and objectively accurate doctrines," the more one will reject Young's depiction of God and the nature of

27. ROBERT BERG, PENTECOSTALS, POSTMODERNISM, AND THE SHACK, IN FORGIVENESS, RECONCILIATION, AND RESTORATION: MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES FROM A PENTECOSTAL PERSPECTIVE 25 (Martin William Mittelstadt & Geoffrey William Sutton eds., Pickwick 2010).

28. WILLIAM P. YOUNG, THE SHACK (Windblown Media 2007).

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forgiveness. Pentecostals, Berg argues, should remain transfixed by the story and the nature of reality as discerned in narrative.

The reality of forgiveness and reconciliation is tough stuff. This has been as much a factor in Pentecostal history as in the history of other religious groups. In fact, the social setting for the emergence of Pentecostalism in North America challenges the work of forgiveness and raises the question of whether even in Pentecostalism, the racial and ethnic barrier can be broken. This is the topic of an article by Renea Brathwaite, "The Azusa Street revival and racial reconciliation: an Afro-Pentecostal perspective." Although characterized initially by attitudes of racial forgiveness and equality, the history of Pentecostalism has been marked by a "Jim Crow" policy of racial segregation. The marginalization of founder William J. Seymour by whites, division of early leadership in the church, and racial indignities served to drive a racial wedge in Pentecostal history. The subsequent formation of the "white" Assemblies of God from its predominantly black Church of God in Christ (COGIC) signaled an institutional split along racial lines. Brathwaite's challenge is for Pentecostalism to return to its roots in racial forgiveness and equity.

Another place where Pentecostalism is pioneering in its theology and practice is with policies and implications for interfaith peace building. This is seen in the chapter by Tony Richie, "From Forbidden Fire to a Different Spirit: A Pentecostal Approach to Interfaith Forgiveness and Reconciliation." Grounded in Jesus' commission of his disciples for the work of forgiveness (*John* 20: 21-23), this work is for the benefit of all people. Richie argues for the application of Christian themes of forgiveness and reconciliation to be extended to all peoples in interpersonal and institutional relationships. Other Pentecostals, like Amos Yong, are adding their voices to the growing movement of interfaith peace-building.[29]

For the editors and authors of this volume, the Pentecostal perspective is grounded in theology and personal testimony, and bears a prophetic possibility for the restoration of individual relationships and communities. The Pentecostal experience is grounded in the Spirit empowerment of Luke-Acts, but carries a reality into contemporary history as a contemporary Spirit empowerment taken from the Pentecostal vision that marks the way toward reconciliation. Drawing upon this theological and relational presence, forgiveness is a visible

29. *See* INTERFAITH JUST PEACEMAKING: JEWISH, CHRISTIAN, AND MUSLIM PERSPECTIVES ON THE NEW PARADIGM OF PEACE AND WAR (Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite ed., Palgrave Macmillan 2012).

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expression of God's love that does not demand justice, but rather seeks to promote peace by bringing healing and reconciliation in relationships between people united by one Spirit. Although history is replete with tales of revenge, Christian forgiveness provides an alternate response.

Taken together, these three books offer a vision and a challenge to the intersection of law and religion. Behind Henderson's work, one cannot but hear the competing visions of justice and legal rectitude founded upon different religious ordering of the world. This dynamic extends through Worthington's sense of justice, and is seen even in the effort to form a Christian denomination in the face of Jim Crow during the very years of the production and Los Angeles premiere of D.W. Griffith's racist film, *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), an adaption of Thomas Dixon's novel *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*.[30] Patterns of religion and law are deeply interwoven and fraught with implications of transcendence and meaning, as Harold J. Berman argued so well in *The Interaction of Law and Religion* (1974).[31] Forgiveness leads from the personal to the institutional as Frank Buchman frequently argued. It leads to the public square or it leads nowhere. In order to avoid destructive conflict in the twenty-first century, forgiveness is a theological and relational dynamic that finds reconciliation as the greater reality when faced with conflict and vengeance. Forgiveness reminds us of law's important goals—justice and fairness, in their distributive, procedural, retributive, and restorative forms.

Taken together, these are three very different books. The books also carry us to address the challenge presented by Dean of Harvard Law School Martha Minow in *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence*[32]—namely that there are degrees of relationship between vengeance and forgiveness. In the realm of human affairs, the tough work is that of finding the proper place for such relationships and institutions on this continuum and marking out of the boundaries of them. In recent comments about forgiveness, Minow opined that forgiveness serves as a kind of "third order" strategy, enabling and promoting economic and social rights that, in turn, make possible the realization of the basic human rights affirmed

30. THOMAS DIXON, THE CLANSMAN: AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE OF THE KU KLUX KLAN (Gregg Press 1967).

31. HAROLD J. BERMAN, THE INTERACTION OF LAW AND RELIGION (S.C.M. Press 1974).

32. MARTHA MINOW, BETWEEN VENGEANCE AND FORGIVENESS: FACING HISTORY AFTER GENOCIDE AND MASS VIOLENCE (Beacon Press 1998).

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in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[33] Forgiveness, as Frank Buchman knew, was not an insignificant tool in the hands of statecraft.

Or, as pointed out in the years of the Cold War by journalist and political philosopher Hannah Arendt in her book *The Human Condition*, forgiveness, together with the power of promise, has the ability to create new foundations for social existence. To forgive is to find ourselves as close to the place of the Creator as is granted us: *We can dispense with the past and create anew.* Arendt writes:

> Without being forgiven, released from the consequences of what we have done, our capacity to act would, as it were, be confined to one single deed from which we would never recover; we would remain the victims of its consequences forever, not unlike the sorcerer's apprentice who lacked the magic formula to break the spell.[34]

So where do we begin forgiveness studies? With the three locations noted at the beginning of this review? With Buchman and MRA? What if forgiveness is hard-wired? Each of these books fits into these larger questions. How we answer this question is important to political life in the twenty-first century.

Given the historical record of persecution by a dominant society, in *After Auschwitz*, Holocaust theologian Richard L. Rubenstein, argues that after such atrocities, forgiveness is not possible.[35] Only the organization of an empowered state can shield Jews [humanity] from an unreliable God and the increasing violence that puts people at risk.[36] Such thinking is countered by Arendt, who argues that humane reconstruction can only happen through forgiveness and promise. She is credited with the statement that Jesus is the "discoverer" of forgiveness, and the topic and its practice as embedded in Judaism came to shape Christianity profoundly. Citing *Luke* 5:21-24, *Matthew* 9:4-6 and *Mark* 12:7-10, Arendt implies by this that humans, like God, can forgive in the sense of releasing each other from the consequences of the past.[37] Forgiveness facilitates the emergence of new and unforeseen initiatives and "interrupts" how things might otherwise have been.

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33. Martha Minow, comments on file at the Boston Theological Institute, December 6, 2011.

34. HANNAH ARENDT, THE HUMAN CONDITION 237 (Univ. Chi. Press 1958).

35. RICHARD L. RUBENSTEIN, AFTER AUSCHWITZ: HISTORY, THEOLOGY, AND CONTEMPORARY JUDAISM 81-122 (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press 1992).

36. MARC H. ELLIS, REVOLUTIONARY FORGIVENESS: ESSAYS ON JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND THE FUTURE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE 278-79 (Baylor Univ. Press 2000).

37. ARENDT, *supra* note 37, at 239.

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