

Virtual School of Dialogue, Democracy and Peaceful Conflict Resolution

RECONCILIATION AND JUSTICE – Mr. Erik Cleven **Lesson V**



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Reconciliation and Justice

Reconciliation is a difficult topic because it deals with broken or fractured relationships. Richard Holloway, the former Bishop of Edinburgh has written that “We can damage people so deeply that we rob them of the future by stopping the movement of their lives at the moment of injury”¹. It is as if we are destroying the narrative of their life as they are living it and giving them an identity as a victim. Those that we might think need to be reconciled, may not at all be ready for reconciliation. Feelings of hurt and animosity get in the way of moving beyond painful and destructive things that have happened in the past. Raising the question of reconciliation I have often been told “It is too early for reconciliation!” But what exactly is reconciliation? Is it possible at all? Is it equally possible on the personal as well as the collective, social and political level?

One reason why people who have been involved in conflict resist talk about reconciliation is that they are making assumptions about reconciliation. Usually they think that reconciliation means making friends with former enemies, forgetting about wrongs that were committed and liking and getting along with them. If this were what reconciliation were about I would share people’s skepticism to it. I agree that people cannot be expected to forget about earlier wrongs and start liking former enemies. This would be not just unreasonable, but also impossible. But perhaps it is possible to understand reconciliation differently?

In this lecture we will focus on reconciliation on the social or collective level. One definition of reconciliation on this level that I have found helpful is as follows: Reconciliation is when people in a community are free to choose their own friends without having to fear the consequences². In this understanding reconciliation is not about harmony or everyone being friends. It is instead based on the reality of conflict and accepts that conflicts may continue even when violence has ended. It is however, based on freedom. Personal freedom to choose as well as being free of the consequences and trauma of the conflict or violence. Reconciliation could be said to a process which allows people to live with conflict without violence. We might also say that reconciliation is a process where former enemies or people from different sides of violent conflicts create the possibility of a common future as a community or a nation³. In the following we will explore various elements of reconciliation and look at processes that have been used to try to achieve reconciliation on a social and political level. But first we will look at what needs individuals and communities that have experienced violence have, both from the point of view of victims and perpetrators.

In a book on restorative justice, Howard Zehr discusses the needs of victims and offenders of violent crime⁴. He also discusses the needs of communities where violent crime has taken place. His understanding of these needs is based on years of work with victim-offender mediation and experience in developing such programs. Though his discussion refers mainly to individual

¹ Holloway, Richard (2002) *On Forgiveness. How Can We Forgive the Unforgivable?* Canongate Publishing.

² I owe this definition of reconciliation to Graham Dyson of the Centre for Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, Norway.

³ Lecture by Atle Sommerfeldt, General Secretary of Norwegian Church Aid, June 28, 1999.

⁴ Zehr, Howard (1990) *Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice*. Herald Press.

crimes and not to collective processes of oppression or war, the needs are I believe much the same as those experienced by people in violent conflict.

Victims of violence or their families and loved ones often have a need for what he calls deminimization and deprivatization. This means that it is important for them that we do not trivialize what has happened to them with statements like “It will be alright”. Also getting what happened into the public space is part of this. If victims have the sense that the rest of society takes what happened seriously this gives them a sense of recognition and support. Zehr says it is important to many that the wrong is actually denounced by the community. This is also connected to a need to be listened to. He also says they have a need for truth telling and clarification of responsibility. This is not necessarily the same as seeing someone punished for what happened, a point we will return to below. It is however about making sense of what happened and giving people a sense of meaning in light of something that can seem meaningless. Other needs that victims or their families have according to Zehr include the possibility to grieve, the need for support and empathy, assurance that what happened will not happen again and forgiveness. In addition to this there may be a need for some kind of concrete reparation.

Zehr also discusses the community’s needs in cases where violence is committed. He says that communities need reassurance that what happened was not acceptable and that there is agreement that it was harmful, they need to see that something appropriate is being done about it, and that steps are taken to discourage its recurrence.

It is not hard for us perhaps to identify with these needs of victims and communities. It may seem stranger to us that Zehr also discusses the needs of offenders – of those who commit violence. Why should we care about offenders? We shall return to this below when we look more closely at what concept of justice Zehr’s ideas are based on. Zehr says that offenders need to have their stereotypes and rationalizations challenged. He says offenders will often attribute certain ideas to their victims such as that a woman really wanted to be raped. Or that a person they assaulted really was asking for it. These misattributions need to be challenged he says. Offenders also need emotional support and they need to have their identity as a criminal challenged. Connected to this is the need to develop a positive self image. They may need help to deal with guilt and to have their humanity affirmed. On a more practical level they may need something as basic as to learn employment or interpersonal skills and how to take responsibility.

Some of the above points are perhaps unique to criminals who commit violent crimes on an individual level. But I think many of these needs are also present for people in areas where there is or has been violent conflict. Many of the psychological mechanisms are the same in these situations and we need to see what might be gained by focusing in this way on the needs of these various actors: victims, perpetrators and communities. In situations of violent conflict we may also find that many people are both victims and perpetrators at the same time.

Howard Zehr is an advocate of what is called restorative justice. This form of justice is often contrasted with retributive justice⁵. Retributive justice is the kind of justice that we find in courtrooms all over Europe. It is focused almost exclusively on the perpetrators and on establishing guilt for certain crimes. The kind of truth or information that is promoted is of a narrow kind, the kind that supports establishing the question of guilt or innocence. Therefore the

⁵ See e.g. Tutu, Desmond (2000) *No Future Without Forgiveness*. Image

experiences of the victims are of less interest to a court dealing with retributive justice. In addition this kind of justice seeks to punish those found guilty of crimes. The act of violence or other crime that was committed is of utmost importance. The relationship between the victim and the offender or the community is not.

Restorative justice on the other hand is very much concerned with relationships between offenders and their victims and the communities where they live. As the name indicates, restorative justice is about restoring something, and that which it seeks to restore is relationships. Ascertaining what actually happened is important in restorative justice too, but now a wider truth is sought. In restorative justice truth is not just about whether a person actually committed the act of violence or criminal act, but also about how it affected the victim and how the victims and their family experienced the event. Ultimately, the goal is not to “pay back” or give retribution, but to restore the offender fully into the community and change or transform the relationship between the offender and the victim to a positive and constructive one. Restorative justice, as we shall see, was at the basis of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s understanding of justice.

It is important at this point to say that restorative justice does not involve letting criminals off the hook or letting them get off without taking responsibility. On the contrary, restorative justice, though it does not always focus on punishment, forces offenders to face what they have done and also to take real responsibility. A criminal who is convicted in a traditional court can be taken to prison and then never have to see or face the people he or she has wronged. In restorative justice processes, such as victim-offender mediation, the criminal must meet with the victim or their family and cannot get away from having to be confronted very directly with what they have done. In many ways this can be harder than just going to prison. The offender also has to face a much wider understanding of truth than in a traditional courtroom.

In order to understand this it is useful to look more closely at the understanding of truth used by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)⁶. The TRC in its report describes four levels of truth. The first level is forensic truth. This is the kind of truth that could be used as evidence at a trial. Fingerprints, DNA, weapons, a mass grave, all of these are examples of things which could be used as evidence and which could make up part of the forensic truth. This level of truth is about things that can be objectively verified through scientific investigation.

The second level of truth in this understanding is narrative truth. A narrative is a story and this level of truth has to do with the stories we tell about what happened. Your story and my story. This level of truth may not be objective, and our stories may not necessarily agree, but on one level they are nonetheless fundamentally true because they deal with how we experienced events and how these events affected us. I may not agree with your story, but I have to accept it as part of your experience and your truth.

The third level of truth develops as people engage in dialogue. This is social or dialogical truth. There can be a point where the sharing and listening to of stories can lead to a shared or collective truth emerging. This happens both as forensic or narrative truth increases. In Bosnia and Herzegovina events like what happened in Srebrenica were highly contested earlier, but with

⁶ South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, 1998, Volume One, Chapter Five.

increasing forensic evidence there is more acceptance from all sides that the killings there actually took place.

The fourth level of truth in the TRC's understanding is that of healing and restorative truth. This has to do with how the truth is used. When evidence like that which has been uncovered about Srebrenica emerges it can be used to promote reconciliation or it can be used to fuel or justify further conflict or violence. As we saw above, truth telling can be an important need that victims of violence have, but it can, if used in the wrong way also lead to bitterness and the desire for revenge. Truth is not enough, we need truth and reconciliation.

But even given what we have said about justice and truth so far, don't we still need punishment? Let's look at what the role of punishment is. As we have seen punishment is a form of retribution, or a way that criminals or perpetrators have to pay a price for what they have done. But does punishment really give satisfaction? The most common form of punishment is imprisonment, especially in Europe where the death penalty has nearly been abolished.

Certainly a trial and subsequent jail sentence can satisfy some of the needs that victims and communities have when violence has been committed. There can be a sense that something is being done. Also families can have a sense that what happened to them is deprivatized in the sense that the rest of the community cares about it. A court case certainly lends legitimacy to the condemnation of an act of violence. Some truth is also revealed by such a process, though it tends to be of the forensic kind.

When a perpetrator is punished a certain satisfaction may be experienced by victims or their families. But it may be that they also have a sense that the punishment was not enough. If someone has been killed, the reason for this is that the loss of a loved one is an irreplaceable loss. There is simply no price that a perpetrator can pay that is high enough to replace the loss of a son or daughter.

What punishment cannot achieve is to address the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. The two do not meet, though they may see each other at the trial. The experience of the victim is not part of the proceedings of the trial and thus the perpetrator hears in which ways he or she was in violation of the law, but not how what they did has affected the life of the victim. Thus, though the perpetrator may pay a price through a prison sentence, they are not necessarily called to responsibility for their actions.

Should victims or their families invest time and effort into addressing their relationship with someone who has violated their humanity or robbed them of a loved one? Of course doing so could involve expressing anger at what has happened or it could involve some level of forgiveness.

I remember that I was working with a group from Bosnia and Herzegovina on the topic of reconciliation. A woman in the group said, "There are some things you can never forgive". I asked her what kind of things she was thinking of and she answered "mass rape". Of course I could not argue with her on this point. As a man I cannot begin to imagine what women who have suffered such violence have experienced or what it must be like to live with this experience afterwards. So I humbly said that she might be right that this is unforgivable. In a way, the woman in the group was seeing forgiveness as an act of weakness that somehow required

forgetting about the pain that had been suffered. That evening though, I talked to a friend of mine who made me think about forgiveness in a different way. She said that if you think about forgiveness as something that you do to a perpetrator in order to be nice, or because it is the “right” thing to do, then certainly mass rape would be unforgivable. But she told me there is another way of thinking about forgiveness. Forgiveness can also be something that you do for yourself. Instead of something that is done for the other, it is something that you do to free yourself from the pain and trauma of your experience. In this sense forgiveness is an act of liberation. In the moment you can forgive, the perpetrator no longer has power over you and you cease to be a victim. In a sense you regain your full humanity through the act of forgiveness. Simply saying the words “I forgive you” cannot do this. It requires something to happen. Some way or another the relationship between the victim and offender must be addressed. I am not saying that forgiveness must be conditional on the regret or remorse of the perpetrator. But the victim must reflect on the relationship to the perpetrator. From this point of view, forgiveness becomes an act of strength. Achieving the ability to forgive is then about finding the strength and the freedom necessary for forgiveness.

To be able to do this requires finding this strength, morally and spiritually. It requires a firm grounding and a clear sense of ones own humanity. Where do we find the basis on which to build reconciliation? Some find this basis in religion. On a trip to Rwanda last year I visited projects where widows of genocide victims were in dialogue with wives of men accused of genocide and who were in prison. They had been brought together by the need to heal their communities. But it was possible to talk about reconciliation and dialogue because this was a part of the discourse of the churches they belonged to. In addition to this the churches in Rwanda are multiethnic and thus there have been and are relationships even between members of groups that were enemies during the war. So a question that people in areas of conflict need to ask is “what local concepts or traditions can we build reconciliation on?” and “what arenas exist for contact between people who need to reconcile?”

Now we are of course talking about reconciliation on the collective level. The difference between interpersonal reconciliation and collective reconciliation is mainly one of scale. It may perhaps be harder for people to enter into a reconciliation process if a whole society has suffered violence rather than just an individual. Nonetheless the processes are more or less the same. For reconciliation on the collective level though, the issue of balancing the past and the future becomes even more important. Reconciliation is of course both about the past and the future. It is necessary to deal with the past, but to what extent? There is no one answer to this question, but certainly it is necessary to deal with the past to a great enough extent to make a common future possible.

Howard Zehr, in his book *Changing Lenses*, also offers what he calls a restorative justice yardstick. A yardstick is something you use to measure things⁷. Zehr’s restorative justice yardstick is a way of assessing different processes to see to what extent they correspond to the principles of restorative justice. He includes five categories of questions. These include:

1. Do victims experience justice?
2. Do offenders experience justice?
3. Is the victim-offender relationship addressed?

⁷ A yard is a little shorter than one meter.

4. Are community concerns being taken into account?
5. Is the future being addressed?

These questions provide a framework which allow us to think about what different processes which aim at dealing with the effects of violence can achieve. Categories 1 and 2 may seem very subjective, but if we look at some of Zehr's subquestions we can see that they are concerned with dealing with the seriousness of the crime. Under category one he is concerned with opportunities to tell their truth to relevant listeners, protection against further violation, and whether the outcome adequately reflects the seriousness of the offense. Under number two he is concerned with offenders taking responsibility for what they have done, with challenging misattributions and with encouraging changed behavior.

We can now look at some of the processes that have been employed to deal with offenses on a mass scale. In recent years there have been numerous attempts, perhaps we could call them experiments, in reconciliation and justice and in dealing with the effects of mass human rights violations⁸. Some of these approaches have been retributive in nature and others have been much more grounded in the principles of restorative justice. Most of them are a combination. They have also been institutionalized on the national or international level. In particular we will look at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. These two institutions represent different approaches that we can compare and contrast and which can teach us something about what we can hope to achieve by such processes.

The ICTY was established by a UN Security Council resolution in 1993 and is located in The Hague in The Netherlands⁹. It has four stated objectives:

- to bring to justice persons allegedly responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law
- to render justice to the victims
- to deter further crimes
- to contribute to the restoration of peace by promoting reconciliation in the former Yugoslavia.

The tribunal has the authority to deal with four types of offenses:

- Grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions
- Violations of the laws or customs of war
- Genocide
- Crimes against humanity

The cases are of course tried in The Hague and not in the countries where the offenses happened. In the case of convictions perpetrators also serve prison terms in western countries such as The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. So far the tribunal has indicted 161 persons and of these 41 have been found guilty¹⁰. The tribunal currently has a budget of around \$272 million per year.

⁸ See <http://www.usip.org/library/truth.html> for a full list of truth commissions with links to websites.

⁹ See <http://www.un.org/icty/cases-e/factsheets/generalinfoindex-e.htm> for more information on the ICTY.

¹⁰ See <http://www.un.org/icty/cases-e/factsheets/procindex-e.htm> for details.

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a national process established December 15, 1995 by President Nelson Mandela through the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act. It finished its work in October 1998. The commission was chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and had 17 members. This commission included blacks, whites, so called coloureds, Indians, as well as Christians, a Muslim, a Hindu and a lapsed believer. The commission dealt with a limited time period – from March 21, 1960, the date of the Sharpeville Massacre until May 10, 1994, the date of President Mandela's inauguration. Those who had been involved in political killings could come forward and apply for amnesty. The conditions for receiving amnesty were:

- Act must be committed between 1960-1994
- Must have been politically motivated
- Must make full disclosure
- The rubric of proportionality had to be observed (the means were proportional to the objective)

Remorse was not a requirement (though amnesty was only granted to those that pleaded guilty), but amnesty was not automatic. The commission had three committees, the Committee on Human Rights Violations, the Committee on Reparation and Rehabilitation and the Committee on Amnesty. After a perpetrator had witnessed to the TRC the committees would investigate the case and determine whether a full disclosure had been made. The unique thing about the TRC is that your disclosure before the commission had to be made publicly, on television¹¹. Over 20 000 witness statements were taken by the commission.

There was also a possibility for reparation to victims. Urgent interim relief was given to more than 20 000 victims at \$330 per person. Individual reparation grants of up to \$3830 per person per year for 6 years were also given at a total cost of \$477 million. In addition to this the cost of the TRC (not including the reparations) was \$50 million.

The TRC was in some ways similar to a court. Testimony was given, but unlike a court victims as well as perpetrators were heard from. Victims could also confront perpetrators directly. The proceedings took place on stages with audiences. If a person guilty of a crime did not come forward or if their amnesty application was rejected their case could be taken up by regular courts. Unlike the ICTY the TRC was not started or run by internationals. It is important to mention that the TRC had amnesty applications from both former members of the African National Congress as well as former governments representatives.

One of the advantages of the TRC is that it gave space to and recognized the experience of the victims. It publicized truths about the apartheid regime and gave official acknowledgement to what had happened in the past. Because the TRC was only operational for three years altogether it limited the time that the new South Africa would spend on this process so that focus could be put on the future.

There have of course also been criticisms of the process. In some cases victims felt satisfied with the process and could even forgive perpetrators who had killed family members. But this did not

¹¹ Tutu, Desmond (2000) *No Future Without Forgiveness*. Image

always happen. Though the truth was told, the TRC was not able to address structural injustice. Whites still owned and controlled most of the wealth in South Africa after the TRC had finished its work. Though these criticisms are accurate the commission nonetheless did achieve some important results. One person who worked on the commission said that it “Narrowed the scope of permissible lies”. In other words so much truth was told through the 20 000 statements that were taken from both victims and perpetrators that it changed the understanding of the whole nation of itself. So on some level it had a cathartic effect. One could also claim that the TRC helped to avoid civil war in South Africa and made a common future possible.

The South African TRC was unique in that it offered an amnesty option. Not all truth commissions have done this. In fact most of them have been mostly concerned with truth and much less concerned with forgiveness or amnesty. Yugoslavia did have a truth commission for a short time. It was established by President Kostunica in February 2002. This commission was short-lived however and never really got started. Its focus was on trying to rewrite history and the members of the commission were all academics. There was no public process planned and because of the way it was formed (with little consultation) it did not succeed even in fulfilling its mandate.

Most truth commissions have a focus on truth but do not include an amnesty provision like in South Africa. One of the best known is the Guatemalan one. Its official name was Commission for Historical Clarification. The mandate of the commission was to focus on human rights violations committed during the civil war between 1962 and 1996. Staff members of the commission visited around 2000 communities and recorded over 7000 testimonies. They also investigated official documents and succeeded in getting thousands of US documents relating to the conflict in Guatemala declassified¹². The final report was published in 1998¹³.

There are some clear differences between the TRC and the ICTY. The TRC was a locally based project started by South Africans themselves. The ICTY was initiated by the international community and not by the countries in the former Yugoslavia themselves. Thus the ICTY is located outside of the Balkan region whereas the TRC had local offices throughout South Africa. The ICTY can offer only conviction or acquittal whereas the TRC either offered amnesty or the possibility of further prosecution. The TRC worked from 1995-1998 with the Committee on Amnesty spending additional time processing amnesty applications. The ICTY has been working since 1993 and is still not finished with its work. The number of people involved or connected to the processes were also different for these two institutions. The TRC collected over 20000 witness statements and many people attended the hearings or followed them on TV or radio. At the ICTY 161 people have been indicted and it is difficult to follow the process. Certainly the cases are open and transparent but the amount of materials and transcripts makes it practically impossible to follow the cases closely. These differences are also seen in the very goal of the two institutions. The goal of the TRC was national unity, healing and reconciliation. The goal of the ICTY was accountability over impunity. Another goal of the ICTY was to individualize guilt or responsibility so that the acts committed would not be seen as having been done collectively by an ethnic group, but by an individual who had received his or her due punishment.

¹² IDEA (2003) *Reconciliation After Violent Conflict: A Handbook*. Stockholm.

¹³ A summary of the report has been published in English by the Archdiocese of Guatemala as *Guatemala: Never Again!* Orbis Books, 1999.

On the other hand the ICTY provides an objective system based on the rule of law. But aside from the fact that such a system doesn't address the relationship between victims, offenders and communities and that many people throughout the Balkans experience it as subjective and unfair, it is also extremely time consuming. At the time of his death the trial against Slobodan Milosevic alone had gone on longer than the three years that the TRC worked. In Rwanda around 120 000 people were accused of participation in genocide. As of this year the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda had handed out 22 judgements involving 28 accused!¹⁴.

This tribunal is similar to the ICTY but is of course dedicated to dealing with the Rwandan genocide in 1994. The court is in Arusha in Tanzania. The interesting thing about this court from our perspective is that it has been combined with local processes called "gacaca". Gacaca is a Kinyarwanda word meaning "on the grass" and denotes a traditional form of justice where elders in a community hear cases and seek justice. The gacaca process has been used in Rwanda because of the huge number of cases after 1994. There are estimates that over 80 000-100 000 people were involved in the killings. If a traditional court were to deal with these cases it would probably never be able to finish. The gacaca process has allowed a locally based system of dealing with a large number of cases. The advantage is that it is based in communities and not in a third country and on traditional African practices, not western models of justice. Thus amnesty has been given in Rwanda and perpetrators are being integrated back into their communities in many cases.

This case is interesting because it shows how local and more traditional processes for reconciliation or justice can be integrated into modern ones. In this regard, Uganda is also an interesting case. In Uganda there has been a long and brutal civil war between the Ugandan government forces and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). This is probably one of the most violent and brutal conflicts in the world. Nearly the entire population of Northern Uganda has been displaced by the war and it is estimated that around 2 million people are living in refugee camps. Children have been abducted and raped and forced to fight as child soldiers. Joseph Kony, the leader of the LRA is among the first people to be indicted by the International Criminal Court, a permanent war crimes tribunal also located in The Hague. This year negotiations have taken place between representatives of the Ugandan government and the LRA. President Museveni of Uganda offered amnesty to Kony if he would agree to peace. This has caused the international community to protest vigorously. They do not want to see him given amnesty since they think he should be brought to justice in The Hague.

The case of Joseph Kony and Northern Uganda can appear to be a tension between human rights and peace. If we support the prosecution of Kony at the ICC then we hinder the process of negotiating peace. On the other hand, if we give amnesty in return for negotiating peace then we win peace but human rights loses. Of course this has something to do with how we understand human rights. If we believe that legal prosecution of human rights violators is the top priority then we would want to see Kony go to The Hague. However, it is also progress for human rights if peace were to come to Uganda and there was an end to the abduction and abuse of children in this conflict. So it is not perhaps so much peace vs. human rights as a question of how we understand human rights.

¹⁴ See <http://65.18.216.88/default.htm>

Another important question is how real Museveni's wish for peace is. There is no doubt that he is using the case against Kony for his own political purposes. Similar assertions have been made about the trial against Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

What do the people themselves want? Most people in northern Uganda just want an end to the conflict and safety for their children. They are not so interested in seeing Kony sent to The Hague. Partly this is based on local processes of reconciliation in northern Uganda that some have advocated using to reconcile militants on both sides and local communities. The Acholi people have a traditional rite of forgiveness which has been used when members of one tribe kill members of another. In this rite perpetrators stick their bare feet in a freshly cracked egg meant to symbolize innocent life. By dabbing themselves in it they are restoring themselves to the community and their former state. They then brush against a branch of a pobo tree which symbolically cleanses them¹⁵. These traditions are alive in the Gulu region of Uganda and could play an important role in the process of peace and reconciliation.

We have now looked at some of the ways that reconciliation has been attempted on a macro level in societies where mass human rights violations and war crimes have taken place. None of these systems are perfect, but certainly some progress has been made in learning about how reconciliation can be a real and healing process for divided communities characterized by broken relationships. There is no guarantee of reconciliation though. No definite recipe that can work in all cases. Sometimes time is the only thing that can heal. What is definite is that these process do not happen unless we work for them. At the start of this lecture I mentioned that some people say "It is too early for reconciliation". I would then call to mind what the French philosopher Jacques Derrida said about forgiveness: "There is only forgiveness, if there is any, where there is the unforgivable"¹⁶. Likewise, it is precisely in situations where reconciliation seems impossible that it takes on meaning and becomes important. Ultimately it is about regaining a future and repairing the narrative of our lives.

Questions for reflections and discussion:

- How is reconciliation understood in your culture? Where do discourses of reconciliation and forgiveness exist (e.g. religious organizations, political processes, traditional rituals, etc.)?
- How does your own belief system or philosophical/ethical stance deal with reconciliation?
- What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of systems such as the TRC, the ICTY and the ICTR?
- What do you think are your own needs and the needs of your community with regard to dealing with the wars of the last 15 years and moving into the future?
- Is it important do you think for countries that experienced war in your region to focus on reconciliation? If not what are the alternatives?

¹⁵ Victims of Uganda Atrocities Choose a Path of Forgiveness, by Marc Lacey, The New York Times, April 18, 2005. Available online at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/18/international/africa/18uganda.html?ex=1163653200&en=91f7727607c29d21&ei=5070>

¹⁶ Derrida, Jacques (2001) *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* Routledge