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Raymond G. Helmick, S.J., and Rodney L. Petersen (eds.). *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy, and Conflict Transformation*. Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation, 2001. Pp. v + 440. \$34.95 (Cloth).

[1] This volume is a collection of essays growing out of a symposium entitled, "Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religious Contributions to Conflict Resolution," which was sponsored by the Sir John Templeton Foundation and held at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, in October 1999, at Harvard University. The premise of the project is that in the twenty-first century concepts such as forgiveness and reconciliation will have potential beyond the seminary and other specifically religious contexts and have efficacy within the arena of public policy.

[2] The book is divided into four sections. Part one deals with the theology of forgiveness, part two with forgiveness and public policy, part three with forgiveness and reconciliation, and part four with the task of seeking forgiveness after tragedy. The book jacket promises that "Forgiveness and Reconciliation will be an essential resource for libraries, scholars, conflict negotiators, and all people who hope to understand the role of forgiveness in the peace process."

[3] Rodney L. Petersen's essay, "A Theology of Forgiveness" opens the collection. If one had hoped for a solid systematic presentation of forgiveness to serve as the foundation for the project, one is disappointed. The essay takes a whirlwind tour of forgiveness within Christian theology without defining a precise context for the theology under investigation. Realizing the problem, a second section of Petersen's essay is entitled "The Terms of Forgiveness." It is again disappointing, although the author tells stories about how this lack of precision has in the past been problematic when applying his theology in fieldwork. Another essay in the first section, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, by Stanley S. Harakas limits itself to an orthodox perspective. The essay argues for the advantage of an orthodox theology of forgiveness over legalistic understandings of sin and forgiveness found in Roman Catholicism or some Protestant traditions. While one might question how recalling the painful divisions between Christians really helps the project of moving Christian values into political spheres of conflict, Harakas's essay does admit that there isn't some doctrine of

forgiveness on a shelf somewhere that Christians can easily take down and apply in the marketplace. Harakas closes his essay by reflecting upon aspects of sacramental forgiveness and reconciliation that might serve as a model for forgiveness within public contexts.

[4] The first essay in the second section, "Does Religion Fuel or Heal in Conflicts?," by Raymond Helmick, S.J., probably should have opened the book. Helmick admits outright the many problems involved with introducing religious values into situations of conflict. An essay by Douglas M. Johnston, "Religion and Foreign Policy," insists upon the need for strong national, super-national, and sub-national relationships in a world still struggling with ethnic strife and rife with high-technology weaponry. This reviewer found the practicality of Johnston's models particularly insightful.

[5] Everett Worthington's essay opens part three, which deals with forgiveness and reconciliation and begins with working definitions of unforgiveness, forgiveness, conflict resolution, and reconciliation from the perspective of international or societal relations. He defines forgiveness as "a juxtaposition or superposition of a strong positive emotion over the cold emotions of unforgiveness in such a way that the unforgiveness is contaminated and overwhelmed by the more positive emotions." He proposes the REACH model (Recall, Empathize, Altruistically offer forgiveness, Commit, Hold on to forgiveness) for individuals who desire forgiveness but find themselves unable to effect forgiveness in their lives. This method, however, when applied to couples failed and the FREE model (Forgiveness and Reconciliation through Experiencing Empathy) was developed. Unfortunately, a process for effecting forgiveness on a scale larger than couples fell outside the parameters of the author's study.

[6] Ervin Staub and Laurie Anne Pearlman's essay, "Healing, Reconciliation, and Forgiving after Genocide and Other Collective Violence" was essentially a report of a two-week workshop that the authors conducted in Rwanda in September 1999. Although containing interesting summaries and theory, data regarding outcomes is unfortunately missing from this study. John Dawson's essay "Hatred's End," is a faith-based theory of healing. Although purposefully "preachy" in style, the essay does seem to give one a strange sort of direction. There is all kinds of work to be done, and Dawson's emphasis seems to be simply "in faith, do something!"

[7] The final section entitled, "Seeking Forgiveness after Tragedy," begins with Audrey Chapman's essay regarding the efficacy of Truth Commissions. Again a weak attempt is made to quickly summarize a theology of forgiveness and reconciliation. The contribution of the article is its excellent summary of the Truth Commission in South Africa. Interestingly enough, the author concludes that national reconciliation, rather than an emphasis on personal forgiveness and interpersonal reconciliation, seems to have been a more effective approach in South Africa. Other essays focus on case studies concerning the Balkan conflict, the conflict in Northern Ireland, and the Mozambique peace process.

[8] The afterword is penned by George Ellis. While the essay does attempt to pull together the work, one is left with the feeling that one is again being preached to rather than intellectually convinced. The appendix, however, is a valuable resource indexing worldwide organizations that promote forgiveness and reconciliation.

[9] I am not convinced that this volume is as essential for peacemaking efforts in the twenty-first century as the promoters envision. Although there are individual essays of high quality, the book, although beautifully produced, lacks a clear goal, a convincing organizational plan, and certainly a precise philosophical and theological basis. Certainly one sees that some good work has been done, but it seems that some projects were sponsored that in the end did not document a truly valuable report. If forgiveness and reconciliation from a Christian perspective will have an impact on the peacemaking efforts of this century, it will need to be grounded in serious exegetical, philosophical, and systematic work. From this reviewer's perspective, this volume fails to provide this essential foundation.

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