

*NOTE: THIS CLASS IS OPEN ONLY TO THOSE WHO
HAVE TAKEN THE FALL FORGIVENESS CLASS*

FORGIVENESS

Spring 2012

Syllabus

Forgiveness honors the heart's greatest dignity.

Whenever we are lost, it brings us back to the ground of love.

*With forgiveness we become unwilling to attack
or wish harm to another.*

*Whenever we forgive, in small ways at home,
or in great ways between nations,
we free ourselves from the past.*

-- Jack Kornfield

Without forgiveness, there really is no future.

-- Bishop Desmond Tutu

He (she) who is devoid of the power to forgive,

is devoid of the power to love.

-- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Course Description: In this year-long, on-line class we will meet people all over the world, from a variety of religious and cultural traditions, who have practiced forgiveness as a means of healing, peace and liberation. Through readings, [films](#), and exercises we will develop our own "forgiveness muscles" and deepen our spiritual practice. We will also explore ways of using forgiveness to strengthen our pastoral, prophetic and public ministries. This class will be experiential, drawing on personal narratives, science,

psychology, practical theology and the wisdom and practices of Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism.

Fall semester focused primarily on the development of interpersonal and pastoral skills in forgiveness (e.g., in our relationships, families, workplaces and communities as well as at times of stress, illness and betrayal).

Spring semester will examine the role of forgiveness, repentance, moral repair and reconciliation in the wake of wrong-doing and injustice on a much larger and/or institutional scale. We will pay particular attention to the possibilities for forgiveness, justice and peace in situations of racial injustice, sexual violence, child abuse, and genocide. We will also examine how (or if) we can forgive God and/or ourselves.

Course Objectives: By the end of Spring semester, students will be able to: (1) describe in their own words the following terms: revenge, repentance, repair, and reconciliation; (2) discuss the power and limitations of forgiveness in overcoming racial injustice, sexual violence, child abuse and genocide; (3) cite specific examples of how different faiths approach forgiveness and justice; (4) reflect on their own theology and spiritual practice of forgiveness; and (5) point to ways they have listened to and supported others in their journeys toward forgiveness.

Course Requirements, Texts & Films: The primary expectation - and hope - of spring semester is that students develop and/or deepen their theology and spiritual practice of forgiveness and support others in doing the same. This will be accomplished through weekly on-line forums, especially: a "[Practice Circle](#)," and "[Readings, Films & Conversation](#)."

Over the course of the semester, students will be asked to review a book or a film related to at least four of the following five queries:

- (1) How can we forgive racial injustice? Or do we?
- (2) How do we as people of faith respond to abuse with forgiveness and justice?
- (3) Are some acts - such as the Holocaust and genocide - unforgivable?
- (4) How can we forgive God and/or ourselves? Or do we?
- (5) What can we do in the face of so much wrong-doing in the world?

See below for a list of suggested book and film titles for each of these queries. Similar books or films may be substituted with the permission of the instructor.

In lieu of one to two book/film reviews, students may opt to skype or call class members (one or more) on a regular basis to discuss class readings (1 review = approximately 5 hours of skyping/calling). A review of what they learned from such conversations and a log of their sessions will be due at the end of the semester.

Course Instructor: This on-line course will be taught by Christine Fry, an ordained Unitarian Universalist minister and SKSM ('96) graduate. Chris has taught a variety of classes at Starr King including: Forgiveness; Poetry, Illness & Pastoral Care; Health & Healing; Religious Education; Compassion & Moral Repair; and Spiritual Practice for These Times. This is her second on-line course. In addition to teaching, Chris' ministry includes facilitating "Write for Health" groups in her home town of Davis,

California. She is an active member of the Davis United Methodist Church and involved in the Interfaith Rotating Winter Shelter and Celebration of Abraham. Chris lives with her husband, Isao Fujimoto, who is a community activist and a professor of Community Development and Asian American Studies at U.C. Davis. Their daughter, Esumi, is in her freshman year at New York University.

Office Hours: Chris will be available to meet with students individually through email (revcfry@aol.com), and, on occasion, by phone or in person. Students are asked to contact Chris through email to make arrangements for phone or in-person meetings. Monday - Wednesdays will be the best time to reach her.

Spring 2012 Calendar

Query: Can forgiveness bring greater peace and justice to the world?

January 30: FORGIVENESS IN A BROKEN WORLD

Query: How can we forgive racial injustice? Or do we?

February 6: MY FIRST WHITE FRIEND

February 13: A BONE TO PICK

February 20: PICKING COTTON

Query: How do we as people of faith respond to abuse with forgiveness & justice?

February 27: CHILD ABUSE: WOULD YOU FORGIVE?

March 5: FORGIVENESS & ABUSE: JEWISH & CHRISTIAN RESPONSES

Query: Are some acts unforgivable?

March 12: THE SUNFLOWER

MARCH 19: FORGIVING DR. MENGELE

March 26: FROM VENGEANCE TO FORGIVENESS IN RWANDA

SPRING RECESS

Query: How do we forgive God and/or ourselves? Or do we?

April 2: FORGIVING GOD

April 9: FORGIVING ONESELF

Query: What can we do in the face of so much wrong-doing?

April 16: REPENTANCE

April 23: REPAIR

April 30: RECONCILIATION

Query: What have we learned? What are we grateful for?

May 7: SUMMING UP (EARTH & FIRE) - OUR FORGIVENESS JOURNEY

May 14: SUMMING UP (WATER & AIR) - OUR FORGIVENESS JOURNEY

SUGGESTED BOOKS & FILMS

On forgiveness and racial injustice

Books:

Cose, Ellis. Bone to Pick: Of Forgiveness, Reconciliation, Reparation and Revenge (2004), ISBN 0743470664, \$1.00

Cose, Ellis. The End of Anger: A New Generation's Take on Race & Rage (2011), ISBN 0061998559, \$16.49

Cotton, Ronald & Jennifer Thompson-Cannino. Picking Cotton: Our Memoir of Injustice and Redemption (2009), ISBN 0312376537, \$10.38

Krog, Antjie. Country of My Skull: Guilt, Sorrow and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa (2000), ISBN 0812931297, \$ 12.00

Raybon, Patricia. My First White Friend: Confessions on Race, Love & Forgiveness (1997), ISBN 0140244360, \$11.25

Tutu, Desmond (Bishop). No Future Without Forgiveness (1999), ISBN 0385946893, \$14.97

Films:

"Cats of Mirikitani (Japanese internment)" (2008), ASIN B00120TVQC, \$ 14.97

"After Innocence (includes commentary by Ronald Cotton)" (2007), ASIN B000KJU1E6, \$14.97

"Desmond Tutu" (2006), ASIN B000F6ZEQO, \$14.99

"In My Country (drama re South African Truth Commission)" (2005), ASIN B0009I8QGI, \$6.36

"Sixty Minutes: Exonerated" (2008), ASIN B00I8BUE74, \$17.95

Forgiveness & Abuse

Books:

Einhorn, Lois & Arun Gandhi. Forgiveness & Child Abuse: Would YOU Forgive? (2010), ISBN 1931741697, \$14.50

Fortune, Marie and Joretta Marshall. Forgiveness & Abuse: Jewish and Christian Recollections, (2002), ISBN 0789022516, only available through inter-library loans

Moran, Martin. The Tricky Part: A Boy's Story of Sexual Trespass, A Man's Journey to Forgiveness (2006), ISBN 0307276538, \$12.41

Films:

"Priest" (1995), ASIN 6305428093, \$13.46

"The Boys of St. Vincent" (2004), ASIN B0000DIJON, \$24.98

Holocaust & Genocide

Books:

Kallos, Stephanie. Broken For You (novel, Holocaust related), 2004, ISBN 0802142109, \$ 10.17

Kor, Eva and Lisa Buccieri. Surviving the Angel of Death: The Story of a Mengele Twin in Auschwitz (2009), ISBN 1933718286, \$ 10.17

Ilibagiza, Immaculee. Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust (2007), ISBN 1401908977, \$ 8.95

Ilibagiza, Immaculee. Our Lady of Kibeho: Mary Speaks to the World from the Heart of Africa (2010), ISBN 1401927432, \$ 10.46

Larson, Catherine Claire. As We Forgive: Stories of Reconciliation from Rwanda (2009), ISBN 03100287308, \$10.87

Wiesenthal, Simon. The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness (1998), ISBN 0805210601, \$ 10.85

Films:

"As We Forgive (after genocide in Rwanda)" (2009), ASIN B002RBHDFU, \$ 12.40

"Forgiving Dr. Mengele: the Eva Kors Story" (2005), ASIN B000MAFXQO, \$16.99

"I Have Never Forgotten You: The Life & Legacy of Simon Wiesenthal" (2007), ASIN B0001MMBQ, \$ 17.99

"Murderers Among Us (VHS drama re Simon Wiesenthal)" (1998), ASIN 6301929748, \$22.28

"Rwanda: Living Forgiveness" (1994), ASIN B002JAHT2Q, \$ 7.99

"The Diary of Immaculee" (2006), ASIN B0006FKE4Q, \$ 15.75

Repentance, Repair and Reconciliation

Books:

Battle, Michael Jesse & Bishop Desmond Tutu. Reconciliation: The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu, ISBN 0829818332, \$16.15

Bhutto, Benazir. Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy & the West (2008), ISBN 0061567582, \$ 10.17

Davis, Laura. I Thought We'd Never Speak Again: The Road from Estrangement to Reconciliation (2003), ISBN 0060957025, \$ 11.99

Flancbaum, Debby. The Jewish Woman Next Door: Repairing the World One Step at a Time (2007), ISBN 9657108950, \$ 17.12

Gaines, Janet Howe. Forgiveness in a Wounded World: Jonah's Dilemma (2003), ISBN 1589830776, \$ 26.95

Hanh, Thich Nhat. Reconciliation: Healing the Inner Child (2010), ISBN 1935209647, \$10.17

Lederach, John Paul and Angela Jill (father/daughter). When Blood & Bones Cry Out: Journeys Through the Soundscape of Healing and Reconciliation (2011), ISBN 0199837104, \$24.95

Park, Andrew Sung. From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded (Korean Christian perspective), 2004, ISBN 0687038812, \$21.00

Schimmel, Solomon. Wounds Not Healed by Time: The Power of Repentance and Forgiveness (draws from Judaism, Christianity and Islam), 2004, ISBN 019517612X, \$ 29.99

Walker, Margaret Urban. Moral Repair: Reconstructing Moral Relations After Wrongdoing (2006), ISBN 0521009256, \$ 31.17

Tutu, Bishop Desmond. God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time (2005), ISBN 0385483716, \$

10.40

Films:

"Reconciliation (gay father and son)" (2009), ASIN B004S546H6, \$20.37

"Repentance (3 generations Russian family)" (2004), ASIN B0000YEDJA, \$19.78