

Public Forgiveness in Post-Conflict Contexts
March 5 - 6, 2010 Radboud University Nijmegen

Organised by: Centre for Ethics, Radboud University and Cordaid, The Hague
With support of: ICCO, Sormani Fonds, Radboud University Nijmegen, Dpt. Philosophy
Radboud University Nijmegen

We are pleased to invite you to the international conference on “Public Forgiveness in Post-Conflict Contexts”. During the conference theoretical presentations will be alternated with discussion of experiences from two countries that have suffered from gross conflict and violence, Guatemala and Northern Ireland.

The conference welcomes both practitioners working in the field of peace mediation and conflict resolution and academic scholars working on the topic of transitional justice, reconciliation and forgiveness.

For a detailed program please visit the conference website at <http://www.ru.nl/cve/publicforgiveness/>. Here you can also find a link to register for the conference.

Friday March 5, Expert Seminar

Beelzaal Kasteel Heyendaal, Radboud University Nijmegen

13:30 – 17.30 Presentations and discussion with book-participants, conference-speakers and other guests (admission by invitation only).

Presenters:

Sanderijn Cels (Harvard-MIT Public Disputes Program)
Erik Doxtader (University of South Carolina Columbia)
Catherine Guisan (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; visiting professor
University Utrecht)
Alice Maclachlan (York University Toronto)
Margaret Smith (American University Washington)
Wouter Veraart (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
Annelies Verdoolaege (Universiteit Gent)

20.00 – 22.00 Symposium Justice vs Reconciliation (with Soeterbeeck Program, Dutch spoken)

Presenters:

Johan du Toit (prosecutor ICTY The Hague)
Coreferent and discussion

Saturday March 6, International Conference

Aula Radboud University Nijmegen

9:15 – 9:30 Introductory presentation: Forgiveness in public contexts – Bas van Stokkom

9:30 – 10:00 Keynote lecture (1): How to Make Sense of Public Forgiveness. A Philosophical Perspective – Trudy Govier

10:00 – 10:30 Keynote lecture (2): Public Forgiveness at the Boundary between the Religious and the Secular: How Do We Read the Terrain? – Robert Schreiter

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break

11:00 – 12:30 Case: Guatemala

- 11:00 – 11:30 Seeking forgiveness or appeasement? Saying sorry but not making amends -the case of Guatemala – Marlies Stappers
- 11:30 – 11:45 Reflection by co-referent – Stephan Parmentier
- 11:45 – 12:30 Discussion

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

13:30 – 15:15 Case: Northern Ireland

- 13.30 –14:00 Public Forgiveness after the Northern Irish ‘Troubles’ Wilhelm Verwoerd / Alistair Little
- 14:00 – 14:15 Reflection by co-referent – Margaret Smith
- 14:15 – 15:15 Discussion

15:15 – 15:45 Coffee/tea break

15:45 – 16:15 Keynote lecture (3): Commissioning Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Ephemeral Spaces: The Role of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in Africa – George Wachira

16:15 – 16.45 Keynote lecture (4): Can Forgiveness Be Made Safe For Politics? – Daniel Philpott

16:45 – 17:30 Discussion

17.30 Closure and drinks

Conference speakers

Trudy Govier is philosopher and author of many articles and books, including *Forgiveness and Revenge* (Routledge 2002), *Taking Wrongs Seriously* (Humanity Books, Prometheus 2006), and *A Practical Study of Argument* (Wadsworth/Cengage, Seventh Edition 2010). In addition to academic work, she has been a key participant in peace education and advocacy groups. Trudy Govier is presently Professor of Philosophy at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada.

Alistair Little is former loyalist (protestant) and political prisoner; experienced reconciliation worker in Northern Ireland, Ireland, the Balkans, South Africa, and the Middle East with an emphasis on in depth sharing of personal histories/life stories; co-founder of and co-facilitator within the Glencree Sustainable Peace Network; Irish Peace Centres; fieldworker (May 2010+). Recently his autobiography was published: *Give a Boy a Gun: One Man's Journey from Killing to Peace-Making*.

Stephan Parmentier teaches sociology of crime, law and human rights at the K.U. Leuven (Belgium). His research interests include political crimes and transitional justice, and the administration of criminal justice. He has served as an advisor to many international organisations, including the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and the non-governmental organisation Guatebelga, set up to combat impunity for serious human rights violations in Guatemala. Between 1999-2002 he was the vice-chairman of the Flemish section of Amnesty International.

Daniel Philpott is Associate Professor of Political Science and Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. He is author of *Revolutions in Sovereignty*, editor of *The Politics of Past Evil: Religion, Reconciliation, and Transitional Justice*, and he is completing a book titled *Just and Unjust Peace: An Ethic of Political Reconciliation*.

Robert Schreiter is professor of theology at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. He has been involved with peace/building on all six continents, especially around the healing of societies in post-conflict reconstruction, and the building of resilience for local peace-builders. For twelve years he was the theological consultant to *Caritas Internationalis*, the umbrella organization for 162 relief and development agencies in the Roman Catholic Church, for its programs in peace-building. Among his works are: *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* and *Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies*.

Margaret Smith is a Scholar in Residence in the Division of International Peace and Conflict Resolution at the School of International Service, American University. Her areas of specialization include nationalist and ethnic conflict, uses of memory in politics, and post conflict reconstruction in deeply divided societies. She has studied the revision of the teaching of history as a tool of post-conflict reconstruction, and is the author of *Reckoning with the Past: Teaching History in Northern Ireland* (Lexington Books, 2005).

Marlies Stappers is the initiator and executive director of Impunity Watch, an international non-profit group, seeking to promote accountability for past atrocities in countries emerging from a violent past. Prior to that she worked as the coordinator of the Universal Justice programme at the Dutch development organisation *Solidaridad*. She is also initiator and coordinator of the

Dutch Guatemala Platform Against Impunity, a group of Netherlands-based NGOs advocating and lobbying for accountability in Guatemala. Between 1995 and 2001, she lived in Guatemala, where she worked on accompanying Guatemalan refugees returning from Mexico and on mental health projects. She also worked as a researcher for the Guatemalan Historical Truth Commission and as an observer of the Peace Accords for the UN Mission in Guatemala (Minugua).

Bas van Stokkom is research fellow at The Centre for Ethics, Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands. His research concentrates on the fields of citizenship, deliberative democracy, restorative justice, policing, and legal / punishment ethics. He is secretary of the Dutch-Flemish journal *Tijdschrift voor Herstelrecht* (Journal of Restorative Justice) and co-editor of the studies *Images of Restorative Justice Theory* (2008) and *Reflections on Reassurance Policing in the Low Countries* (2008).

Wilhelm Verwoerd is former researcher on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission; former lecturer in Philosophy, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa; programme co-ordinator of the Survivors and Former Combatants Programme at Glenree (mid-2002-mid-2009), with an emphasis on cultivating the Sustainable Peace Network; joint Co-ordinator within the Irish Peace Centres Consortium (mid-2009+). Verwoerd is author of many books, including *Equity, Mercy, Forgiveness: Interpreting Amnesty within the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Peeters, 2007).

George Wachira is Senior Research and Policy Advisor and former Executive Director (1996-2006) of Nairobi Peace Initiative-Africa (NPI-Africa) A seasoned peacebuilding practitioner with almost 20 years of experience, his expertise includes mediation and dialogue facilitation, peacebuilding and conflict transformation training, design of peacebuilding reconciliation interventions, and research and writing. He has spent the last two years researching the role of truth and reconciliation commissions in Africa, focusing on Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone and South Africa.