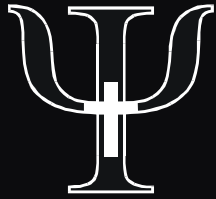


*Network of
Christians in
Psychology*



13th Annual NeCIP Conference 2003

Forgiveness

Bawtry Hall, Doncaster
4-6 April, 2003

Keynote speaker:

Professor Everett L. Worthington Jr.
Virginia Commonwealth University, USA

Booking forms and further details available from
www.necip.org.uk. Other details available from
Janet Jackson at conference@necip.org.uk or on
0116 230 1057.

Keynote

Saturday 5 April, 10.00

Everett Worthington, Jr.
Virginia Commonwealth University

Where are you in the process of forgiveness?

I identify two aspects of forgiveness – decisional forgiveness and emotional forgiveness. Preference for these two definitions are thought to be related to one's fundamental valuing of virtues. Two sets of virtues are identified, and people are found to value one set more than others. This fundamental value difference also explains how people focus on which scriptural verses they most commonly think of to govern their beliefs about forgiveness. I look at emotional forgiveness more carefully. In doing so, I define unforgiveness, emotional forgiveness and reconciliation and show its relationship to justice. I briefly describe the Pyramid Model to REACH Forgiveness, which is an intervention to help people forgive.

Breakout session # 1

Saturday 5 April, 11.30-12.45

Liz Gulliford
University of Cambridge

Forgiveness as personal transformation

The last twenty years have seen the development of a growing body of psychological literature on the subject of forgiveness. Forgiveness has been widely regarded as a purely religious construct. What happens when it slips these 'theological moorings' and becomes embedded in psychological discourse? Has the focus changed in this move from forgiveness for the sake of the other, to an arguably narcissistic focus on ourselves? This charge has been laid at the door of 'self-help' books on the topic. Responses to this issue will be explored. The question of how forgiveness is defined psychologically clearly has a bearing on measures of its success. Measures, mechanisms, and models of forgiveness will be drawn into discussion.

Stephanie Goins
YWAM

Forgiveness in the reintegration of former child soldiers in Sierra Leone

I will talk about the progress of my research thus far in examining the role forgiveness might play in the reintegration of former child combatants. Children between the ages of 6 and 18 have been participants in the civil war in Sierra Leone since its inception in 1991. They have their own stories to tell in regards

to how they were affected by rebel invasions, as well as how they became part of the fighting forces, in what ways they participated, and what life has been like since their demobilization. Their understandings of forgiveness are simultaneously simplistic and sophisticated. Many have chosen to live 'in forgiveness' under the most extreme circumstances; just as many are left with memories which are too difficult to 'forgive and forget'. Agencies established to assist in the reintegration process typically do not incorporate a holistic approach but focus primarily on equipping former child combatants with vocational skills, continued education, and basic (initial) health care. Sierra Leoneans need more for their overall 'recovery'. The practice of forgiveness may be key in maintaining healthy relationships, particularly in relationships that have been broken due to acts of violence. I will provide some examples of the impact of 'practising forgiveness' in family and community reintegration as it applies to former child combatants.

Anna Grazia Lecca
University of Southampton

Gift of love: The role of forgiveness in the therapeutic process of remission from drug misuse

Harmful and threatening experiences especially in early childhood such as deprivation, dismissal, neglect or any abuse are common themes in psychotherapy. If "secure love" could be gained only through parents' exploitation, emotional disturbance or personality disorder is sometimes the consequence in adulthood. The awareness of not having been loved as one truly was and the consciousness of the meaning of these painful feelings do not seem to be enough to bring the person towards healing. The healing process is

about building a bridge of reconciliation between past and present in which forgiveness has a crucial role. In these research described, forgiveness constitutes a key task for addicts dealing with their suppressed anger, fear and long-repressed needs and wishes during their rehabilitation programme in a residential community for remission from drug misuse. One group of 15 drug-addicts who maintained a form of spiritual belief and religious practice, and a second control group of 15 drug-addicts without spiritual belief, both in their third year programme in a residential community answered extensive in-depth interviews. In a wide range of issues addressed, participants were asked to describe their belief, their personal experience of God, their closeness to Him and their commitment in faith. Secondly, interviewees were asked to talk about forgiveness related to a particular painful relationship and associated feelings. Case reports show a positive association between forgiveness and serenity, peace, hope for the future and increased positive feelings in those patients with spiritual belief. On the contrary those without spiritual belief displayed much more a sense of anger, hopelessness, despair, sorrow, resentment and desolation with a higher level of emotional distress.

Breakout session # 2

Saturday 5 April, 14.30-15.45

Fraser Watts
University of Cambridge

Sin and forgiveness: Theology and psychology

It has been argued that the New Testament was written in a shame culture and reflects that. In contrast, the Bible was first translated into English in a guilt culture and English translation still reflect that. It will be argued that our current understandings of sin and forgiveness are too negative and guilt-laden, and do not properly reflect New Testament thinking. Second, it will be argued that the Christian understanding of sin is one that can be better understood in the light of developments in 20th century psychology. Specifically, the compulsive, or addictive, nature of sin, and human ambivalence about accepting the possibility of liberation from it, are aspects of the human predicament on which psychology can shed light. Thirdly, the forgiveness of humanity through Christ's work on the cross can also be understood better with the aid of modern psychology. Particular attention will be paid to two important strands in Christian thinking about the cross, the cross as defeat of sin and evil, and the cross as the place where the price was paid for human sin. These ideas about the Cross have very different psychological resonance.

Rhiannon Lloyd
Le Rucher/ Mercy Ministries, Geneva

Forgiveness and reconciliation in Rwanda

I intend to share what I have witnessed happening in the lives of countless Rwandans – a forgiveness that is shocking and can only be of Divine origin. There are many misunderstandings on forgiveness, both within and without the church. There are some principles God has been teaching us - mainly the centrality of the Cross in forgiveness, and the need for the Atoning Sacrifice, not only for God to be able to forgive us, but for us to be able to forgive others. As well as our own sins, we need to bring to the Cross the sins of others against us, and the pain which has resulted. It's hard to forgive when the heart is full of pain, but when this pain is transferred to Jesus (Is 53:4) our hearts are freed up to be able to forgive. In our workshops, both Hutu and Tutsi share their stories with one another and then transfer their pain to the crucified Lord. They then symbolically nail their stories to a cross. Following this simple act, I have seen lives being transformed in a way I would never have believed had I not witnessed it personally in the lives of thousands by now. Another principle which we have found to be significant is the 'just judge' principle of 1 Pe 2:23. Only when we know there is a just judge in heaven can we entrust our case in to His hands, and choose not to be the judge ourselves. In my session I would like to further explore the above principles.

Everett Worthington Jr.
Virginia Commonwealth University

Forgiving: Five steps to forgiveness in clinical practice

I define unforgiveness, forgiveness and reconciliation. The Pyramid Model to REACH

Forgiveness is a psychoeducational intervention to help individuals forgive using five steps to forgiveness. Research supports its effectiveness. You can apply information from this workshop in enrichment, therapy, psychoeducation for its own sake, or as a psychoeducational adjunct to counseling. It can also be used in church settings, aimed at helping people become more forgiving people. I include recent advances in technique. In this workshop, I present the five steps within the context of a 13-hour group format that also focuses on talking about transgressions and becoming a more forgiving person.

Breakout session # 3

Sunday 6 April, 9.30-10.45

Open discussion

Promoting spiritual and religious competencies in clinical practice

This session looks beyond forgiveness and will be an open discussion looking at how NeCIP can best help promote spiritual and religious competencies in clinical practice. Clinical trainees are currently obliged to cultural, ethnic, gender, and sexuality issues, but not religious issues. Should this be changed, and if so, how? We will think both about treating religious clients and about the impact of a clinician's beliefs on clinical decision making, explanation and formulation, professional practice, and clinical research.

Everett Worthington Jr.
Virginia Commonwealth University

Ideas for research into forgiveness: Personality, social psychology, and developmental psychology; justice, business, and health psychology

I describe the research in our lab in six basic research areas, and we brainstorm other ideas of cutting edge research that needs to be done to help reveal more about forgiveness. (1) Personality: We have developed measures of forgiveness as an event and personality disposition. (2) We are studying social psychological processes associated with forgiving, including religious influences. (3) We have theorized about developmental processes governing development of forgiving in children, but not studied it yet. (4) We are looking at restorative justice and the roles of apology, restitution, and forgiveness and their associations with health. (5) We have begun to examine forgiveness in a business context, but the study is very basic at this point. (6) The opportunities for studying forgiveness and health are numerous. We have reviewed the literature, but studied only (a) cortisol and (b) basic autonomic nervous system markers to date. In each area, I review briefly and in a cursory way what we are doing in our lab, and we talk within the group about other studies that might be of interest.

Presenters

Stephanie Goins began working with YWAM (Youth With a Mission) in 1989, relocating to the Harpenden base in 1998 to provide 'member care'

to our staff in the form of counselling, debriefing, and training in briefing, debriefing and team building. Simultaneously, she was looking at justice and advocacy issues relating to YWAM staff. She became particularly interested in children in difficult circumstances, and specifically child combatants. Her current doctoral research grew out of this interest as well as significant time spent in West Africa on board Mercy Ships M/ V Anastasis. Before joining YWAM, she had earned an M.A. in Psychology and was employed as a counsellor.

Liz Gulliford has been a Research Assistant for the Psychology and Religion Research Programme at the University of Cambridge since February 2001. She studied for her first degree in Theology in Oxford, before moving to Cambridge in 1998 where she undertook an interdisciplinary MPhil, culminating in a thesis on *Theological and Psychological Aspects of Forgiveness* in 1999. Keen to contribute to the dialogue between theology and psychology from both sides, she has been studying for a BPS accredited Psychology degree whilst working for the Psychology and Religion Research Programme, and is in the final stages of assessment. At the moment she is working on two chapters for an edited volume on forgiveness, *Forgiveness in Context*, with Fraser Watts and others.

Anna Grazia Lecca is a Clinical Psychologist and currently in the 2nd year of a PhD in spirituality and mental health at the University of Southampton. For many years she worked in the Italian NHS in a variety of roles and services, including working with drug and alcohol abusers and their relatives; providing brief and long term interventions in the Mental Health Department; promoting inter-agency collaboration among service providers to promote quality of life in Sardinia Regional Community; and working with adolescents, teachers, and parents to

prevent anti-social behaviour in secondary schools and promote regular attendance. Anna Grazia is Catholic and belongs to the Charismatic Renewal.

Rhiannon Lloyd is a former doctor of medicine and psychiatry. Since 1985, after a period of training with Youth With A Mission, she has been in full-time Christian work, ministering extensively in cross cultural situations. Since 1994, she has pioneered a reconciliation ministry in Rwanda. She has also been running reconciliation workshops in South Africa since 1996. Teams are now beginning to go out from Rwanda to take the message of healing and reconciliation to other nations. Before starting the work in Rwanda she spent many years teaching on courses for Christian workers and ministering people with deep emotional wounds. Although living in Wales, Dr Lloyd is based at Mercy Ministries in Geneva.

Fraser Watts is Starbridge Lecturer in Theology and Natural Science at the Faculty of Divinity of the University of Cambridge, Director of the Psychology and Religion Research Programme, Fellow of Queens' College, Cambridge, and Vicar-Chaplain of St Edward King and Martyr, Cambridge. Prior to his current posts, Fraser was Head of the Department of Clinical Psychology at King's College Hospital, London, and subsequently Senior Scientist at the Medical Research Council's Applied Psychology Unit in Cambridge. He is the founding editor of the journal *Cognition and Emotion* and is a former President of the British Psychological Society. He has written or edited fourteen books and is the author of more than 120 journal articles and chapters.

Everett Worthington is Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia,

where he has been on the faculty since 1978. His research interests focus on forgiveness and reconciliation, marriage, and religious values. Reflecting these interests, Everett is author or co-author of more than 160 refereed articles and book chapters, and has written or edited seventeen books, several of which have been translated into Chinese, Portuguese, and Indonesian. His most recent books include *Dimensions of forgiveness: Psychological research and theological perspectives* (Templeton Foundation Press, 1998), *Hope-focused marriage counseling* (InterVarsity Press, 1999), and *Five steps to forgiveness: The art and science of forgiving* (Crown Publishers, 2001). He was the founding editor of *Marriage and Family: A Christian Journal*, and serves on the editorial boards of the *American Journal of Family Therapy*, the *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, and the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*. As Executive Director of the Campaign for Forgiveness Research, Everett has raised over \$7m to fund scientific research projects into forgiving. In addition to his academic work, Everett is a licensed Clinical Psychologist in Virginia and has run a private practice for over twenty years. He is an active church member involved in education at all ages, and has been involved in coaching youth sports including soccer and wrestling. Public education about forgiveness and reconciliation is central to Everett's work, and he has spoken internationally at conferences, universities, and churches in Brazil, South Africa, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Canada. More widely his public teaching efforts have included videotape and magazine writing, and more than 300 appearances in different media, including Good Morning America, CNN, the 700 Club, NPR, and *TIME* magazine.