

## New Book

Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and the Pathways to Peace Editors: Ani Kalayjian & Raymond F. Paloutzian  
Availability: Expected to be published in 2007 by Springer Publishing

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Overview of Book Forgiveness can enable people to move beyond the burden due to the deep pain, anger, hatred, grudges, and misunderstanding that are often the result of trauma, whether it is human-induced or the result of natural causes. Although there are numerous books on the market that counsel people in the arts of forgiveness and reconciliation, most are addressed to the individual and suggest prayer, meditation, or other spiritual exercises as a way to begin to forgive and overcome anger, hatred, or alienation. Some of them are couched in terms of a specific religious tradition. Others are more psychological in their approach. Many of the books focus on reconciliation of a specific issue such as healing a couple's relationship after an affair or forgiving one's parents. Several books address forgiveness at the communal or societal levels and suggest ways to overcome racial and ethnic strife. In our examination of the available titles, we did not find texts that deal with the healing of trauma through forgiveness that were comprehensive in scope or sufficient to talk about it at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, familial, communal, and societal levels. Only a broad examination such as this can reveal the similar patterns that occur at all levels. We propose just such a book.

The emphasis of this book is on the larger units of analysis, placing it squarely and properly within the context of a peace psychology series. This means that special attention should be paid to the cognitions and behavior of people in their unique social, historical, and cultural contexts in a way that facilitates our understanding of the structural properties of aggregates of people that promote systemic violence and that show the possibility of changing to promote systemic peacebuilding. Forgiveness and reconciliation are useful elements in this systemic peacebuilding effort. One useful contribution of this book to the peace psychology literature would be to demystify the idea of forgiveness in the minds of scholars and policy makers, i.e., it would no longer be necessary for the idea of forgiveness to be seen as a head-in-the-clouds, lofty ideal that is too far removed from reality to be put into practice. Instead, we hope to illustrate concrete examples of how people can cognitively reframe their interpretation of reality in a way that is both realistic while at the same fosters peace-promoting values and promotes socially just outcomes. Part of the peace building process will require a step by step enhancement of mutual trust, and the processes that nurture trust include those that nurture forgiveness, reconciliation, and occasionally their boundaries and limits. The Journal of Social Issues issue on Peace Psychology recently edited by Christie (2006) serves as a springboard from which to draw these connections.

The multitude of conflicts currently wreaking havoc across the globe and the continuing reports of violence in communities and estrangement within families suggest that despite a saturated market, the message that forgiveness and reconciliation are a necessary foundation to communal living and thus to human survival has not yet gotten through. We think it is time for a novel approach to learning how to move beyond trauma and to forgive. The inclusive, multidisciplinary, multiethnic, multigenerational, and international perspectives and the pathways towards healing trauma that are suggested in the proposed volume are intended to provide such an approach. The authors represent sufficient disciplinary and cultural diversity and the depth and breadth of experience to undertake this groundbreaking effort.

Although the book is multi-authored, it will be designed so that the material is synthetic and integrated. This will be facilitated in at least three ways. First, authors will be given a set of common instructions for the structure and content of the chapters. Each chapter will have a research base and will extend that so that it can be applied in practical ways to concrete situations. Various aspects of case studies will be included for illustrative purposes. Second, after all chapters are in, they will be edited as a whole set in order to build in the degree of synthesis and integration of material that would approximate that which would be achieved in a single authored text. Third, the opening chapter and epilogue will highlight and be built around common themes that emerge from the text. These points are elaborated below.

Christie, D. (2006). Post-Cold War Peace Psychology: More Differentiated, Contextualized, and Systemic. *Journal of Social Issues*. 62,(1). [Special issue.]