

**BRINGING FOCUS TO BEING FORGIVABLE:  
COMPLETING UNFINISHED BUSINESS,  
MAKING AMENDS, AND  
BEING RECONCILED WITH GOD**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Despite the ubiquitousness of needing forgiveness and the proliferation of material on this subject, I see widespread bewilderment about where to start and how to learn to forgive or to be forgiven. Often enough, people trudge on, sensing that their energy is being sapped by unforgiveness but hobbled by assumptions such as, "I can't forgive after what happened," or "I can't forgive myself for what happened." Forgiveness is perceived as ideally valuable but practically unattainable. Figuratively speaking it is as if, in a port city in Canada, many people are looking for the harbour; lots of streets lead there, and plenty of people assert, "You can't miss it," but no one seems to have a large-scale map, or a knowledgeable tour guide. In wanting to get to the harbour myself as a human being, and in walking with others in that direction as a spiritual director, I hope this research project will help map the terrain and explore possible routes toward forgiveness of others and of oneself.

The numerous titles on forgiveness, and the perspectives and processes they offer, might be aligned in three approaches or contiguous clusters. While all these titles treat forgiveness as worthwhile and no categorization among them is airtight, each of these three approaches offers values for reaching decisions about whether to forgive, a viewpoint for imagining humans as forgivable, and a vocabulary for naming what forgiveness might mean on the ground. However, while there are secular writers who acknowledge the effects of spirituality on psychological health, and while there are spiritual writers who evoke specifically religious concepts, in the literature on forgiveness I do not see a comprehensive view of how these perspectives and processes might be classified, interact, and benefit individuals burdened by unforgiveness and persons accompanying them spiritually. My question, then, is: how are the distinctive components of secular, spiritual-but-not-religious, and religious approaches to forgiveness and self-forgiveness complementary? In response, I think that in a healthy society all three of these

approaches will be operative. If there is only secularity, there may be neglect; individuals can and do "fall through the cracks" of even a well-intentioned system. If there is only spirituality, there may be ineffectiveness; for example, a new information-sharing group among left-handed persons may no longer exist two years from now. If there is only religion, there may be abuse, the concept of separation of church and state having proven its worth. My hypothesis is that, in a secular and diverse society these three approaches are complementary: that is, in terms of understanding and practice of forgiveness and self-forgiveness they each have something to contribute to the others. As well, I hope to demonstrate how three concrete means proposed respectively by these approaches not only have features in common but also have distinctive characteristics that constitute strengths to be shared as people become ready to extend and receive forgiveness. I want to start by describing these three approaches to forgiveness. In selecting a specific exemplar of each approach I have sought to identify three that offer not only sound theory but also practical learning opportunities to the general population. I then want to focus on two aspects: generally, how each approach is perceived by writers in the other groups; and, specifically, how one selected concrete means of forgiveness-readiness training proposed by each approach compares with the other two. In selecting a specific corpus of concrete means in each approach, I have attempted to apply four criteria: whether a work is (1) respected, as evidenced in the writers' qualifications and in references by other qualified writers; (2) representative, covering many if not most points made by other writers; (3) recent, or at least in continuous use; and (4) referring to self-forgiveness, in addition to forgiveness of others. Using a secular approach, the concrete means is suggested stages in completing unfinished business, particularly at the end of life. Using a spiritual-but-not-religious approach, the concrete means is steps four to ten of the twelve steps, on making amends. Using a religious approach, the concrete means is a summary of various iterations of Anglican rites for being reconciled with God. The first step, then, will be to

identify characteristics of each approach to forgiveness: a survey of the general field; an outline of a specific exemplar within the field; a description of a concrete means within the exemplar; and an overview including the approach's teleology or implicit assumptions about the impetus of human life, anthropology or implicit assumptions about the value of human persons, and topology or explicit articulations about the direction of human endeavour. I will also be looking for whether writers refer specifically to self-forgiveness, and for any ongoing questions raised in each approach. The next step will be to carry out a comparative analysis of what the three approaches each have to offer, on two fronts: noting reciprocal perceptions among the approaches, including potential value added and bases of usefulness and trustworthiness; and assessing the selected concrete means, including convergent areas and unique features, as potential contributions to better ensuring access, effectiveness and empowerment for persons seeking to forgive.

## **II. SECULAR APPROACH TO FORGIVENESS: HEALING**

### **1. General Field: Forgiveness Therapy**

In a secular approach to forgiveness, a general field is forgiveness therapy.<sup>1</sup> Enright and Fitzgibbons describe forgiveness therapy as a process of examining past situations of unfair treatment, acknowledging associated feelings, reframing one's experience ("narrative repair"<sup>2</sup>), seeing the offender and oneself in new ways, letting go of anger, and modifying relational patterns. In technical terms, forgiveness is a developmental sequence involving, first, new thinking or cognition, second, new feeling or affect, and third, new acting or behaviour. Forgiveness is both intrapsychic – a process inside a person – and interpersonal – an act between persons. In practical terms, it takes both time and effort. The need for forgiveness is everywhere apparent. The initial causal factor is an incident causing injury (injustice, transgression, wrong,

harm, mistreatment, unfair treatment, "interpersonal wound",<sup>3</sup> or "disappointing or hurtful behavior"<sup>4</sup>). The injury is real, intense, and interpersonal, that is, not random or having to do with the human condition.<sup>5</sup> A complicating factor is resentment in the form of bitterness, vengefulness, spite, nursing a grudge, mentally replaying the hurtful memory, or dwelling on feelings of victimization, in short, "a commitment to remain[ing] angry".<sup>6</sup> Juola Exline and Baumeister find that barriers to expressing repentance include a "magnitude gap"<sup>7</sup> or discrepant perceptions of the transgression by the victim and the perpetrator, shame in both parties, and fear of punishment. Barriers to expressing forgiveness include vulnerability or fear of recurrence, pride or fear of appearing weak, principle or fear of being "morally remiss",<sup>8</sup> loss of the benefits of victim status or the leverage of being owed and, interestingly, a lack of experience of being forgiven. The costs of unforgiveness are high, and include perpetuation of physical and mental distress, damage to successful functioning in the form of behaviour "appropriate for those much younger",<sup>9</sup> and damage if not termination of relationships. In short, "holding a grudge is fundamentally antisocial."<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, forgiveness or dealing with one's anger directly and constructively instead of merely venting, managing, medicating or fearing it is an option. Forgiveness can be undertaken initially for oneself, to find release from hard feelings, and eventually "to respond morally toward the offender"<sup>11</sup>. Enright and Fitzgibbons define forgiveness as follows:

People, upon rationally determining that they have been unfairly treated, forgive when they willfully abandon resentment and related responses (to which they have a right), and endeavor to respond to the wrongdoer based on the moral principle of beneficence, which may include compassion, unconditional worth, generosity, and moral love (to which the wrongdoer, by nature of the hurtful act or acts, has no right).<sup>12</sup>

Forgiveness, then, is a constructive response to harm, or the cancellation of "interpersonal debt".<sup>13</sup> It is about engagement notwithstanding ambivalence, generosity beyond what is deserved, and compassion notwithstanding injustice; the offender is no longer defined primarily by the wrongdoing, but is deserving of respect simply as a human person. Forgiveness is

paradoxical: the forgiver refrains from deserved punishment and extends undeserved good. Forgiveness is transformational for the victim, by annulling the distorting effects of the wrongdoing on relationships,<sup>14</sup> and possibly for the wrongdoer, by lifting guilt and shame. Forgiveness is a "performative utterance"<sup>15</sup> of "[belief] in what the (now repentant) wrongdoer can become".<sup>16</sup> In a nutshell, it is a reduction of negative responses, and a possible increase in positive responses to the offense: "an absence of ill will",<sup>17</sup> and "a motivationally and volitionally unique coping mechanism".<sup>18</sup>

### *Self-Forgiveness in Forgiveness Therapy*

An important subset of forgiveness is self-forgiveness.<sup>19</sup> The need for self-forgiveness arises from injury to others or oneself through one's own actions, followed by unforgiveness of oneself. Injury to others calls for consideration of one's actions, in terms of the severity of the offence and whether forgiveness has been sought, and for consideration of one's motives, in terms of whether they were external (somebody made me do it) or internal (I did it myself). Injury to oneself involves a challenge to one's central life assumptions about the world being orderly and oneself as being good and having agency. Injury to oneself also involves exposure to one's shadow self as being mean or false. Injury to oneself can result in feelings of guilt, that is, a negative evaluation of one's own behaviour, and in feelings of shame, that is, a negative evaluation of one's own worth. Hall and Fincham in particular point out that self-forgiveness is like interpersonal forgiveness in being an intentional process undertaken despite objective wrong. Self-forgiveness is unlike interpersonal forgiveness in terms of severity: "[T]he consequences of not forgiving the self typically may be more severe than those associated with a lack of interpersonal forgiveness."<sup>20</sup> Self-forgiveness is also unlike interpersonal forgiveness in terms of the need for reconciliation with the offender, that is, oneself: "When one harms oneself or

someone else, however, the offender must continue to face himself/herself and his/her actions."<sup>21</sup> Self-forgiveness is not failure to acknowledge the wrongdoing or to accept responsibility for the consequences with little effort, discomfort or benefit. One characteristic of authentic self-forgiveness is empowerment. Equipped with a conscience and with consciousness, humans can learn to take responsibility for their own happiness. A second characteristic of authentic self-forgiveness is comprehensiveness. Self-forgiveness facilitates, and is concurrent with, forgiveness of and by others. Pingleton maps this comprehensiveness as follows: "(a) forgiveness can only be received from God if given to others, (b) forgiveness can only be given to others if received from self, and (c) forgiveness can only be given to self if received from God."<sup>22</sup>

## **2. Specific Exemplar: Palliative Care**

In a secular approach to forgiveness and the general field of forgiveness therapy, one specific exemplar is palliative care, defined as "the active total care of patients and their families by a multi-professional team when the patient's disease is no longer responsive to curative treatment".<sup>23</sup> Palliative care is about dying;<sup>24</sup> Byock and Kübler-Ross emphasize that dying is a highly individualized experience involving unpreparedness and comfort, challenge and opportunity. Dying is not the same as getting better; Fisher and his colleagues affirm that in this context open, accurate, timely communication with caregivers and possibly distant next of kin is crucial. Dying is not necessarily a problem; Fisher and his colleagues add that participation by the dying person in end-of-life planning, including wishes for any visiting, is important. It is possible to die well: "[I]f even the most emotionally robust among us will eventually die, it follows that a certain wellness in dying must be possible."<sup>25</sup> A good death is hard work ("taskwork"<sup>26</sup>) involving being willing to talk, learning closeness skills, engaging in growth, and making the best use of what time remains. Cheng and her colleagues note that a good death is an exercise in grieving

interrelated losses: functions, relationships, identity, and particularly a sense of purpose and meaning. In this context of grieving, it is noted that family conflict was present in 55% of hospice deaths considered in one study reported by Cheng,<sup>27</sup> and that the benefit of all therapy lies in recognizing and grieving each loss.<sup>28</sup> Kübler-Ross observes that dying is not unlike early childhood development, involving continual adaptation to possibly unwanted change. Along similar lines, Byock observes that dying is not unlike childbearing, involving early and late or transitional stages of labour. Dying is an art form (the art of dying, or *ars moriendi*), a process of becoming more whole that is honourable, generative, and possibly even rueful: "to die with some projects left undone".<sup>29</sup> In facilitating forgiveness in palliative care – bearing in mind five stages in dying persons' attitude toward dying, that is, denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance<sup>30</sup> – communication techniques are helpful. A therapy of listening calls for someone who can sit still, listen even briefly or irregularly, offer a compassionate presence, perhaps ask open-ended questions, and receive storytelling including rage and fear as well as healing and laughter. A therapy of silence calls for availability regardless of the desire to talk by the dying person or by the soon-to-be-bereaved. Given that unforgiveness in the form of issues not addressed is ultimately burdensome, a forgiveness technique appropriate for bereaved persons is bereavement care. According to Rando, bereavement care can allow a bereaved person to remember the lost relationship comfortably and realistically, for example by asking, "What would you have wanted to say?" and "What don't you miss about the deceased?"<sup>31</sup> As well, given that unforgiveness in the form of feelings not expressed is ultimately explosive, a forgiveness technique appropriate for dying persons is a life review, or guided autobiographical writing, often shared in a safe group, about one's experience and interpretation of that experience. A life review can allow a person to explore beliefs, evaluate choices, affirm needs – particularly the need to give and receive love – and "result in the resolution of conflicts and forgiveness."<sup>32</sup>

### *Self-Forgiveness in Palliative Care*

An important aspect of the task and the art of a good death is self-forgiveness, especially the concept that forgiveness is best accompanied by gratitude. Roy affirms that, particularly at the end of life, thanksgiving and forgiving constitute opportunities: they are "existential acts of the highest importance for the gravely ill and the dying".<sup>33</sup> To give thanks is to honour the presence of others as constitutive of one's own existence, particularly when one is faced with total loss; to forgive is to "refuse to carry [...] rage and hatred forward into my future",<sup>34</sup> particularly into death. Here again, forgiveness is concurrent with self-forgiveness: having forgiven and given thanks for others, "I can with solid hope ask to be forgiven."<sup>35</sup>

### **3. Concrete Means: Suggested Stages in Completing Unfinished Business**

In a secular approach to forgiveness, the general field of forgiveness therapy, and the specific exemplar of palliative care, one concrete means is completing unfinished business. In the context of palliative care, it has been noted that:

[Patients] welcomed a breakthrough in their defenses, they appreciated our willingness to talk with them about their impending death and unfinished tasks [...]. They were, at times, hanging onto life because of some unfinished business [...]. These patients all felt better [...] and usually died soon after the unfinished business was taken care of.<sup>36</sup>

Palliative care sources<sup>37</sup> characterize completing unfinished business as part of a good death. Dying well involves successful closure and peaceful resolution of relationships; an optimal outcome is "the experienced love of self and others, the completion of relationships, the acceptance of the finality of one's life and the achievement of a new sense of self".<sup>38</sup> Dying well can involve saying farewell with no need for response, tying up loose ends, finding a way to say the never-said, or letting someone know they are thanked or loved. In particular, palliative care sources characterize forgiveness as part of completing unfinished business. Residual and sometimes longstanding personal and social conflict in the form of "unresolved, unforgotten and

unforgiven family issues"<sup>39</sup> and particularly "not feeling forgiven by God or others"<sup>40</sup> is a frequent source of sadness and concern; family conflict was present in 59% of cases considered in one study reported by Baker.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless there is hope: "attention to and assistance with psychosocial issues, including issues of forgiveness, is an invaluable gift to dying patients"<sup>42</sup> that can "promote personal growth towards spiritual maturity and integrity, through facilitating reconciliation and completing unfinished business".<sup>43</sup> One forgiveness technique borrowed from Luskin, a non-palliative care source that is nonetheless applicable at the end of life, is the following.<sup>44</sup> A person seeking to forgive can (1) take the hurt less personally, no longer "renting too much space to disappointment";<sup>45</sup> (2) blame the offender less, realizing that "Anyone can tune in to a grievance or choose to switch to the forgiveness channel;"<sup>46</sup> (3) change one's grievance story to dwell on the good, including times one has oneself been forgiven; and (4) enforce only what is enforceable, taking charge, not control.

### *Self-Forgiveness in Completing Unfinished Business*

An important part of completing unfinished business is self-forgiveness. Palliative care sources,<sup>47</sup> while not offering self-forgiveness techniques, highlight "the importance of forgiving those who have done wrong, and of self-forgiveness for wrongs committed".<sup>48</sup> A proliferation of self-forgiveness techniques borrowed from non-palliative care sources<sup>49</sup> includes the following. According to Luskin, one can (1) treat oneself with kindness, remembering to "[r]emind yourself that no one is a failure: each of us is only someone who was unable to successfully accomplish something at a particular place and time;"<sup>50</sup> (2) accept that change happens when it is ready to happen, remembering that "[w]e can forgive ourselves for being stuck and getting hurt;"<sup>51</sup> and (3) accept that mistakes happen, remembering that "never to hurt anyone else is an unenforceable rule."<sup>52</sup> According to Close, one can (1) let go of the naïve assumption that life is simple; (2) see

earned guilt as constructive, asking, "What do I need to do differently?"<sup>53</sup> and (3) find learning in the mistake. According to Flanigan, one can (1) confront oneself by acknowledging damage to relationships, including the relationship with oneself; (2) hold oneself responsible by determining what about oneself, if anything, needs to be forgiven and remembering that "[h]atred poisons, no matter to whom it is directed";<sup>54</sup> (3) admit one's flaws to someone else, which can lead to "enormous personal growth";<sup>55</sup> and (4) allow transformation, which can take various forms: restitution, possibly symbolic; changed assumptions; rituals of cleansing and connecting, best if communal; and empowerment, acknowledging that "[t]o be a good human is a choice."<sup>56</sup> Perhaps the most thorough analysis of the processes involved in forgiveness, including self-forgiveness, is Enright's forgiveness triad<sup>57</sup> (in edited form, see Appendix A), a concrete means that highlights the complementarity among forgiving others, receiving forgiveness from others, and self-forgiveness. The numerous units in this analysis, set out in four phases, are not necessarily sequential, nor are they necessarily all required. They are summarized in the following table, which will be carried forward to section 5, Comparison.

<b>Table 1: Summary of Units from Forgiveness Triad</b>	
<b>Uncovering</b>	1. Awareness of denial (offense to other or to self not so bad). 2. Awareness of anger or guilt. 3. Awareness of shame. 4. Awareness of cathexis (emotional investment). 5. Awareness of cognitive rehearsal (replaying event). 6. Awareness of comparison by offender with self, between past and present relationship with offended other, between past and present self. 7. Realization that offended other and self adversely changed. 8. Altered sense of other, world, self.
<b>Decision</b>	9. Change of heart (conversion): realization of need for change in relation to offender, offended other, self. 10. Willingness to consider as an option: forgiveness of offender, seeking forgiveness from offended other, forgiveness of self. 11. Commitment to forgive offender, to receive forgiveness as a gift, to forgive self.
<b>Work</b>	12. Reframing toward offender as acting in context, toward offended other as vulnerable, toward self as imperfect. 13. Empathy toward offender, offended other and self as suffering before and following offence. 14. Compassion toward offender, toward offended other (willingness to wait), toward self (willingness to love). 15. Absorption of pain.
<b>Outcome</b>	16. Finding meaning for self and others in offence, suffering, forgiveness. 17. Realization that one has needed and received others' forgiveness, has forgiven others, and could offer forgiveness to self. 18. Realization that one is not alone. 19. New sense of purpose.

<p>20. Release from negative feelings toward offender, from excessive guilt and remorse toward oneself.  21. Possible reconciliation, if apology, amends, avoidance of recurrence by offender; if receptivity, trust by person offended.</p>
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#### 4. Ongoing Question in a Secular Approach

In a secular approach, an ongoing question<sup>58</sup> is whether unilateral forgiveness is possible, that is, whether forgiveness necessarily entails reconciliation. Traditional factors facilitating forgiveness if involving reconciliation are acknowledgement of the offence (I did it), apology (I'm sorry), and restitution, particularly in the form of trustworthy behaviour (I'm prepared to change). While forgiveness may be concurrent with partial or potential reconciliation, a number of writers<sup>59</sup> suggest that it does not necessarily involve reconciliation:

[O]ne can forgive another and yet choose not to remain in a relationship with him or her. While forgiveness may open the door to reconciliation, the nature of the relationship may well depend more on the trustworthiness of the offender than on the desires of the injured.<sup>60</sup>

Nor is forgiveness necessarily conditional on a response by the perpetrator; rather, it is "a willful, reasoned, intrapsychic process undertaken by the victim, irrespective of the offender",<sup>61</sup> "sans que [la personne offensante] le sollicite, sans condition de contrition [...], sans aveu, sans promesse".<sup>62</sup>

#### 5. Overview of a Secular Approach

A secular approach to forgiveness as described above is characterized by relatively frequent joint authorship, relatively frequent publication in peer-reviewed journals, and detailed research and reflection that has been ongoing since the 1980s. In terms of teleology,<sup>63</sup> that is, implicit assumptions about the impetus of human life, a secular approach would seek to do good. In this approach, Enright and Seron express its value as being objective, interdisciplinary, and respectful of clients. More than doing no harm, it offers effective benefit; elsewhere than in the confessional or the courtroom, it offers a space in which to speak. In terms of anthropology,<sup>64</sup> that is, implicit assumptions about the value of human persons, a secular approach would see humans

as seeking health including relational health. It might express its viewpoint as being of benefit to the human person as a human being or a citizen in a given society. Webb and his fellow researchers affirm that this approach attempts to address the human condition, including human error and negative emotions of anger, fear, depression and anxiety, whether directed toward oneself, others, society, nature, or the universe. In terms of topology,<sup>65</sup> or explicit articulations about the direction of human endeavour, a secular approach would cast the desired outcome of forgiveness and self-forgiveness in terms of healing. There is a consensus on expressing this vocabulary of healing as physical (lessened pain, stress and chronic illness), mental (lessened negative affect; improved psychological functioning), emotional (lessened conflict; improved subjective wellbeing), relational (interception of the downward spiral of desire for retaliation; inception of a positive cycle of intent and action), and spiritual (personal growth; moral love). As has been seen, a secular approach to forgiveness acknowledges spiritual benefits, and it is a spiritual approach to forgiveness that the next section will explore.

### **III. SPIRITUAL-BUT-NOT-RELIGIOUS APPROACH TO FORGIVENESS: RECOVERY**

Occupying a space of dynamic tension between secular and religious approaches to forgiveness is a spiritual-but-not-religious approach. It must be emphasized that these classifications are fluid and the boundaries between them are permeable. In this section I want to juxtapose writings on forgiveness that are neither descriptively secular nor prescriptively religious but approach forgiveness from a spiritual standpoint, broadly defined.

#### **1. General Field: Forgiveness on Spiritual but not Religious Grounds**

In a spiritual-but-not-religious approach to forgiveness, a general field is forgiveness undertaken on spiritual but not religious grounds. Writers in this group offer further insights into forgiveness.<sup>66</sup> Human beings, and human forgiveness, are spiritual. Worthington affirms that

most people are spiritual by nature. They have experiences of beauty, awe, communal life and hope; they have a sense of connection with nature, humanity, life and the universe; and they have ensuing beliefs and practices, which may be contextualized in a religion. Shank identifies acknowledgement of unforgiveness as spiritual discernment, and commitment to forgiveness as spiritual striving. The dynamics of forgiveness implies openness to the spiritual (the sacred, the divine, the transcendent, that which is greater than the self, the source of love, a presence, a friend, or the strength to change direction). Mindfulness as part of forgiveness, and a possible ensuing capacity to find meaning in suffering, include an ongoing, rediscovered or new relationship with the spiritual.

Forgiveness on spiritual but not religious grounds is described as a characteristic of morality (or ethics), arguably a spiritual quality in that it goes beyond therapeutic benefit and points to a greater power as motivation and source. Augsburg distinguishes moral motivation for forgiveness (reversal of moral judgement) from ethical (reversal of moral attitude), legal (remission of punishment), transactional (exchange of release), and psychological (volitional overcoming of resentment) motivations.<sup>67</sup> Griswold adds that the need for forgiveness arises from moral isolation, in which the person injured holds the moral right or prerogative of forgiveness, and the injurer may request but not claim it.<sup>68</sup> Abel draws an interesting distinction between two aspects of forgiveness as an ethical response to wrongdoing. To the extent that bad behaviour by humans stems from wickedness, a moral aspect of ethical response would see relational responsibility as reciprocal, and forgiveness as a response that can be required and learned. To the extent that bad behaviour by humans stems from unhappiness, a wisdom aspect of ethical response would see suffering as irreducible, retribution as untenable, and forgiveness as the only adequate response.<sup>69</sup> As well, forgiveness is described as a characteristic of the best of humanity, which is also arguably a spiritual quality. Among animals only humans can repent and forgive;<sup>70</sup>

only humans can choose to break the cycle of retaliation and start over; only humans can exercise forgiveness as release from the consequences of their actions. Arendt asserts that the power to forgive is not limited to God: it needs to be mobilized by humans.<sup>71</sup> Forgiveness as a characteristic of the best of humanity includes narrative, a specifically human capacity. Narrative can break silence, name harm, and close wounds.<sup>72</sup> Ricoeur points out that in order for there to be mutual comprehension in forgiveness, narrative needs to include two speech acts: by the injurer, a request for forgiveness, articulating experience of failure and acknowledgement of accountability; and, by the person injured, an offer of forgiveness, not condoning the injury but expressing a reframed perception of the injurer. Similarly, forgiveness as the best of humanity includes memory, also a specifically human capacity. Forgiveness is remembering differently,<sup>73</sup> a discourse of completion: if eschatology is the completion of limited historical knowledge, then happy memory is an ultimate horizon. Ricoeur distinguishes between truth as the aim of history, which seeks explanation and credibility, and faithfulness as the aim of memory, which seeks understanding and responsibility. He further distinguishes between forgetting as void, static and not caring, and happy memory as neutralization of humans' "attraction to sorrow".<sup>74</sup> Tillich articulates the paradoxical relationship between forgiveness and memory as follows:

Forgiving presupposes remembering. And it creates a forgetting not in the natural way we forget yesterday's weather, but in the way of the great "in spite of" that says: I forget although I remember. Without this kind of forgetting no human relationship can endure healthily. [...] I speak of the lasting willingness to accept [the one] who has hurt us.<sup>75</sup>

Forgiveness on spiritual but not religious grounds includes forgiveness named as a gospel value, invoking a greater power or wisdom without prescribing ritual or creed. From Augsburg there are gospel illustrations of responsible forgiveness, nonresponsible forgiveness, forgiveness as renegotiation of relationship, and forgiveness as restoration to community.<sup>76</sup> There are gospel metaphors of forgiveness: debt cancelled, stone not thrown, illness healed, food shared, tears

shed.<sup>77</sup> There are gospel summaries of forgiveness: love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you; love one another, as I have loved you; love your neighbour, as yourself. Furthermore, forgiveness on spiritual but not religious grounds can include forgiveness named as coming from God, here again invoking a greater power or wisdom without prescribing ritual or creed. Smedes points out that a person having hurt is nonetheless "created to be a child of God"<sup>78</sup>. God, too, is hurt by interpersonal injury: "You did it to me." Experiencing a desire to forgive is described as being in touch with God. Forgiving itself is described as Godlike: in forgiving, "we copy God's own art."<sup>79</sup>

#### *Self-Forgiveness on Spiritual but not Religious Grounds*

Forgiveness on spiritual but not religious grounds includes frequent reference to self-forgiveness.<sup>80</sup> In spiritual terms, self-forgiveness is a bellwether of a person's behaviour toward others, given that oneself and others are all connected to the source of life. Self-forgiveness on spiritual but not religious grounds is described as a characteristic of conscience, arguably a spiritual quality akin to morality. Schimmel notes that a sound exercise of conscience involves understanding that injury to others is also injury to oneself, as well as determining the extent to which guilt is earned. It also involves alleviating unearned guilt by performing a possibly symbolic penance of one's own choosing, as well as determining how much penance is enough. Similarly, self-forgiveness on spiritual but not religious grounds is described as a characteristic of love, arguably a spiritual quality akin to the best of humanity. Smedes writes that, cast in terms of love, self-forgiveness makes use of concreteness in taking one thing at a time, and courage in forgiving oneself as a prerequisite for accepting love from others. One undertakes forgiveness, as love, to release, possibly repeatedly, and to reconnect. Lastly, self-forgiveness on spiritual but not religious grounds can include forgiveness named,

descriptively but not prescriptively, as being of God. Self-forgiveness reflects a person's relationship with God: a person who has experienced God's unconditional love is no longer justified in self-condemnation. Rather, self-forgiveness is "a signal to the world that God's love is a power within you".<sup>81</sup>

### **Specific Exemplar: Twelve-Step Spirituality**

In a spiritual-but-not-religious approach and the general field of forgiveness on spiritual but not religious grounds, one specific exemplar is twelve-step spirituality.<sup>82</sup> Wuthnow reports that, starting in the 20th century, reported prevalence of relational conflict – 37% with a spouse, 36% in one's upbringing, 32% in the workplace, 60% in trying to forgive another, 50% in trying to forgive oneself – has resulted in the emergence of small-group support, for example in women's groups, men's groups, peer groups and encounter groups. These groups post 64% weekly attendance, nearly 100% monthly attendance, and 50% involvement for five years or more among members.<sup>83</sup>

One subset of the support group phenomenon is comprised of self-help groups, which Farris Kurtz defines as follows: "A self-help group is a supportive, educational, usually change-oriented mutual-aid group that addresses a single life problem or condition shared by all members."<sup>84</sup> The main goal of self-help groups is change. Self-help groups are self-governing, with voluntary participation, membership comprised of all who have the problem, and leadership indigenous to members. They are also self-supporting, with voluntary contributions and relatively autonomous local groups. Lieberman and Borman describe self-help groups as systems of effective alternative support, creating intentional, subcultural, supplementary communities, particularly for stigmatized populations.

One subset of self-help groups is comprised of twelve-step groups. Following the creation of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) in 1939, there has been an international proliferation of twelve-step programs, with roughly 2 million members in 90,000 groups<sup>85</sup> and attendance at a meeting of any twelve-step group standing at 12% of the population.<sup>86</sup> Farris Kurtz observes that the twelve steps call for surrender: "You alone can do it, but you cannot do it alone."<sup>87</sup> They call for action, or letting go of what does not work, and for maintenance, particularly including gratitude. Observed stages of affiliation with twelve-step groups are the following: "change readiness"<sup>88</sup> ("hitting bottom"<sup>89</sup>, or the "experience of despair"<sup>90</sup>); exploratory attendance; commitment to the group; and carrying the message, mainly through one's own sobriety. The ethos of twelve-step groups encompasses achieving insight into addictive behaviour and its self-sabotaging consequences; transforming one's identity by seeing the self as internal but not necessarily individual; and finding community for living, until "we get the program" or until the program "gets us".<sup>91</sup>

Twelve-step programs are spiritual movements. The *Big Book* of Alcoholics Anonymous makes it clear that these programs have an explicit spiritual focus, not only on abstinence, but also on spiritual awakening and eventual spiritual serenity. From its inception, based in part on the link established by Carl Jung between spirituality and recovery from addiction, William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and the 1920s nondenominational spiritual movement the Oxford Group, Alcoholics Anonymous has been "spiritual rather than religious"<sup>92</sup>: "We must find some spiritual basis for living, else we die."<sup>93</sup> Kurtz and Ketcham describe twelve-step spirituality as a spirituality of imperfection,<sup>94</sup> accepting paradox, dealing with failure, seeing progress as neither efficient nor random, and seeing oneself as becoming teachable.<sup>95</sup> Twelve-step spirituality involves a radical shift. First, there is admission of inability to change by oneself. Human willpower is seen to be ineffective, notwithstanding intelligence, resourcefulness

and determination. Doing what one can and leaving the rest to one's higher power alleviates an exaggerated sense of individual agency, and displaces the supportive role once played by addictive substances. In this context, belief is seen as reasonable, allowing a person to leave behind inadequate childhood concepts: "[M]any spiritually-minded persons of all races, colors, and creeds were demonstrating a degree of stability, happiness and usefulness which we should have sought ourselves."<sup>96</sup> Belief is seen as sane, allowing a person to set aside contending articles of faith: "We have learned that whatever the human frailties of various faiths may be, those faiths have given purpose and direction to millions. People of faith have a logical idea of what life is all about."<sup>97</sup> Belief is seen as logical, allowing a person to affirm that addiction is "an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer"<sup>98</sup>: "Without knowing it, had we not been brought to where we stood by a certain kind of faith?"<sup>99</sup> In short, about one's own power: "Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did."<sup>100</sup> Then, there is claiming of a power greater than oneself. A higher power is needed: a reality beyond oneself, however named: God, the supreme being, the creator, the creative force or source or intelligence, the spirit of the universe, the great reality, infinite power and love, "cette Puissance que nous ne pouvons nommer, mais sans laquelle on n'est rien"<sup>101</sup>. Trusting in this force beyond one's own conscious intent alleviates isolation, and displaces the mystical role once played by addictive substances. In this context, spiritual awakening is seen as a human capacity for wonder and worship: "[D]eep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God."<sup>102</sup> Spiritual awakening is seen as one's own understanding of God: "Our own conception, however inadequate, was sufficient to make the approach and to effect a contact with [God]."<sup>103</sup> Spiritual awakening is seen as a profound change, not necessarily sudden, in one's thinking and living: "[T]he consciousness of the Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives."<sup>104</sup> In short, about a higher power: "First, there is one. And second, you're not it."<sup>105</sup> Means for effecting this shift are expressly spiritual:

meditation, or paying attention to one's higher power, body and feelings, and to silence; and prayer, or making oneself available to one's higher power, without bargaining, for example in the serenity prayer. Specifically regarding forgiveness, twelve-step spirituality posits resentment as antithetical to spirituality, and forgiveness as letting go of resentment. Forgiveness is not unconditional; genuine love involves confrontation. Forgiveness is not a deal; change is not a bargaining chip. Forgiveness stems from an experience of being forgiven oneself: "invariably, the experience of being able to forgive was preceded by some experience of being forgiven."<sup>106</sup> Forgiveness leads to an experience of empowerment: "we begin to accept primary responsibility for who we are."<sup>107</sup>

### *Self-Forgiveness in Twelve-Step Spirituality*

Twelve-step spirituality does not overlook self-forgiveness.<sup>108</sup> Rohr notes that, in admitting wrongdoing, there is a "tendency to resist, doubt, and deny ourselves forgiveness";<sup>109</sup> in identifying those harmed and becoming willing to make amends, "[w]e usually need to make amends to forgive even ourselves."<sup>110</sup> Naming and working through anger toward oneself, by admitting facts, assessing actions without condemning oneself as a person, and learning to love oneself appropriately, is widely reported: 51% of support group members paying attention to self-forgiveness, and 78% becoming better able to forgive oneself.<sup>111</sup>

### **Concrete Means: Steps Four to Ten, on Making Amends**

In the context of a spiritual-but-not-religious approach to forgiveness, the general field of forgiveness on spiritual but not religious grounds, and the specific exemplar of the twelve steps, addiction has been defined as "the habitual use of any chemical substance, legal or illegal, which can harm the spiritual, emotional, mental, physical or social well-being of users and/or those around them".<sup>112</sup> Recovery from addiction, it has been noted, involves introspection,

interpersonal honesty, learned coping skills, social support, and particularly "spiritual growth and wholeness".<sup>113</sup> An essential part of forgiveness as recovery is making amends.<sup>114</sup> One aspect of twelve-step spirituality that is particularly applicable to making amends is the distinction Kurtz and Ketcham draw between wilfulness, that is, addiction as a form of idolatry, "locat[ing] divinity in drugs"<sup>115</sup> and demanding change, and willingness, that is, recovery as surrender, being "surprised by grace"<sup>116</sup> and being open to being changed. Additional aspects of twelve-step spirituality that are particularly applicable to making amends are two tools it provides. Opening oneself to forgiveness is facilitated by telling and receiving stories (anecdotal therapy, or "storylistening"<sup>117</sup>). As the locus of telling one's story, the twelve-step meeting is a safe space offering confidentiality and absence of advice; the meeting is also a speech event offering practical wisdom and shared opportunity. Grappling with forgiveness is facilitated by working the steps, particularly taking inventory and making amends. As the locus of working the steps, the twelve-step process is systematic, naming, acknowledging and healing one's injured worldview; the process is also realistic, being objective and "highly effective as a release for the alcoholic's long-standing burden of guilt".<sup>118</sup> The specific steps involved in making amends steps four through ten are an effective means of clearing the way for forgiveness. These steps use the means of self-responsibility to attain the end of self-care. Step four, taking a personal moral inventory, acknowledges human desires for pleasure, safety and recognition as God-given assets that can, if misused, become liabilities of immaturity, self-pity and self-justification. A moral inventory is realistic, including assets, and painstaking, done in writing. In step five, an accurate admission of wrongdoing, one shares, in the presence of God, one's own sins, not others', with a trustworthy person. Step six, becoming willing to let go of shortcomings now seen as self-destructive, highlights the need for human co-operation with the divine. This task is demanding but not impossible: one need only begin, and keep trying. Step seven, asking for grace to have one's

shortcomings removed, calls for a healthy humility and relies on a healthy spirituality that is neither illusory self-sufficiency nor barren religious tenets. Step eight, listing the persons harmed and becoming willing to make amends, involves naming, not blaming or shaming, particularly if there has indeed been bad behaviour by the other person. Regardless of willingness by the other person, becoming willing to make amends is experienced as an inner turning point in which a person becomes able to give and receive love. Step nine, making amends, is taking action, "doing what we can",<sup>119</sup> possibly in direct apology, possibly in changed behaviour. Amends call for courage in exercising sincerity and generosity, as well as prudence in assessing whether reference to the past will make matters worse and whether the amends are self-defeating and hurtful or divinely led and appropriate. Step ten, making personal inventory and remedial action ("self-overhaul"<sup>120</sup>) a regular habit of spot checks and end-of-day appraisals, is the beginning of a lifelong practice of adjusting oneself serenely to self-discipline, a changed response to life. In general, steps four through ten are characterized by thoroughness: the exact nature of our wrongs, all these defects of character, entirely ready, amends to them all. They are also characterized by manageability: first one becomes ready to let go of shortcomings, and only then does one asks to have them taken away; first one becomes willing to make amends, and only then does one set about making them.

#### *Self-Forgiveness in Steps Four to Ten, on Making Amends*

Two of the steps involved in making amends also point to self-forgiveness. Step five points to the fact that injury includes isolation, while the possibility of receiving and offering forgiveness, including self-forgiveness, is the "beginning of true kinship with [humans] and God".<sup>121</sup> Step eight points to the fact that injury includes emotional wrongdoing toward oneself: in "punishing ourselves for no reason"<sup>122</sup>, "[w]e have probably done more damage to ourselves

than to anyone else, so we put ourselves first on the list" of persons to whom amends are owing.<sup>123</sup> The twelve steps are set out, in edited form, in Appendix B. Steps four through ten are set out in the following table, which will be carried forward to section 5, Comparison.

<b>Table 2: Steps Four through Ten</b>	
(4)	Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
(5)	Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
(6)	Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
(7)	Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
(8)	Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
(9)	Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
(10)	Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

#### **4. Ongoing Question in a Spiritual-but-not-Religious Approach**

In a spiritual-but-not-religious approach, an ongoing question<sup>124</sup> is whether self-forgiveness is in fact possible, that is, whether forgiveness is necessarily interpersonal, and whether self-forgiveness is necessarily hasty or superficial. Armchair objections to self-forgiveness would allege that it is an irresponsible shortcut for avoiding responsibility and a cheap trick for avoiding the victim. They would see self-forgiveness as dangerous, assuming a lack of motivation to change, and ask whether self-punishment is not an effective deterrent to bad behaviour. They would see self-forgiveness as subjective, assuming a lack of objectivity, and ask whether a promise made in solitude is valid. They would see self-forgiveness as inappropriate, assuming a lack of moral authority, on two counts: asking, if only another can forgive, whether it is possible to experience oneself as a person for the sake of whom one can forgive; and asking, if only God can forgive, whether self-forgiveness is idolatrous "do-it-yourself absolution".<sup>125</sup> All that said, however, many writers in this group<sup>126</sup> see self-compassion as an effective basis for improved behaviour. Moving through pain to life is seen to be valid; what leads to bad behaviour is denial, and forgiveness including self-forgiveness is seen to involve acknowledgment, not

denial, always with transformation as a goal. In self-forgiveness, as in offering and receiving forgiveness from others, at best, an active conscience in the offender, possibly backed by objective assessment from a therapist, ethicist or clergyperson, is seen to be operative. Self-forgiveness is seen as concurrent with seeking and offering forgiveness with others. Lastly, self-forgiveness is seen to be graced: "Relief from self-judgement comes by forgiving grace."<sup>127</sup>

## **5. Overview of a Spiritual-but-not-Religious Approach**

A spiritual-but-not-religious approach to forgiveness as described above is characterized by relatively frequent monographs, offering scholarly, philosophical, pastoral and popular contributions since the early 20th century. As distinct from a secular approach, in which many writers are accredited in the fields of psychology and health care, and a religious approach, in which many writers are ordained clergy or vowed religious, writings adopting a spiritual-but-not-religious approach can be by philosophers, educators, writers on the history of philosophy or the sociology of religion, hermeneuticists, theologians, or clergypersons writing for academic or unchurched readerships. The perceptions of forgiveness included in this approach are nothing if not heterogeneous. While many writers on a spiritual-but-not-religious approach reiterate principles of forgiveness set out in a secular approach, they are also comfortable expressing forgiveness in spiritual terms as, variously, a characteristic of the best of humanity, morality or conscience, and sometimes gospel or God. That said, in these writings there is an absence of reference to religion as doctrinal tradition or ritual prescription. In terms of teleology,<sup>128</sup> that is, implicit assumptions about the impetus of human life, a spiritual-but-not-religious approach would seek to do good, possibly with a little more strength than a secular approach, invoking a greater power. Abel expresses the value of such an approach in terms of morality – forgiveness being a moral fact that is present in all cultures and religions –

, noting that "dire « pardon » est la plus élémentaire politesse."<sup>129</sup> He also expresses this value in terms of justice, asking whether total justice is possible and whether forgiveness is "une forme plus totale de justice".<sup>130</sup> In terms of anthropology,<sup>131</sup> that is, implicit assumptions about the value of human persons, a spiritual-but-not-religious approach would see humans as seeking a sense of the sacred. It might express its viewpoint as providing support to the human person as a seeker. In this context of supporting seekers, Augsburger notes the importance of paradigms resulting from social location and vision of reality, and of paradigm shifts, for example, seeing the search for forgiveness as a locus of prayer, and the forgiving community as a radical reality. In terms of topology,<sup>132</sup> that is, explicit articulations about the direction of human endeavour, a spiritual-but-not-religious approach would cast the desired outcome of forgiveness and self-forgiveness in terms of recovery. Griswold expresses this vocabulary of recovery in terms of moral community: seeking forgiveness as a desire to rejoin that community, and conscience as its internalized voice. As has been seen, a number of authors offering a spiritual approach to forgiveness for a popular readership are ordained clergypersons, and it is a religious approach to forgiveness that the next section will explore.

#### **IV. RELIGIOUS APPROACH TO FORGIVENESS: ABSOLUTION**

##### **1. General Field: Forgiveness in Christian Writing**

In a religious approach to forgiveness, a general field is found in Christian writing. Bridging but not blurring the distinction between a religious approach and a spiritual-but-not-religious approach are writers who as both psychologists and clergy not only affirm that forgiveness is therapeutic and spiritual but also ground it in a Christian religious tradition. They and other writers in this group offer additional, specifically-focused perceptions of forgiveness.<sup>133</sup> Marty notes that Christian forgiveness is trinitarian, and indeed quaternitarian:

God as Abba, steadfastly offering forgiveness; God in the Christ, demonstrating forgiveness; God in the Spirit, providing access to forgiveness; and God in each believer,<sup>134</sup> embodying forgiveness in commitment to a "cruciform life".<sup>135</sup> Monbourquette adds that Christian forgiveness is characterized by freedom, going beyond childhood images of a punitive God. It is also characterized by maturity, going beyond a facile uploading of responsibility onto God.<sup>136</sup> Forgiveness is crucial to Christian identity, as deliverance in a new covenant. It is decisive in Christian activity, as discipleship in making a new life real. It is essential to Christian ethics, not only in terms of justice, as distinct from a philosophical highest good, but also in terms of love, as distinct from systems of reward and punishment.<sup>137</sup> Basset draws an important distinction among three concepts. "Mal originel" might be translated as "original harm"; it has to do with harm has its source in human existence. Once accepted as a fact and without minimizing "l'expérience abyssale du mal"<sup>138</sup> its memory can be changed. "Mal originaire" might be translated as "originating harm"; it has to do with harm that happens because of human fault, and has its source in human history. "Pardon originel" might be translated as "original forgiveness"; it has to do with God's consistent response to human fault and resulting harm. In the Christ, the experience of this human-caused harm is "inscrite dans la mémoire vivante de Dieu comme sa propre expérience":<sup>139</sup> God is not indifferent, and human guilt can come to an end. Original forgiveness is incarnate in particular in the Christ, who shares and accepts human-caused harm for the sake of living relationship, and through whom God delegates to humans the power to forgive; thus original forgiveness is potentially incarnate in humans as well.<sup>140</sup> Holloway draws another distinction, between conditional and unconditional forgiveness.<sup>141</sup> Conditional forgiveness is forgiveness of an action that is demonstrably wrong and acknowledged to be irreversible: "There is only forgiveness, if there is any, where there is the unforgivable."<sup>142</sup> At best, conditional forgiveness is "amor fati" or loving fate,<sup>143</sup> that is, saying yes to the reality of life including pain

and loss. Unconditional forgiveness is forgiveness of a person, not as a tactical strategy but as an unmerited gift. At best, unconditional forgiveness is an experience of grace: while on the face of it forgiveness is humanly impossible, "[b]elievers say it has its source in God."<sup>144</sup> Christian resources facilitating forgiveness include belief in a benevolent, transforming God who is saddened by harm and desirous of authentic relationship; experience of grace, as justifying pardon that accepts humans, and as sanctifying power that transforms them; a resulting worldview of forgiveness as shared resurrection and public liberation; and an ensuing practice of prayer that can be revelatory of unrealistic expectations, roads regrettably taken, and "mistakes that make us wise".<sup>145</sup> Forgiveness is also facilitated by Christian imagery: being accompanied by the Christ at every step, in divine presence or "ce qui fait vivre".<sup>146</sup> The Christ offers a prayer of forgiveness,<sup>147</sup> seeking God's forgiveness of humans; and a prayer of surrender,<sup>148</sup> seeking God in every situation. Linn and Linn suggest that, in working toward forgiveness, one can tell the Christ about one's feelings in a re-imagined scene of hurt; recall a scripture passage in which the Christ responds to someone like oneself; ask what healing the Christ would want for one's antagonist and for oneself, and why; ask the Christ to come into the scene, respond to oneself, and respond to one's antagonist; and respond to the antagonist and to oneself as would the Christ.<sup>149</sup> Given that forgiveness is of God but may not come easily to humans, Christian forgiveness highlights the value of a confessor. In this practice, one shares not only a specific injury but one's whole relationship to God with a safe accompanying person who is recognized by and accountable to a faith tradition, and who can offer active listening and calm acceptance but no quick fixes.<sup>150</sup> Given that healing is fostered and isolation attenuated in a group, Christian forgiveness also highlights the value of community. In Christian forgiveness, a "Spirited community"<sup>151</sup> of forgiven and forgiving persons is a distinguishing characteristic and a locus of praxis,

demonstrating both the desire and the capacity to forgive when appropriate, and neither ignoring injury nor branding injurers, but mediating reconciliation in shared structures and practices.<sup>152</sup>

### *Self-Forgiveness in Christian Writing*

Christian forgiveness does not neglect self-forgiveness.<sup>153</sup> Sources of a need for self-forgiveness may include an erroneous image of oneself: "The real problem is not that we dislike God or our neighbor but that we don't love ourselves"<sup>154</sup> and an erroneous image of God, projected as a form of pride: "Their standards for forgiveness are higher than God's."<sup>155</sup> Self-forgiveness from a Christian standpoint involves a process: seeking forgiveness from others and from God if necessary; reaching a prayerful decision to forgive oneself, perhaps by telling the Christ how one wishes one had acted differently and asking the Christ for forgiveness; making a ritual "penance with a purpose":<sup>156</sup> possibly direct, in the form of acts of love toward persons hurt, indirect, in the form of learning from the situation, or symbolic, in the form of an object eventually laid to rest, and quite probably therapeutic, as contributing to transformation. Self-forgiveness from a Christian standpoint is accomplished by accepting God's forgiveness: "Le pardon soi est le lieu d'émergence de cette force de libération qui pourtant vient d'ailleurs et va plus loin."<sup>157</sup> It is also decisive in forgiving others, allowing for a moral synthesis in forgiving one's neighbour as oneself: "en se pardonnant à soi-même, c'est du même coup aux autres que l'on pardonne *sans effort, sans contrainte, sans amertume*."<sup>158</sup>

## **2. Specific Exemplar: Christian Scripture**

In a religious approach to forgiveness and in the general field of Christian writing on forgiveness, one specific exemplar is Christian scripture.<sup>159</sup> A reading of First Testament and New Testament passages on forgiveness uncovers a number of themes, including the following.

*Sin exists.* Sin (human harmfulness, resulting in human-caused injury) is omnipresent, and serious. Sin against one's neighbour, particularly if the neighbour is innocent, includes hatred, vengeance and grudgebearing. More importantly, sin against God includes stubborn failure to pay attention to commandments set out, unmindfulness of wonders performed, high-handedness, serving foreign gods (a form of adultery), taking vengeance oneself, presumptuousness, worshipping images, blaspheming (particularly against the Holy Spirit), disloyalty, overconfidence in forgiveness, imagining that one is hidden from God, offers of ungodly sacrifices, refusal to accept God's fairness and forgiveness, and refusal to accept the urgency of forgiveness.<sup>160</sup> Factors in assessing the seriousness of sin include whether there was knowledge of what one was doing and intent to do it,<sup>161</sup> the prominence of the person sinning,<sup>162</sup> and whether there was knowledge of and involvement in the sin by the congregation, there being a requirement to speak up and reprove.<sup>163</sup> Consequences of sin include being overwhelmed, being crushed, being sick, ceasing to exist, being in the depths of the earth, hurting oneself and hurting others. There is a requirement for restitution to a neighbour who has been harmed, and for a penalty to God, both including provision for a bonus; affordability of the penalty is a consideration.<sup>164</sup>

*Forgiveness is possible.* Means of forgiveness include, from God: measureless goodness and grace; steadfast love, patience, compassion, and possible relenting at human distress; slowness to anger, non-retention of anger, and delight in clemency; attentiveness to prayer; and thoroughness of forgiveness.<sup>165</sup> Means of forgiveness include, from humans: the possibility of atonement through a priest, including the Christ as priest; belief and baptism in the Christ; and the gift, grace and presence of the Christ.<sup>166</sup> Factors affecting the likelihood of forgiveness include whether there is realization, confession, repentance and reparation.<sup>167</sup> Ends of forgiveness include the manifestation of God's goodness, and the praise and glory of God's name.<sup>168</sup> Among humans,

the ends of forgiveness include greater ability to worship God as God's people, notwithstanding rules of cleanness or even human unworthiness and stubbornness.<sup>169</sup>

*Forgiveness has consequences.* Consequences of being forgiven by God include deliverance, cleansing, renewed youth and good throughout one's life, happiness, love for God in proportion to the magnitude of the sin forgiven, knowledge of the presence of God, the gift of God's Spirit, the possibility of God's purpose even in sin, a place among those sanctified, the possible instruction, recovery and forgiveness of others, and being a blessing.<sup>170</sup> In concrete terms, if one is forgiven oneself, one is to forgive, and from the heart.<sup>171</sup> People are to bear with one another, and, if there is repeated repentance, to forgive repeatedly.<sup>172</sup> Consequences of forgiving others include knowledge of salvation; being forgiven oneself; and improved relationships, including extending hope and love to others, and possibly having others' sins forgiven in heaven.<sup>173</sup>

### *Self-Forgiveness in Christian Scripture*

Christian forgiveness extends to oneself. As has been seen, refusal to accept God's forgiveness – including of oneself – affects the likelihood of its occurring;<sup>174</sup> one possible consequence of forgiving – including oneself – is having one's own sins forgiven in heaven;<sup>175</sup> and one is to love and forgive others as oneself.<sup>176</sup>

A comprehensive illustration of all these themes is the parable of the prodigal son.<sup>177</sup> Here the sin is an inheritance squandered in dissolute living; factors in assessing the seriousness of the sin include intent and planning. The consequences of the sin include being in need, being hired out, feeding pigs, and being without help. There is realization in saying, "I will get up, go, and say;" confession in admitting, "I have sinned;" repentance in realizing, "I am no longer worthy;" and reparation, in being willing to work "like a hired hand". For the returning son, being forgiven

involves being seen from afar off and being the subject of celebration. For the father, forgiving involves a generous, spontaneous response, and gratitude. The older brother, I would say, is a counter-example illustrating the consequences of unforgiveness of others and oneself: churlishness, bitterness, anger at others and, perhaps, anger at himself for having been neither assertive nor appreciative.

### **3. Concrete Means: Rites, particularly Anglican, for Being Reconciled with God**

In a religious approach to forgiveness, the general field of Christian writing, and the specific exemplar of Christian scripture, rites of reconciliation are a concrete means involving confessing one's sins as part of preparing oneself to receive absolution.<sup>178</sup> Absolution has been defined as "[t]he pronouncement of God's forgiveness of sins, customarily following confession".<sup>179</sup> Whether individual or general, whether pronounced by the authority of the church or proclaimed as the power of the gospel, absolution is usually predicated on admission, repentance, and willingness to make reparation. Current Christian practice tends to refer to reconciliation rather than absolution.

In the shared church history of Christian rites of reconciliation, until the 500s CE, the early church considered baptism to be the sacrament of remission of sins following initial conversion, which involved a radical decision and high standards, and reconciliation to be a possible second baptism, that is, a single subsequent opportunity to repent of grave post-baptismal sin causing harm to the church community and calling for forgiveness mediated by it. In the Western church during the early middle ages from the 600s through the 900s CE, the Celtic church included missionary monks, working independently of bishops and making available the practice of regular private confession to a spiritual director. During this period, confession and absolution became repeatable, and tariff penance, a comprehensive system of

proportionality, was codified. Confession and absolution remained a condition for receiving communion. During the high middle ages from the 1000s through the 1100s CE, private and possibly daily confession and absolution became available, with confessors acting as judges. During the Scholastic period from the 1200s through the 1600s CE, the Fourth Lateran Council in 1213 set out a requirement for annual private confession and communion at Easter as a minimum, and the Council of Florence in 1439 declared reconciliation to be one of seven sacraments. In the Roman Catholic Church from 1563 to 1973, the norm was individual confession and absolution, at least annually and as a prerequisite for communion. Following Vatican II, in 1974 Paul VI provided for three rites: (1) individual reconciliation, involving individual confession and individual absolution; (2) a first form of general reconciliation, involving a general celebration of pardon, followed by individual confession and individual absolution, and acknowledging the communal dimension of sin and forgiveness; and (3) a second form of general reconciliation, involving a general celebration of pardon, general confession and general absolution, to be used in exceptional circumstances, and accompanied by a requirement that serious sins still be confessed individually to a priest. Bélanger sees forgiveness as based, not only on scripture and tradition, but also on believers' shared sense of the faith (*sensus fidelium*). Renier adds that forgiveness is baptismal, sin being seen as infidelity to one's baptism; communal, reconciliation being seen as an act of the whole church in a visible liturgical context; and pastoral, sinfulness being seen as part of the human condition more than violation of a law. In the Orthodox churches, confession is seen as healing rather than judicial, with confessors acting as witnesses; and reconciliation is seen as manifested by the entire church in the liturgical year, sacraments, fast days, feast days and chants. In the Protestant churches, starting in the 1500s, there was a marked shift to general confession and absolution. General confession and absolution were seen to be non-prescriptive: voluntary, and made primarily to God in the Christ and possibly

to a pastor or another person, the pastor exercising ministerial authority. General confession and absolution were seen to be non-sacramental: baptism being the sole sacrament of forgiveness, and confession and absolution being a declaration of forgiveness; and salvation being by grace through faith alone, confession and absolution being means of grace, and contrition and penance being suspect as works. In the Protestant view, while the sole validity of absolution lies in the word of God, its efficacy lies in its pronouncement by a pastor. In Protestant churches today there is increased appreciation of individual confession and absolution as an extension of pastoral care: confession is seen as a human need, and reconciliation as a ministry of the church. Today there is strong ecumenical consensus that conversion is lifelong, liturgy and praxis are reciprocal, and reconciliation is communal and societal as well as individual. In a striking rapprochement, at least one Roman Catholic writer, Bélanger, expresses appreciation and hopes for continued follow-up with the relatively new communal celebration of reconciliation,<sup>180</sup> while at least one Protestant denomination, the Lutheran Church, expresses appreciation and provides for continued follow-up with the relatively new individual practice of reconciliation.<sup>181</sup>

Absolution can take three forms: precatory, a prayer that the penitent will be forgiven, used in the early church; authoritative, a statement that the individual penitent is forgiven, used in Roman Catholic practice; or declaratory, a proclamation that sins are forgiven in Christ, used since the Reformation. The components of the medieval sacrament of penance<sup>182</sup> were contrition, confession, absolution, and penance (or satisfaction). Longstanding bases for penance include the theological virtues (faith, hope and charity), the cardinal virtues (fortitude, prudence, temperance and justice), the corporal works of mercy (feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the imprisoned, visiting the sick, burying the dead) and the spiritual works of mercy (instructing the ignorant, counselling the doubtful, admonishing sinners, forgiving offences, bearing wrongs patiently, and comforting the

afflicted). The components of current rites of reconciliation are hearing the word of God (replacing contrition), as letting the text speak to one's situation; conversion (replacing confession), as opening to God's love and to the future; and reconciliation (replacing absolution and penance or satisfaction), as welcoming God's forgiveness and witnessing to it in one's life. Penance, if any, needs to be simple, direct, prompt and feasible. Longstanding and still effective forms of penance include: reading of scripture, possibly favourite passages of the penitent; prayer, with attentiveness, and for others including the living and the dead; self-denial, including positive thoughts and words; and service, or compensatory steps that can be taken. While direct reparation is not always possible or advisable because of distance, death, impropriety, or lack of means, amendment of life is seen as confirmation of forgiveness, in that it appropriates grace in gratitude, not as payment, and avoids recurrence by means of willingness, not achievement.

#### *Self-Forgiveness in Rites for Being Reconciled with God*

Specifically with regard to self-forgiveness, the concrete means of confession and absolution point to the importance of not denying harm, including harm to oneself, the connection between believing that one has been forgiven by God and accepting oneself as forgiven, and a preference for repentance instead of unaddressed remorse and for generosity instead of scrupulosity.<sup>183</sup>

Continuing the review of Christian rites of reconciliation, in the Anglican Communion,<sup>184</sup> historically, according to the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer*, confession and absolution were made available, and voluntary. Although these practices declined starting in the 1700s, following a revival of men's and women's religious communities and the Oxford Movement in the 1830s, private confession again became available on a regular basis. The Anglican tradition offers manifold opportunities for confession and absolution: in private to a priest, collectively at the

daily liturgical offices, and collectively during the Eucharist at the sharing of the peace, the presentation of the gifts, and the breaking of the bread. Theologically, in a fused context of Roman Catholic reliance on church as authoritative concerning the grace of forgiveness, with a sacramental model of ministry, and Protestant reliance on faith as acceptance of the grace of forgiveness, with a professional model of ministry, the Anglican Communion has taken a via media, relying on both sacramental grace and Christian discipline as means toward forgiveness, and on a pastoral model of ministry that offers spiritual guidance and encourages ethical integrity. Anglican practice continues to view reconciliation as a voluntary response to a felt need "All may, some should, none must"<sup>185</sup> and not a requirement of canon law or a recourse only during illness. For Anglicans, reconciliation is a sacramental rite. A distinction is drawn between validity (being forgiven) and efficacy (feeling forgiven, and "living as one forgiven"<sup>186</sup>). Hyde sees reconciliation as encounter. In his experience, penitents may be prodigal or returning home, with reconciliation experienced as anamnesis of baptism. Penitents may be perplexed or grieved and troubled, with reconciliation experienced as assurance. Penitents may be pilgrims or intentionally seeking, with reconciliation experienced as a cure of souls (*cura animarum*) and a valuable adjunct to spiritual direction. Characteristics of various Anglican rites of reconciliation are set out in Appendix C. A summary of characteristics that are shared among these rites is set out in the following table, which will be carried forward to section 5, Comparison.

<b>Explicit reference to trinitarian God</b>	Almighty God, Father, Lord; Jesus Christ our Lord, Saviour, God's only, blessed Son; especially presence, power, inspiration of Holy Spirit; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God
<b>Characteristics of God</b>	Creation, gift of life, all good things; goodness; infinite mercy (compassion, pity, tenderness, patience); steadfast love (welcome, invitation, attentiveness, receptiveness, acceptance, graciousness, favour); wishing turning (conversion), healing (salvation) and restoration (life, not death) of humans; promise to humanity in Christ
<b>Explicit reference to church</b>	Public worship (early church, conversion, praise, God's Word, prayer, sacramental life including baptism); delegated authority from Christ, through ministry of clergy, in name of church; fellowship (body of the faithful, members of Christ's body, friends in Christ, one in Christ, all Christians, God's servants, God's people, God's heritage)
<b>Explicit reference to sin</b>	- Description as manifold; thought, word, deed; commission (things done), omission (things left undone); known, unknown; own fault; wickedness, disobedience, evil, temptation; offence (trespass) against God;

	erring, straying, following own desires to excess; brokenness, need; leading to confusion, guilt, grievous, wearisome burden, misery, lack of health; deserving of wrath, punishment, judgement, death; early emphasis on human humility, lowliness, meekness, obedience - Confession (acknowledgement, not hiding)
<b>Absolution</b> (pardon, remission, release, deliverance, being freed)	- Earnest repentance (true penitence, being heartily sorry, lamenting, weeping) - Faith (belief, trust, confidence) in gospel (life, passion, death, resurrection of Christ; advocacy, mediation, merits, complete redemption, perfect sacrifice, righteous propitiation of Christ, reconciliation of all humanity in risen Christ; transforming, renewing Word) - Turning from sin (putting away of sin) - Drawing near to God (coming, requesting help, asking for, seeking forgiveness, in Christ, turning to Christ) - Intending to lead new life, make amends (new, contrite heart)
<b>Consequences of forgiveness</b>	Life (everlasting life, eternal life, not perishing); peace (= goodness, blessing, grace, joy, peace of mind); amendment of life (newness of life, strengthening in goodness, help, defence, cleansing of thoughts, refreshment, declining from sin and inclining to virtue, increase of true religion); love of God (pleasing God, delighting in God's will, walking in God's ways, walking with God, being children of God); glory of God (honour of God, upholding of heritage of God)

#### 4. Ongoing Question in a Religious Approach

In a religious approach, an ongoing question is whether human forgiveness is possible, that is, whether forgiveness is necessarily a divine prerogative that humans can only pronounce: at issue here is the nature of the interdependence between divine and human forgiveness. A number of writers in the religious group offer perspectives on what this relationship looks like, including the following. Forgiveness is a divine initiative of concern and, in response, a human practice of love, in acceptance of neighbour, commitment to right relationship, and struggle for justice.<sup>187</sup> Forgiveness is experienced from God, and mediated through humans as transmitters of divine activity.<sup>188</sup> Basset writes that human forgiveness precedes divine forgiveness in temporal terms but not in existential terms: it is an illustration, an incarnation, of divine forgiveness; it is divine forgiveness "en devenir".<sup>189</sup> Divine forgiveness, then, is the source of human forgiveness: if forgiveness is a river, God is its source, the delta is where forgiveness is lived out among humans, and exercising human pardon is swimming upstream. God does not depend on humans; still, unless there is co-operation from forgiving, Christ-imitating humans, opportunities can be missed, even for God.<sup>190</sup> In particular, these perspectives call for consideration of the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer.<sup>191</sup> While the "severe conditionality"<sup>192</sup> of this text reflects an

observable truth that "if we are not prepared to forgive those who have trespassed against us, then the time will surely come when we ourselves will be denied the forgiveness we need,"<sup>193</sup> forgiveness is not a negotiable commodity. God offers forgiveness; God does not cut deals. God's forgiveness has to do with God's generosity, not human deservingness: "In this is love, not that we loved God but that [God] loved us."<sup>194</sup> God regrets certain human actions; God does not condemn human beings. The only price for being forgiven is living as a forgiven person from that point forward, loving and forgiving others as oneself: "Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."<sup>195</sup> Consistent, reciprocal interpretations of this text propose a reading such as "Pardonne-nous nos offenses *afin que* nous puissions pardonner à ceux qui nous ont offensés,"<sup>196</sup> and affirm that, when humans request God's forgiveness, their own willingness to forgive is an indication of good faith.

## **5. Overview of a Religious Approach**

A religious approach to forgiveness as described above is characterized by an abundance of dictionary entries, articles, theses, monographs, textbooks, handbooks, prayer books and canonical texts. These works reflect longstanding cycles of ongoing experience and disciplined reflection from throughout the common era in the New Testament, and at least since the consolidation of the Pentateuch in the First Testament. Not surprisingly, there is ample room for divergent views; there is also ample opportunity to experience forgiveness: individually and communally; in the presence of a clergyperson, spiritual director, or fellow believer; at any of the daily offices, at the Eucharist, on Ash Wednesday, and particularly in the rite of reconciliation whenever sought. In terms of teleology,<sup>197</sup> that is, implicit assumptions about the impetus of human life, a religious approach would seek to do good, possibly with a little more stamina than a spiritual-but-not-religious approach, invoking a longer tradition (and, for Christians,

possibly with a little more joy, invoking the ongoing presence of God through the Christ in the Spirit). It might express its value in terms of long-articulated importance and broadly-based encouragement of forgiveness by faith traditions, as Rye and his fellow researchers point out: in Judaism, following confession and return; in Christianity, as possible regardless of repentance; in Buddhism, as forbearance and compassion; in Islam, as valued if not required repair of relationships; and in Hinduism, as part of the path of dharma. In terms of anthropology,<sup>198</sup> that is, implicit assumptions about the value of human persons, a religious approach would see humans as seeking, and articulating, a healthy relationship with the sacred. It might express its viewpoint as being of service to the human person as child of God. Specifically in Christian pastoral care, Patton sees forgiveness as "forgiving-ness":<sup>199</sup> a characteristic of right relationship with God and others that is more about who one is than what one has done, more a process of discovery than a program of action, more about quality of life than a task to be performed. In terms of topology,<sup>200</sup> that is, explicit articulations about direction of human endeavour, a religious approach would cast the desired outcome of forgiveness and self-forgiveness in terms of absolution. It expresses this vocabulary as re-establishment of harmonious relationship between God and humanity. Lehman and Marty observe that, whether through ritual in primitive religions as the "earliest apprehensions of the numinous",<sup>201</sup> through liturgical practice in developed religions, or through faith in Christianity seeing justification as the righting of offence against God and sanctification as restoration of the relationship with God, there is voluntary alignment with God's desire, through a system of acts, moving from being unforgiven and unforgiving to being forgiven and forgiving.

## V. COMPARISON

In this section I want to focus on two aspects: generally, how each approach is perceived by writers in the other groups; and, specifically, how one selected concrete means of forgiveness-readiness training proposed by each approach compares with the other two.

### 1. Perceptions of Approaches

#### *Secular Approach*

With regard to a secular approach, from the standpoint of a spiritual-but-not-religious approach there is considerable concurrence<sup>202</sup> about what forgiveness is not. It is not denying (it didn't happen; I don't feel bad about it), forgetting (I don't remember it happening), condoning (what happened wasn't wrong), or excusing (the person who did it wasn't wrong). It is not atonement for "the predicament of irreversibility".<sup>203</sup> While good, forgiveness is not an obligation; it is supererogatory. Forgiveness is not pardoning or waiving of due process of law. Nor is it veiled retaliation or willing God to punish the offender. It is not weakness, inferiority, passivity, or limited to women. It is not just going through motions (expedient forgiveness), just saying words (hollow forgiveness), or just abandoning resentment but not exercising beneficence. From this spiritual-but-not-religious standpoint, for example as noted by Webb and his fellow researchers,<sup>204</sup> the value added of a secular approach to forgiveness lies in the contributions made by psychotherapy to spirituality, in the form of the scientific method as well as presentation, education and intervention strategies. In comparison with a spiritual-but-not-religious approach to forgiveness, I think a secular approach might see its own usefulness in light of the basis of need, by potentially making forgiveness therapy regularly available, in addition to options such as massage therapy, reflexology and art therapy, as a basic component of palliative care in hospices.

It might also see its own trustworthiness in light of the basis of truth, by conducting intellectual research, as seen in the array of scholarly publications in this field.

From the standpoint of a religious approach to forgiveness,<sup>205</sup> there is a particularly interesting variance of views about the relationship with a secular approach. Relying on a virtue theory, Cantens<sup>206</sup> posits a Christian concept of forgiveness as transcending, and being substantially different from, a humanist concept of forgiveness. Christian virtue is "that which renders a person's act and the person [...] good".<sup>207</sup> In the context of the Christian cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance and courage, forgiveness is a duty of temperance. In the context of the Christian theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, forgiveness is an act of charity, for the sake of good, not evil and for the sake of God, a "more robust justification"<sup>208</sup> for forgiving. By contrast, relying on a vector theory, Holloway<sup>209</sup> posits a reconstructionist approach to religion. Given the fact that secularism – notwithstanding valid assertions that religion (at all) is one choice among many and that there is no one right way – accepts and applies the best of religious values to counter divisiveness and meet human needs, there is a need to acknowledge religions as the main vectors (or carriers) of values. A striking image visualizes religions as launch engines, values as payload-bearing satellites, and the human community as their orbit. According to this view, religions are less important than the love of God: religion is a deconstructible human practice, but the love of God not is deconstructible. Religions are less important than the values they carry: while identifying God with a past set of social arrangements is a barrier to development, religious texts do help make humans better,<sup>210</sup> and "religions at their best produce people who are benefactors of humanity."<sup>211</sup> Similarly, while religions are not essential to forgiveness, they do offer the best narratives and metaphors for this practice. All that said, Marty adds that, although "most theologies [...] see God acting where God is not explicitly recognized,"<sup>212</sup> a religious approach overall would recognize "humanistic forgiveness"<sup>213</sup> as a

welcome insight, not necessarily requiring a religious context or invoking or consciously imitating the divine. From this religious standpoint, for example as noted by Patton,<sup>214</sup> the value added of a secular approach to forgiveness lies in enriching interaction: while theology contributes serious engagement with religious tradition in articulating its views of human problems and possibilities, psychotherapy contributes a method involving theory interacting with practice in positing confidence in the possibility of transformed human existence. In comparison with a religious approach to forgiveness, I think a secular approach might see its own usefulness in light of the basis of offer, by providing forgiveness therapy, in addition to services regularly provided by religious caregivers, as part of palliative care in publicly funded long-term health care facilities. It might also see its own trustworthiness in light of the basis of credibility, by ensuring non-partisan research as seen in the consistent provision of peer review.

#### *Spiritual-but-not-Religious Approach*

With regard to a spiritual-but-not-religious approach, from the standpoint of a secular approach there is a distinction to be drawn between spirituality and religion. Fisher and his colleagues, among other writers,<sup>215</sup> describe spirituality as the spiritual dimension of human existence. Spirituality addresses existential questions of ultimate meaning and purpose and celebrates goodness and truth. Spirituality involves a search for and a relationship with a significant, transcendent spiritual power that is a source of strength and permanence as well as unconditional love and hope. That being the case, a secular approach recognizes that forgiveness can involve moving beyond oneself, that is, a qualitative change in understanding and identity. Between psychotherapy and spirituality, forgiveness constitutes a "unique point of interface",<sup>216</sup> a significant, salutary construct in both fields, and a powerful path to relief, transformation and growth. Particularly in palliative care, a secular approach has recognized nonreligious humanistic

spiritual care as a need, and attention to spirituality as part of a good death, since the early 1990s. In this secular setting, spiritual care techniques include spiritual assessment, of whether sources of spiritual strength are important and are working, and spiritual direction, offering a space in which to explore one's fears and affirming hope. From this secular standpoint, for example as noted by Webb and his fellow researchers,<sup>217</sup> the value added of a spiritual-but-not-religious approach to forgiveness lies in the contributions made by spirituality to psychotherapy, that is, the evocation of a power greater than human endeavour, the growth experiences that a relationship with that higher power implies, the articulation of classic concepts of love, hope, gratitude and faith, as well as the promotion of human strength and virtue. These researchers conclude that the full utilization of spirituality in health care including psychotherapy is beneficial to the wellbeing of society at large. In comparison with a secular approach to forgiveness, I think a spiritual-but-not-religious approach might see its own usefulness in light of the basis of need, by serving niche markets, as seen in the wide range of publications available in this field. It might also see its own trustworthiness in light of the basis of truth, by acknowledging a dimension beyond the scientific and the possibility of connectedness and communication with the source of all energy, creativity, integrity and generosity.<sup>218</sup>

From the standpoint of a religious approach, two writers<sup>219</sup> see a spiritual-but-not-religious approach as part of a whole. Monbourquette sees forgiveness as a human and spiritual, as well as a religious, adventure. Regardless of whether forgivers self-identify as believers, what gives life is a relationship with God, however named (the transcendent, one's higher self, the source of life, divine energy, unconditional love). Patton adds that pastoral care is not necessarily religious, and not only counselling. That said, a secular-but-not-religious approach to forgiveness is characterized by a creative mistrust of both secularity and religion that effectively spans the gap between them.<sup>220</sup> For example, in

recognizing advocacy of forgiveness as a challenge to authority, Arendt cites Jesus, arguably a religious figure. At the same time, she asserts, "The fact that he made this discovery in a religious context and articulated it in religious language is no reason to take it any less seriously in a strictly secular sense."<sup>221</sup> Abel, too, mistrusts forgiveness cast either as facile forgetting or as a religious requirement. Particularly from a religious standpoint, I would suggest that the value added of a spiritual-but-not-religious approach lies specifically in this constructive hermeneutics of suspicion. In comparison with a religious approach to forgiveness, I think a spiritual-but-not-religious approach might see its own usefulness in light of the basis of response, by spontaneously forming fluid groups, as seen in the widespread availability of twelve-step groups. It might also see its own trustworthiness in light of the basis of appeal, by being non-judgemental, as seen in affirmations that the reign of God is not a return to the status quo and that forgiveness involves compassion, solidarity and engagement but no single definition.<sup>222</sup>

### *Religious Approach*

With regard to a religious approach, from the standpoint of a secular approach there is a distinction to be drawn between religion and spirituality. Fisher and his colleagues, among other writers,<sup>223</sup> describe religion as a particular interpretation of human experience. Religion has both an intellectual aspect, or knowledge about one's faith tradition, and a consequential aspect, or integration of that knowledge in one's daily life. Religion involves commonality of values, identity, beliefs and practices. That being the case, a secular approach recognizes that forgiveness has longstanding merit, not only in philosophy, as a moral virtue – wrongdoing being a moral issue, and forgiveness being a moral response – but also in religion, as a religious virtue: in Judaism as an imitation of God; in Islam as an imitation of divine mercy; in Buddhism as nonviolence; in Hinduism as surrender to the divine; and in First Nations spirituality as a

communal response to vengeance. In Christianity, stemming from an affirmation of unconditional love toward all persons by God in the Christ, there is a fundamental commitment to others' worth and wellbeing and a preferential option, having been forgiven oneself, to forgive others. Forgiveness tools that an active religious life can provide include scriptural role models, confessional prayer, an understanding of oneself and others as forgivable by God, and hope for change and an afterlife. All that said, however, a secular approach expresses some wariness about religion. One issue is whether God is an exacting, demanding, punishing perfectionist with a low tolerance for ambiguity as some religious teachings might suggest, or whether in fact God believes in oneself as worthy of being created and being forgiven. A second issue is whether Christian forgiveness necessarily entails interpersonal reconciliation, or whether reconciliation as an alleged religious duty may in fact be harmful if one party to a conflict is unrecovering. A third issue is whether God can be forgiven for harm that does occur. Schimmel notes that complementary believing responses could be accepting God's benevolence, if not omnipotence – heaven not yet being fully realized, given human free will – and at the same time revising one's expectations and letting go of possibly displaced anger at God. Particularly in palliative care, a secular approach has recognized religious care as a fundamental need, regardless of faith tradition, since the early 1990s. In this secular setting, religious care offers support and guidance in religious practices including prayer, which can provide a structure in which to express a person's emotions, and absolution, which can foster a person's preparedness for dying. All that said, a secular approach expresses some reservations about religious care. One caveat is ensuring accuracy, given that patients may be misinformed even about their own religion, or unnecessarily burdened by its interpretation. Another caveat is ensuring that there are available resources, in light of religious diversity. From this secular standpoint, as noted by several writers,<sup>224</sup> the value added of a religious approach lies in its collective memory of seeking and experiencing divine

assistance. A Christian rite of reconciliation, for example, is a pastoral opportunity for sacramental ministry that is unavailable to psychotherapy and moves beyond therapeutic technique. In comparison with a secular approach to forgiveness, I think a religious approach might see its own usefulness in light of the basis of offer, invoking the desire of God as expressed in scripture. It might see its own trustworthiness in light of the basis of credibility, claiming alignment with God as speaking in prophecy and revelation.

From the standpoint of a spiritual-but-not-religious approach,<sup>225</sup> two writers<sup>226</sup> point out a parallel, although not identical, correspondence between recovery from addiction and salvation from sin. Step four, making a moral inventory, is seen as a parallel to examining one's conscience for the seven deadly sins of pride, greed, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth; step five, admitting one's wrongs, is seen as a parallel to the rite of reconciliation and to the practice of spiritual direction. In short, addiction – individual and societal – is seen as a metaphor for sin, and recovery – including an alternative consciousness and contemplative practice – is seen as a metaphor for coming of the kingdom of God. From this spiritual-but-not-religious standpoint, as noted by several writers,<sup>227</sup> the value added of a religious approach lies in its evocation of a specific, longstanding faith tradition. A Christian rite of reconciliation, for example, relies on the wisdom of respectful questioning of or by a specific person, the articulation of a specific sin, and a clear assurance of God's forgiveness in offering "release for troubled souls".<sup>228</sup> In comparison with a spiritual-but-not-religious approach, I think a religious approach might see its own usefulness in light of the basis of response, having long endeavoured to articulate spiritual experience and having developed a toolkit of spiritual practices including ritual, for example in creeds and prayers. It might see its own trustworthiness in light of the basis of appeal, offering communal sharing including connectedness with the writings of past believers, for example in

liturgies and hymns. In summary, it is clear that each of these three approaches to forgiveness has something to offer the other two in terms of usefulness, trustworthiness and value added.

## **2. Comparison of Means**

Here I want to explore how a selected concrete means from each approach to forgiveness compares with the other two. These concrete means, it will be recalled, are as follows: from a secular approach and palliative care, suggested stages in completing unfinished business, in the form of the units of the forgiveness triad; from a spiritual-but-not-religious approach and twelve-step spirituality, steps four through ten on making amends; and, from a religious approach, here specifically in Christian writing, shared characteristics of various Anglican rites of reconciliation. These means of forgiveness are set out in table form in Appendix D.

### *Individual Characteristics*

The units of the forgiveness triad are of medium length and made up of descriptive nouns. Since there are no verbs, there is no person expressed; I would say that the actions described are assumed to be individual. Overall this concrete means of forgiveness is detailed and dispassionate. Steps four through ten are brief and made up of active verbs, in the first person plural. The action described is individual but reflection on the action is shared with another human being and with the group. Overall this means of forgiveness is minimalist and plainspoken. The characteristics of Anglican rites of reconciliation are lengthy and made up of imagery-filled prayers, either in the first person plural or in dialogue form. The action described can be individual or communal; reflection on the action can be shared with a trusted and trained individual. Overall this means of forgiveness is linguistically marked and intentionally evocative of felt experience.

### *Shared Characteristics*

It must be emphasized that the following points of correspondence are parallel, not identical. (1) In terms of the transcendent, the units of the forgiveness triad make no reference to a higher power or to God. They do refer to empathy and compassion, although not at the outset but later, as work. Steps four through ten refer at the outset to God, characterized in other steps as the higher power of one's own understanding. The Anglican rites of reconciliation make explicit reference at the outset to God, characterized as being trinitarian, desiring the restoration of humans, and expressing a promise of that restoration in the Christ. (2) In terms of connectedness, the units of the forgiveness triad refer to realizing that one is not alone, although not at the outset but later, as an outcome. Steps four through ten, I would say, assume group membership at the outset. The Anglican rites of reconciliation make explicit reference at the outset to the church, expressed in public sacramental life, delegated ministerial authority, and a body of servant fellowship. (3) In terms of realization, the units of the forgiveness triad refer to uncovering adverse change, in therapeutic terms. Steps four through ten refer to making a moral inventory of one's shortcomings, in one's own terms. The Anglican rites of reconciliation make explicit reference, in Christian terms, to sin as an offence against God: in thought, word and deed; in things done and things left undone; leading to misery; and deserving of judgement and indeed death. In earlier texts there is greater emphasis on human lowliness, or lack thereof. (4) In terms of sharing, the units of the forgiveness triad make no reference to acknowledgment to another of one's own wrongdoing. Steps four through ten call for admitting one's wrongs and listing all persons one has harmed. The Anglican rites of reconciliation are predicated on not hiding but confessing sin, either individually or communally. (5) In terms of change, the units of the forgiveness triad refer to a change of heart and to reframing one's experience, both constructive

terms. Steps four through ten refer to being ready, a neutral term. The Anglican rites of reconciliation refer, in somewhat darker terms, to earnest repentance, being heartily sorry, and lamenting. (6) In terms of attitude, both the units of the forgiveness triad and steps four through ten refer to willingness; the Anglican rites of reconciliation refer to turning from sin. (7) In terms of initiative, the units of the forgiveness triad refer to seeking forgiveness; steps four through ten make a request to have one's shortcomings removed; in identifiably Christian terms, the Anglican rites of reconciliation refer to drawing near to God and turning to Christ. (8) In terms of action, the units of the forgiveness triad refer to commitment, steps four through ten refer to continuing inventory and admission, and the Anglican rites of reconciliation refer to an intention to lead a new life with a contrite heart. (9) In terms of effect, the units of the forgiveness triad refer to release; an earlier one of the twelve steps refers to restoration to sanity; and the Anglican rites of reconciliation refer, here again in specifically Christian terms, to pardon as deliverance and to life as not perishing. (10) In terms of maintenance, the units of the forgiveness triad refer to a new sense of meaning and purpose, but make no explicit reference to ongoing change. Later steps of the twelve steps refer to carrying the message and practicing recovery principles in all one's affairs. The Anglican rites of reconciliation refer not only to amendment of life (as an end) in vivid imagery of cleansing of thoughts, strengthening in goodness, declining from sin and inclining to virtue, but also and significantly to the love and the glory of God. (11) Finally, in terms of self-forgiveness, one of the three components of the forgiveness triad is devoted to self-forgiveness; commentaries on step eight<sup>229</sup> sagely include oneself among those one has harmed; and one of the Anglican rites of reconciliation reads in part, "Forgive others; forgive yourself."<sup>230</sup>

### *Special Characteristics*

Three characteristics in particular are not shared among these concrete means of forgiveness. The secular means of forgiveness is the only one that refers to the absorption of pain, that is, the need to acknowledge pain, not as an irritant to be ignored and not as a symptom to be alleviated immediately, but as part of whole human living that encompasses imperfect options and tough choices. The spiritual-but-not-religious means of forgiveness is the only one that refers to making amends earlier rather than later, as a means and not as an end. As has been seen, the Anglican rites of reconciliation hold up amendment of life in terms of maintenance, as an end of reconciliation. By contrast, steps four through ten, at the heart of the twelve steps, focus on making amends as central, an operative means of recovery. The religious means of forgiveness is the only one that explicitly includes faith as part of the process. Faith is characterized as belief or trust or confidence in the gospel, that is, the life, death and ongoing aliveness of the Christ, and particularly the Christ's comprehensive advocacy and mediation role.

### **VI. CONCLUSION**

As has been shown, three approaches to forgiveness can be distinguished. At one point or another, each goes some way toward addressing issues of the transcendent, connectedness, realization, sharing, change, attitude, initiative, action, effect, maintenance and self-forgiveness. In addition, each of these approaches to forgiveness has something to offer the other two, not only generally in terms of usefulness, trustworthiness and value added, but also specifically in terms of selected concrete means. A secular approach to forgiveness is characterized by relatively frequent joint authorship, relatively frequent publication in peer-reviewed journals, and detailed research and reflection that has been ongoing since the 1980s. Many writers in this group are accredited in the fields of psychology and health care. The strong points of this approach are:

doing good; valuing objectivity; seeing humans as seeking health including relational health; being of benefit to the human person as a human being or a citizen; expressing the desired outcome of forgiveness as healing; applying the scientific method; conducting non-partisan research; potentially ensuring broad availability of forgiveness therapy; having confidence in human potential; being dispassionate and constructive; and acknowledging pain as part of whole human living. From a secular standpoint, self-forgiveness facilitates, and is concurrent with, forgiveness of and by others; self-forgiveness is an important aspect of the task, and the art, of a good death. A spiritual-but-not-religious approach to forgiveness is characterized by relatively frequent monographs, offering scholarly, philosophical, pastoral and popular contributions since the early 20th century. Writers in this group can be philosophers, educators, writers on the history of philosophy or the sociology of religion, hermeneuticists, theologians, or clergypersons writing for academic or unchurched readerships. They are comfortable expressing forgiveness in spiritual terms, without reference to doctrinal tradition or ritual prescription. The strong points of this approach are: doing good, possibly with a little more strength; valuing morality and justice; seeing humans as seeking a sense of the sacred; providing support to the human person as a seeker; expressing the desired outcome of forgiveness as recovery; acknowledging a dimension beyond the scientific; serving niche markets; applying a constructive hermeneutics of suspicion; having confidence in human virtue; being plainspoken and neutral; and making amends as a means rather than an end of forgiveness. From a secular-but-not-religious standpoint, self-forgiveness is a bellwether of a person's behaviour toward others, a characteristic of conscience and of love, and a way of learning to love oneself appropriately. A religious approach to forgiveness is characterized by an abundance of dictionary entries, articles, theses, monographs, textbooks, handbooks, prayer books and canonical texts, reflecting longstanding cycles of ongoing experience and disciplined reflection. Many writers in this group are ordained clergy or

vowed religious. Potential weak points of this approach are unrealistic expectations and burdensome misinformation. Nonetheless, its strong points are: doing good, possibly with a little more stamina and joy; valuing a specific, longstanding faith tradition; seeing humans as seeking and articulating a healthy relationship with the sacred; being of service to the human person as child of God; expressing the desired outcome of forgiveness as absolution; ensuring connectedness with present and past believers; relying on a collective memory of divine assistance as expressed in scripture, prophecy and revelation; developing a toolkit of spiritual practices; offering assurance of God's forgiveness through sacramental ministry; articulating spiritual experience in marked and often vivid terms; and explicitly including faith in the gospel as part of the forgiveness process. From a religious standpoint, self-forgiveness is accomplished by accepting God's forgiveness, and one is to love and forgive others as oneself. In short, for individuals seeking to offer and to accept forgiveness in relation to others, themselves and God, and for their spiritual companions, these approaches are complementary, offering a range of effective perspectives and processes that are not mutually exclusive.

To return to the image of a port city in Canada evoked in the introduction, the three concrete means might point to three places where a person could find directions to the harbour of forgiveness: a souvenir-filled life review group at the hospice; a smell-of-coffee-filled open twelve-step meeting; or a sun-filled reconciliation room in a church. The three approaches might constitute three ways to get to the harbour: one clean, efficient superhighway built during the past three decades; one blacktop, not more than a hundred years old and direct, if steep; and one path centuries old and well-worn despite a couple of rickety and misleading signposts. I hope this research project has mapped directions and provided indications about each one, as well as offering assurance that "You can get there from here."

## VII. APPENDIXES

### Appendix A

<b>Units from Forgiveness Triad<sup>231</sup></b>		
<b>FORGIVING</b>	<b>RECEIVING FORGIVENESS</b>	<b>SELF-FORGIVENESS</b>
<p><b>Uncovering Phase</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Awareness of defences.</li> <li>2. Awareness of anger.</li> <li>3. Awareness of any shame.</li> <li>4. Awareness of cathexis.</li> <li>5. Awareness of cognitive rehearsal: replaying event.</li> <li>6. Awareness of comparison: by offender with self.</li> <li>7. Realization that self adversely changed.</li> <li>8. Altered sense of world.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Uncovering Phase</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Denial: offense to other not so bad.</li> <li>2. Guilt.</li> <li>3. Shame.</li> <li>4. Cathexis.</li> <li>5. Cognitive rehearsal.</li> <li>6. Comparison: past, present relationship.</li> <li>7. Realization that offended other adversely changed.</li> <li>8. Altered sense of self in relation to other.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Uncovering Phase</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Denial: offense to self not so bad.</li> <li>2. Guilt.</li> <li>3. Shame.</li> <li>4. Cathexis.</li> <li>5. Cognitive rehearsal.</li> <li>6. Comparison: past, present self.</li> <li>7. Realization that others, self adversely changed.</li> <li>8. Altered sense of self in relation to self.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Decision Phase</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Change of heart = conversion: realization of need for change in relation to offender.</li> <li>10. Willingness to consider forgiveness of offender as an option.</li> <li>11. Commitment to forgive offender.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Decision Phase</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Change of heart = conversion: realization of need for change in relation to offended other.</li> <li>10. Desire for forgiveness from offended other: apology, amends.</li> <li>11. Commitment to receiving forgiveness as a gift.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Decision Phase</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Change of heart = conversion: realization of need for change in relation to self.</li> <li>10. Willingness to consider self-forgiveness as an option.</li> <li>11. Commitment to forgive self.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Work Phase</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Reframing toward offender: in context.</li> <li>13. Empathy toward offender: suffering before, following offence.</li> <li>14. Awareness of compassion toward offender.</li> <li>15. Absorption of pain.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Work Phase</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Reframing toward other: vulnerable.</li> <li>13. Empathy toward other: suffering following offence.</li> <li>14. Compassion toward offended other: willingness to wait.</li> <li>15. Absorption of pain.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Work Phase</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Reframing toward self: imperfect.</li> <li>13. Empathy toward self: own suffering following offence.</li> <li>14. Compassion: willingness to love self.</li> <li>15. Absorption of pain.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Outcome Phase</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. Finding meaning for self and others in suffering, forgiveness.</li> <li>17. Realization that self has needed others' forgiveness in the past.</li> <li>18. Realization that not alone.</li> <li>19. New sense of purpose.</li> <li>20. Internal emotional release; decreased negative affect, possible increased positive affect toward offender.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Outcome Phase</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. Finding meaning in offense, forgiveness.</li> <li>17. Realization that self has forgiven others.</li> <li>18. Realization that not alone.</li> <li>19. New sense of purpose.</li> <li>20. Release; relief from excessive guilt and remorse and, perhaps, gratitude toward the other.</li> <li>21. Possible reconciliation, if apology, amends, avoidance of recurrence; if receptivity, trust.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Outcome Phase</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. Finding meaning in offense, suffering.</li> <li>17. Realization that self has forgiven others and received forgiveness from others, and thus could offer forgiveness to self.</li> <li>18. Realization that not alone.</li> <li>19. New sense of purpose.</li> <li>20. Release from excessive guilt and remorse.</li> </ol>

## Appendix B

<b>The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous<sup>232</sup></b>	
(1)	We admitted we were powerless over alcohol that our lives had become unmanageable.
(2)	Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
(3)	Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God <i>as we understood God</i> .
(4)	Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
(5)	Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
(6)	Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
(7)	Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
(8)	Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
(9)	Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
(10)	Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
(11)	Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, <i>as we understood God</i> , praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
(12)	Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## Appendix C

**Characteristics of Various Anglican Rites of Reconciliation<sup>233</sup>**

	<b>Shared</b>	<b>Ash Wednesday Liturgy and Collect; Collect for Purity</b>	<b>Rites of Reconciliation of a Penitent</b>	<b>During Communion</b>
<b>Explicit Reference to Trinitarian God</b>	Almighty God, Father, Lord; Jesus Christ our Lord, Saviour, God's only, blessed Son; especially presence, power, inspiration of Holy Spirit; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God	Everlasting		Maker of all things, judge of all persons, divine majesty
<b>Characteristics of God</b>	Creation, gift of life, all good things; goodness; infinite mercy (= compassion, pity, tenderness, patience); steadfast love (= welcome, invitation, attentiveness, receptiveness, acceptance, graciousness, favour); wishing turning = conversion and healing = salvation and restoration = life, not death of humans; promise to humanity in Christ	Alone capable of forgiving; being all-understanding, all-cherishing, potentially all-forgiving	Potentially in human hearts, on human lips	Sending into world
<b>Explicit Reference to Church</b>	Public worship (early church, conversion, praise, God's Word, prayer, sacramental life including baptism); delegated authority from Christ, through ministry of clergy, in name of church; fellowship (= body of the faithful, members of Christ's body, friends in Christ, one in Christ, all Christians, God's servants, God's people, God's heritage)			
<b>Explicit Reference to Sin</b>	Manifold; thought, word, deed; commission, omission (= things done, left undone); known, unknown; own fault; wickedness, disobedience, evil, temptation; offence (= trespass) against God; erring, straying, following own desires to excess; brokenness, need; leading to confusion, guilt, grievous, wearisome burden, misery, lack of health; deserving of wrath, punishment, judgement, death; early emphasis on human humility, lowliness, meekness, obedience	Possibly notorious	Especially ...	Failing to love God, failing to love neighbour as self; evident, not faced
<b>Forgiveness as Absolution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pardon (= remission, release, deliverance, being freed)</li> <li>- Confession (= acknowledgement, not hiding)</li> <li>- Earnest repentance (= true penitence, being heartily sorry, lamenting, weeping)</li> <li>- Faith (= belief, trust, confidence) in gospel (= life, passion, death, resurrection of Christ; advocacy, mediation, merits, complete redemption, perfect sacrifice, righteous propitiation of Christ; reconciliation of all humanity in risen Christ; transforming, renewing Word)</li> <li>- Turning from sin (= putting away of sin)</li> <li>- Drawing near to God (= coming, asking for, seeking forgiveness, in Christ, turning to Christ)</li> </ul>	Self-examination, prayer, fasting, self-denial, reading of and meditation on scripture; ongoing renewal	Gratitude first; recognition of God's assistance in asking for forgiveness; forgiving others first	"Comfortable words" (= sacrament as comfort); love, charity with neighbours first

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intention to lead new life, make amends, seek help (= new, contrite hearts)</li> <li>- Asking for forgiveness</li> </ul>			
<b>Consequences of Forgiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Life (= everlasting life, eternal life, not perishing)</li> <li>- Peace (= goodness, blessing, grace, joy, peace of mind)</li> <li>- Amendment of life (= newness of life, strengthening in goodness, help, defence, cleansing of thoughts, refreshment, declining from sin and inclining to virtue, increase of true religion)</li> <li>- Love of God (= pleasing God, delighting in God's will, walking in God's ways, walking with God, being children of God)</li> <li>- Glory of God (= honour of God, upholding of heritage of God)</li> </ul>	Reconciliation to community; edification of community; love of enemies (forgiveness of trespassers) as consequence of, and contributing factor to, being forgiven	Restoration of peace, fellowship; prayer for confessor; gratitude again	Forgiveness of others as consequence; forgiveness of self as consequence; gratitude (= praise)

## Appendix D: Concrete means of forgiveness from each of three approaches

### SECULAR APPROACH TO FORGIVENESS: HEALING

General field: forgiveness therapy

Specific exemplar: palliative care

Concrete means: suggested stages in completing unfinished business

### SPIRITUAL-BUT-NOT-RELIGIOUS APPROACH TO FORGIVENESS: RECOVERY

General field: forgiveness on spiritual but not religious grounds

Specific exemplar: twelve-step spirituality

Concrete means: steps four to ten, on making amends

### RELIGIOUS APPROACH TO FORGIVENESS: ABSOLUTION

General field: forgiveness in Christian writing

Specific exemplar: Christian scripture

Concrete means: Anglican rites of reconciliation with God

Summary of Units from Forgiveness Triad	
<b>Uncovering</b>	1. Awareness of denial (offense to other or to self not so bad). 2. Awareness of anger or guilt. 3. Awareness of shame. 4. Awareness of cathexis (emotional investment). 5. Awareness of cognitive rehearsal (replaying event). 6. Awareness of comparison by offender with self, between past and present relationship with offended other, between past and present self. 7. Realization that offended other and self adversely changed. 8. Altered sense of other, world, self.
<b>Decision</b>	9. Change of heart (conversion): realization of need for change in relation to offender, offended other, self. 10. Willingness to consider as an option: forgiveness of offender, seeking forgiveness from offended other, forgiveness of self. 11. Commitment to forgive offender, to receive forgiveness as a gift, to forgive self.
<b>Work</b>	12. Reframing toward offender as acting in context, toward offended other as vulnerable, toward self as imperfect. 13. Empathy toward offender, offended other and self as suffering before and following offence. 14. Compassion toward offender, toward offended other (willingness to wait), toward self (willingness to love). 15. Absorption of pain.
<b>Outcome</b>	16. Finding meaning for self and others in offence, suffering, forgiveness. 17. Realization that one has needed and received others' forgiveness, has forgiven others, and could offer forgiveness to self. 18. Realization that one is not alone. 19. New sense of purpose. 20. Release from negative feelings toward offender, from excessive guilt and remorse toward oneself. 21. Possible reconciliation, if apology, amends, avoidance of recurrence by offender; if receptivity, trust by person offended.

Steps Four through Ten	
(4)	Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
(5)	Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
(6)	Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
(7)	Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
(8)	Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
(9)	Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
(10)	Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Summary of Shared Characteristics of Various Anglican Rites of Reconciliation	
<b>Explicit Reference to Trinitarian God</b>	Almighty God, Father, Lord; Jesus Christ our Lord, Saviour, God's only, blessed Son; especially presence, power, inspiration of Holy Spirit; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God
<b>Characteristics of God</b>	Creation, gift of life, all good things; goodness; infinite mercy (compassion, pity, tenderness, patience); steadfast love (welcome, invitation, attentiveness, receptiveness, acceptance, graciousness, favour); wishing turning (conversion), healing (salvation) and restoration (life, not death) of humans; promise to humanity in Christ
<b>Explicit Reference to Church</b>	Public worship (early church, conversion, praise, God's Word, prayer, sacramental life including baptism); delegated authority from Christ, through ministry of clergy, in name of church; fellowship (body of the faithful, members of Christ's body, friends in Christ, one in Christ, all Christians, God's servants, God's people, God's heritage)
<b>Explicit Reference to Sin</b>	- Description as manifold; thought, word, deed; commission (things done), omission (things left undone); known, unknown; own fault; wickedness, disobedience, evil, temptation; offence (trespass) against God; erring, straying, following own desires to excess; brokenness, need; leading to confusion, guilt, grievous, wearisome burden, misery, lack of health; deserving of wrath, punishment, judgement, death;

	<p>early emphasis on human humility, lowliness, meekness, obedience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confession (acknowledgement, not hiding)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Absolution</b> (pardon, remission, release, deliverance, being freed)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Earnest repentance (true penitence, being heartily sorry, lamenting, weeping)</li> <li>- Faith (belief, trust, confidence) in gospel (life, passion, death, resurrection of Christ; advocacy, mediation, merits, complete redemption, perfect sacrifice, righteous propitiation of Christ, reconciliation of all humanity in risen Christ; transforming, renewing Word)</li> <li>- Turning from sin (putting away of sin)</li> <li>- Drawing near to God (coming, requesting help, asking for, seeking forgiveness, in Christ, turning to Christ)</li> <li>- Intending to lead new life, make amends (new, contrite heart)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Consequences of Absolution</b></p>	<p>Life (everlasting life, eternal life, not perishing); peace (= goodness, blessing, grace, joy, peace of mind); amendment of life (newness of life, strengthening in goodness, help, defence, cleansing of thoughts, refreshment, declining from sin and inclining to virtue, increase of true religion); love of God (pleasing God, delighting in God's will, walking in God's ways, walking with God, being children of God); glory of God (honour of God, upholding of heritage of God)</p>

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- <sup>53</sup> Close, 114.
- <sup>54</sup> Flanigan, viii.
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- <sup>63</sup> Baumeister *et al.*, 79-104;  
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- <sup>68</sup> Griswold, 48.
- <sup>69</sup> Abel, 13-15.
- <sup>70</sup> Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, in Augsburg, 10.
- <sup>71</sup> Arendt, 238;  
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- <sup>72</sup> Walter Benjamin, in Abel, 210.
- <sup>73</sup> Abel, 216-220.
- <sup>74</sup> Ricoeur, 496.
- <sup>75</sup> Tillich, np.
- <sup>76</sup> Repeated offences, Luke 17:3-4; "Father, forgive them," Luke 23:34; regaining of brother or sister, Matthew 18:15; woman taken in adultery, John 8:1-11; all in Augsburg, 22-24.
- <sup>77</sup> Augsburg, 13.
- <sup>78</sup> Smedes, *Art of Forgiving*, 6.
- <sup>79</sup> Smedes, *Art of Forgiving*, 21.
- <sup>80</sup> Mariah Burton Nelson, *Le Coeur en paix Apprendre à pardonner*, trans. Jacqueline Lemay et Jacques Vaillancourt (Montréal Le Jour, Éditeur, 2000), 195-221;  
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<sup>84</sup> Farris Kurtz, 4.

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<sup>87</sup> Farris Kurtz, 151.

<sup>88</sup> Farris Kurtz, 72.

<sup>89</sup> Farris Kurtz, 72.

<sup>90</sup> Lieberman and Borman, 280.

<sup>91</sup> Beattie, 5.

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<sup>93</sup> Bill W., in Kurtz and Ketcham, 4.

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<sup>96</sup> Alcoholics Anonymous, *Story*, 49.

<sup>97</sup> Alcoholics Anonymous, *Story*, 49.

<sup>98</sup> Alcoholics Anonymous, *Story*, 44.

<sup>99</sup> Alcoholics Anonymous, *Story*, 54.

<sup>100</sup> Alcoholics Anonymous, *Story*, 52.

<sup>101</sup> Gaboury, *Sérénité*, 128.

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<sup>106</sup> Seattle University research project, in Kurtz and Ketcham, 218.

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- <sup>117</sup> Kurtz and Ketcham, 114.
- <sup>118</sup> Alcoholics Anonymous, *Story*, 286.
- <sup>119</sup> Beattie, 242.
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<sup>139</sup> Basset, 451.

<sup>140</sup> Basset, 437-464.

<sup>141</sup> Holloway, 39-92.

<sup>142</sup> Jacques Derrida, in Holloway, vi.

<sup>143</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, in Holloway, 43.

<sup>144</sup> Holloway, 88.

<sup>145</sup> Doverspike, 279.

<sup>146</sup> Boisvert, 225,

<sup>147</sup> Luke 23:34.

<sup>148</sup> Luke 23:46.

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- <sup>152</sup> Jones, 31;  
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- <sup>159</sup> *New Revised Standard Version Bible, Anglicized Edition*, Washington DC: National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, 1995, <http://bible.oremus.org>.
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- <sup>162</sup> Leviticus 4:22,27; Wisdom of Solomon 6:6.
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- <sup>164</sup> Leviticus 5:6-7,16; 6:4-5; Job 7:21; Psalm 51:8; Psalm 65:3; Isaiah 33:24; Manasseh 1:13; Acts 26:14; II Corinthians 2:5.
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- <sup>166</sup> Exodus 32:30; Leviticus 5:10; Numbers 15:24-25; Joel 2:15; Ecclesiasticus 46:20; Matthew 26:26-28; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 13:38; II Corinthians 2:10; Ephesians 1:7; 4:32; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 4:14; Hebrews 9:22; I John 2:12.
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- <sup>168</sup> I Samuel 15:25; Psalm 25:11; 79:9; 130:4; Daniel 9:19; Manasseh 1:14-15.
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- <sup>170</sup> II Chronicles 7:14; Psalm 32:1; 51:2,7-9,13-15; 103:3-5; Jeremiah 31:34; 33:8; Joel 2:14; Matthew 9:2-7; Mark 2:2-12; Luke 1:76; 5:17-26; 7:36-50; Acts 2:38; 26:18; Romans 4:7; Ephesians 4:32; James 5:15.
- <sup>171</sup> Matthew 16:35; Colossians 3:13.

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<sup>172</sup> Matthew 16:21-22; Luke 17:3; Colossians 3:13.

<sup>173</sup> Proverbs 17:9; Wisdom of Solomon 18:2; Ecclesiasticus 28:2,4; Matthew 7:2,14-15; Matthew 5:7; Matthew 16:18, 21-35; Mark 4:24; 11:25; Luke 6:37; 11:14; John 20:23; II Corinthians 2:7-8.

<sup>174</sup> Luke 15:11-32.

<sup>175</sup> Matthew 16:18; John 20:23.

<sup>176</sup> Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8.

<sup>177</sup> Luke 15:11-32: <sup>11</sup>Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup>The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup>A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. <sup>14</sup>When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup>So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. <sup>16</sup>He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup>But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! <sup>18</sup>I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup>I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.' <sup>20</sup>So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup>Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' <sup>22</sup>But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe the best one and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup>for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate. <sup>25</sup>Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup>He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. <sup>27</sup>He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' <sup>28</sup>Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. <sup>29</sup>But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' <sup>31</sup>Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup>But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

<sup>178</sup> Rodrigue Bélanger, « Un pardon sans mesure », *Pardon et aveu*, Rodrigue Bélanger et Roger Ébacher (Montréal Médiaspaul, 2012), 9-18, 39-41, 42-52, 52-57;

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<sup>179</sup> Carr, 2.

<sup>180</sup> Bélanger, 45-52.

<sup>181</sup> Hyde, 18-19, 26-27, 41-45.

<sup>182</sup> Thomas Aquinas, in Hyde, 17.

<sup>183</sup> Bélanger, 30-38;

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- Bowman, 39-54;  
Henri Caldélari, *Pardon, source de vie Pourquoi et comment se confesser?* (Paris Éditions Saint-Paul, 1984), 74.
- <sup>184</sup> Hyde, 6-60, 102-136;  
Renier, 161-162;  
Smith, 113-121.
- <sup>185</sup> Hyde, 102.
- <sup>186</sup> Hyde, 118.
- <sup>187</sup> Lehman, 233-236.
- <sup>188</sup> Lehman, 233-236;  
McDonagh, 214-215;  
Marty, 9-28.
- <sup>189</sup> Basset, 452.
- <sup>190</sup> Basset, 449-456.
- <sup>191</sup> Buchhold, 515-520;  
Ellul, 120-136;  
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Monbourquette, 49-56, 83, 203-215, 232, 236;  
Patton, 281-295.
- <sup>192</sup> Holloway, 54.
- <sup>193</sup> Holloway, 56.
- <sup>194</sup> I John 4:10.
- <sup>195</sup> Colossians 3:13.
- <sup>196</sup> Monbourquette, 38.
- <sup>197</sup> Mark Rye *et al.*, "Religious Perspectives on Forgiveness", in *Forgiveness: Theory, Research, and Practice*, ed. Michael McCullough, Kenneth Pargament and Carl Thoresen (New York NY: Guilford, 2000), 17-20, 37-39.
- <sup>198</sup> Patton, 281-295.
- <sup>199</sup> Patton, 281.
- <sup>200</sup> Lehman, 233-236;  
Marty, 11.
- <sup>201</sup> Lehman, 233.
- <sup>202</sup> Abel, 10-15, 208-233;  
Arendt, 238-243;  
Augsburger, 3-28;  
Bash, 166-173;  
Baumeister *et al.*, 79-104;  
Celier *et al.*, 151-163;  
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Smedes, *Art of Forgiving*, 3-12, 13-21, 25, 29, 35-46.
- <sup>203</sup> Hannah Arendt, in Bash, 168.
- <sup>204</sup> Webb *et al.*, 57.
- <sup>205</sup> Holloway, 1-13, 15-37;  
Marty, 11, 14, 21;  
McConnell and Dixon, 31-39;  
Patton, 281-295.  
Rhoads Meek *et al.*, 190-197.
- <sup>206</sup> Cantens, 217-228.
- <sup>207</sup> Thomas Aquinas, in Cantens, 225.
- <sup>208</sup> Cantens, 224.
- <sup>209</sup> Holloway, 1-13.
- <sup>210</sup> Richard Rorty, in Holloway, 9-10.

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- <sup>211</sup> Holloway, 8.
- <sup>212</sup> Marty, 21.
- <sup>213</sup> Marty, 21.
- <sup>214</sup> Patton, 281-295.
- <sup>215</sup> Bash, 166-173;  
Byock, 31;  
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Robb-Nicholson and Schatz, 1-3;  
Vaughan-Sterling, 41-43;  
Webb *et al.*, 57-73;  
Williams, 407-417.
- <sup>216</sup> Webb *et al.*, 57.
- <sup>217</sup> Webb *et al.*, 57.
- <sup>218</sup> Augsburger, 3-28;  
Gaboury, *Pardon de soi*, 11-17.
- <sup>219</sup> Monbourquette, 47-56, 83, 183-192, 203-215, 232, 236;  
Patton, 281-295.
- <sup>220</sup> Arendt, 238;  
Abel, 10-12.
- <sup>221</sup> Arendt, 238.
- <sup>222</sup> Augsburger, 3-28;  
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- <sup>223</sup> Bash, 166-173;  
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- <sup>224</sup> Bowman, 7, 35, 257-260;  
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- <sup>225</sup> Abel, 10-15, 208-233;  
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<sup>226</sup> Alcoholics Anonymous, *Twelve Step*, 48-49, 56;  
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<sup>227</sup> Bowman, 7, 35, 257-260;  
Holloway, 59;  
Palamattathil, 57-75;  
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<sup>228</sup> Holloway, 59.

<sup>229</sup> Gaboury, *Sérénité*, 59, 63, 112-119;  
Rohr, 67-74.

<sup>230</sup> Confession and Absolution, *Celebration of the Holy Eucharist*, Church of St. John the Evangelist, Ottawa, c. 1990.

<sup>231</sup> Enright, 107-126.

<sup>232</sup> Alcoholics Anonymous, *Story*, 286.

<sup>233</sup> Collect for Ash Wednesday, Anglican Church of Canada, *Book of Alternative Services* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1985), 281;

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