New!

Public Forgiveness in Post-Conflict Contexts


Bas van Stokkom, Neelke Doorn and Paul van Tongeren (eds.)

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There seems to be a pervasive trend towards public apologies, forms of national introspection and appeals to grant forgiveness. Archbishop Tutu’s motto that “there is no future without forgiveness” is well known. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission has become an important model and source of inspiration for many other countries that want to deal with their past grievances and internal conflicts.

This book discusses the role of forgiveness within processes of peace building and transitional justice. Does ‘forgiveness’ enable a public or political use of the term? Is it possible to forgive on behalf of others, and if so, under what conditions? These conceptual questions are related to reflections on the cultural and religious contexts of expressing forgiveness. Do forgiving words promote a willingness to look ahead and prevent a relapse into conflicting views on the poisonous past? Or do they bring along aversion? Maybe the ‘push’ towards forgiveness is experienced as highly unfair.
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