

The Christian Fellowship of Healing (Scotland) worked from the early 1950's to support and spread the healing ministry within churches and to encourage engagement with the medical profession. To further these aims a centre was run in Edinburgh where people could come for prayer, listening and healing. A loving and supportive prayer community formed, which came to an end in 2011. This document is part of a legacy of resources which we hope will support others in their engagement with the healing ministry. More archived material is available to the public at the National Library of Scotland.

Forgiveness

By Ian Cowie (Chaplain 1976-88)

We all hurt one another, we are all hurt by others.

In fact, the more deeply we relate to one another the more open we are to being hurt by one another. Failure to understand that simple fact lies behind many broken marriages, many spoiled friendships, many disrupted congregations.

If somebody hurts me, I can do one of two things:

I can forgive

The wound may be sore, but it will heal in time.

There may be reconciliation at an even deeper level than before.

If there is no reconciliation, the experience will still have taught me something.

I can refuse to forgive

I can cherish ill-will against the other, wanting to make the other suffer, even making the other suffer.

Then

The poison will eat into my soul. It will spread into other relationships. It will come between me and God. It will destroy me.

However great or small the wrong done me I must decide in which of these ways I will react. It is a well-known fact that resentment, the failure to forgive, lies behind many illnesses. It may well be that we need to forgive before we can receive healing.

"I will allow no man to narrow or degrade my soul by making me hate him." (GW Carver, an American Negro)

Former CFH Resources can be found at:

www.st-cuthberts.net | www.mindandsoul.info
www.emmaushouse-edinburgh.co.uk

What do I do if I am wronged?

It is no use just trying to "forgive and forget".

We cannot pretend that sin is not real. It will not just go away conveniently.

The evil in the other may have hurt me, but it has probably affected others too.

That evil may be part of a chain reaction: somebody else wronged the person who hurt me, behind that was yet another and another, ... and so on.

I can decide - that evil stops here, I shall not pass it on.

Like the Ulster father whose sons were all killed in one explosion. When people spoke of revenge he protested that too much blood had already been spilled. Not another drop was to be shed for them.

My hurt and my sorrow are real... and perhaps my anger too. I must face them and come to terms with them.

And...

I am not sinless.

I am far from perfect so I must face the possibility that part of the hurt is because the sin in the other person has hit a tender spot in my own sinful nature.

I may consider myself to be the "innocent party", but that may not be the whole truth.

THE CROSS is where human sin and hurt must be faced.

Jesus "bears the sin of the world" in Himself.

Because God loves us, He takes our sins as His sins, so that His perfect life may be ours.

The agony of bearing the sin of one you love is terrible – even He felt He could hardly drink this bitter cup.

So...

We find ourselves at the foot of the Cross beside those who hurt us and beside those whom we have hurt.

We see others through His eyes, not through the eyes of our hurt pride.

We see where we too need forgiveness, and in the light of that we can forgive as we have been forgiven.

We are all trapped in the web of sin, God help us all! Hurting and hurt, destroying ourselves and each other, Only the power of Christ's loving self-sacrifice can free us.

As we face His agony and His blood over us all we find that we can pray for those still trapped – those who hurt us.

RECONCILIATION is the aim of forgiveness.

"[God] gave us the ministry of reconciliation... reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them... " (2 Cor. 5:18 & 19)

If God is concerned to reconcile us who crucify Him, then our aim must be reconciliation too It may not be possible: even God accepts that there are those who will not be reconciled to Him.

This may mean being the first to apologise. It may mean praying about it with a third party. It may mean facing the issue before witnesses. (Matt. 18:15-17)

(It may mean not being afraid to face the wrong, not pretending that you don't care, nor yet concealing your anger ... but don't let the sun go down on it, as Paul says (Eph. 4:26)

If no reconciliation is possible because the other does not want it, is dead or far away, pray about it at the foot of the Cross.

Sorrow over sin in another is painful, but it cleans and heals (Bitterness festers eternally.)

As Joseph exclaimed to the brothers who had wronged him, "Is it for me to put myself in God's place?" (Gen. 50:19)

It is God's job to judge in the long run, we must surrender the right to condemn, and hand everything trustingly into His hands.

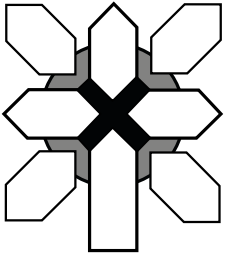
And finally, if the wrong against us has been very deep, perhaps we could learn from the prayer of some unknown women in Ravensbrück concentration camp praying for the guards who had done such terrible things to them. This was found on a scrap of paper beside a dead child.

O Lord, remember not only the men and women of goodwill, but also those of ill-will. Remember not only the suffering they have inflicted on us, but the fruits we brought thanks to this suffering: our comradeship, loyalty, humility, courage, generosity, the greatness of heart which has grown out of all of this:

And when they come to judgement, let the fruits we have borne be their forgiveness.

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Credo

used by the

Christian Fellowship of Healing (Scotland)

The Christian Fellowship of Healing:

is united in its commitment to the practice of prayer as the foundation of all our ministry.

Prayer is the means through which we believe the Holy Spirit can use us, here and now, to continue the practice of healing incarnated by Jesus.

is an ecumenical group of Christians who openly embraces a range of theological understanding and language to describe 'how' God heals.

We accept that health and healing can and does come through medicine, counselling, complementary therapies and other means. This does not negate the real contribution of prayer, rather it upholds the role of prayer to support individuals to listen to the Holy Spirit within them, guiding them, facilitating health and healing.

is committed to being alongside people who are suffering and experiencing pain, struggle and distress whatever their background.

We acknowledge that suffering faces us all and challenges our understanding and belief. Yet we can, with integrity, offer reassurance of God's loving presence accompanying every human being as seen in Christ who has shown us the capacity of God to be vulnerable even to the point of death. Living in and from this truth of the ever present loving God we respond as authentically as possible from our hearts, and we can offer an understanding of the range of meaning of healing which includes miracles.

is convinced of the importance of the varied aspects of healing displayed by Jesus in the miracle stories.

This includes an intense personal encounter with Jesus; affirmation of the individual as a person of value, physical healing, restoration of meaning and purpose, social inclusion; as well as challenge to those in power; confronting rigid thinking and lack of compassion. We believe all these components are aspects of the transforming love of God and reflect the wholeness Jesus calls us into. We see healing as deeply linked with the Christian tradition of vocation through which the living God calls each of us to discover and fulfil our potential.

is united in our understanding that healing in the New Testament includes wholeness.

This links the transforming love that effects miracles with the transforming love that brings the disciples through their fear and resistances into their ministry of apostleship. Our experience is that the practice of prayer in small groups, with a commitment to sharing and listening, enables those of us offering healing prayer to grow in ourselves and in our capacity to experience and share God's love. This includes the reality that some people have a gift of healing and a greater capacity than average to bring about healing.
