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Explorations *in the* Theology of  
**BENEDICT XVI**



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*University of Notre Dame Press*  
*Notre Dame, Indiana*

chapter six



## GOD'S SAVING JUSTICE

*Faith, Reason, and Reconciliation in the  
Political Thought of Pope Benedict XVI*

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In both substance and sensibility, Pope Benedict XVI's writings on politics portray the modern world as an "age of upheaval," to borrow from the title of a book he published just before he became pope.<sup>1</sup> Having lived through Nazi Germany, he carries a textured sense of the twentieth century as a time of totalitarianism, mass atrocity, and general political crisis. In more recent decades, he believes, an age of globalization and technological progress has become one in which disintegrating moral certainties are threatening the foundations of political orders based on human rights, the rule of law, and freedom. Such is the "dictatorship of relativism" of which he spoke.<sup>2</sup>

What explains the age of upheaval, according to Benedict? At the center of his account is an idea that, I propose, also stands at the center of his corpus of writings on politics: the synthesis of faith and reason. The decline of this synthesis Benedict associates closely

with the past century's upheavals. The best hope for recovering this synthesis—and thus the foundations for a just and free society—lies in a revival of the Christian faith, especially the Catholic faith, where he believes this synthesis is found most strongly.

Benedict's case for the synthesis of faith and reason is powerful and pressing. A just response to past political evils, though, requires more than a recovery of sound belief. Mass injustices, whether the totalitarian atrocities of the past century, ethnic conflict, civil war, genocide, religious terrorism, or abortion in modern and modernizing societies, do not exhaust their evil once they have been committed but rather leave behind wounds to persons, communities, and societies. They leave in their wake death, injury, economic loss, trauma, and despair that can persist over ensuing generations, as well as collectively held emotions like hatred, vengeance, and fear that propel cycles of violence. What is also needed, then, is a response that can bring a measure of healing and transformation to these wounds. In the Christian faith this response can be found in God's reconciliation of humanity to himself through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Divine reconciliation then creates the possibility and illuminates the practice of reconciliation among humans in the political and social realm. Reconciliation resonates in the thought of Benedict. He indeed wrote about reconciliation both before and after he became pope.

In this essay I wish to argue that these strands in Benedict's political thought—the need for a renewed synthesis of faith and reason, a revival of belief, and reconciliation, an active, transformational response to past evil—can be woven together to fashion a Catholic response to large-scale political evils of the kind that have characterized the past century. First I want to chart the contours of Benedict's thought on faith and reason. Reconciliation, though, requires more treatment. In the second section of the essay, drawing from Benedict's writings on reconciliation, I develop the idea of reconciliation further as a Christian notion of justice, peace, and mercy and offer some ideas for its enactment in politics. Reconciliation, I argue, not only complements the synthesis of faith and reason but reflects and embodies it as well.

### THE SYNTHESIS OF FAITH AND REASON

When, in his "Regensburg Address" of September 12, 2006, Benedict quoted a Byzantine emperor who drew a connection between violence and the disavowance of faith and reason in Islam, he ignited a now-famous brouhaha with the Muslim world, one that began with riots and even the killing of a nun and then evolved into a global dialogue over faith and reason.<sup>3</sup> The irony of the episode is that Benedict had devoted the vast majority of this address to the breakdown of the synthesis of faith and reason *in the West*. Originally, he argued, the New Testament had achieved a "profound encounter" of Hebrew faith and Hellenistic reason. But over the centuries, in Western thought, this woven cord became unraveled through several intellectual mutations: medieval nominalism, the Protestant Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the relativism of the present day.

The importance of the synthesis of faith and reason, its unraveling in the West, and the dangers of this unraveling for society and politics are themes to which Benedict returns again and again in his writings and speeches. What are the dangers for politics? In his public dialogue of January 2004 with Jürgen Habermas, Europe's most famous secular philosopher, Ratzinger argued that a free state—a constitutional democracy with human rights and civil liberties—depends crucially on prepolitical moral foundations, namely, Christianity's classic synthesis of faith and reason.<sup>4</sup> In contemporaneous addresses, most distinctively at Subiaco, Italy, on April 1, 2005, Ratzinger laments Europe's rejection of this synthesis, symbolized saliently by the European Union's explicit omission of Christianity from its account of the historical roots of Europe's values in the preamble of its proposed European Constitution.<sup>5</sup> The political result, according to Benedict, is that the state, no longer grounded in anything outside of itself, poses as the source of its own morality.<sup>6</sup> Such a state cannot be theologically neutral. If it is democratic, it will reflect the opinion of the majority, whatever that happens to be. More ominously, a state that abandons the God of faith and reason is likely to descend into destruction and violence.

In several of his writings and speeches, Benedict explains in more detail what reason and faith each have to contribute to political orders and what political pathologies result when one of these twins is orphaned from the other.<sup>7</sup> Let us take each in turn.

### REASON, BUT WITHIN THE LIMITS OF RELIGION

"The Catholic tradition maintains that the objective norms governing right action are accessible to reason, prescinding from the content of revelation," Benedict told British leaders when he addressed them in Westminster Hall in September 2010.<sup>8</sup> Natural law was likewise the central theme of his address to the German Bundestag in September 2011.<sup>9</sup> In both addresses he asserted that natural law is the essential basis of justice and fundamental civil and human rights. Majority opinion, the consensus of a people, or the legal fiat of governing institutions cannot provide such a foundation.<sup>10</sup>

But Benedict has cautioned many times against a reason that is detached from the creative reason of the *logos*, or God. The role of religion, he explained in his Westminster Hall address, is not to supply norms for political life or to propose specific solutions. Rather, it is to "purify," "shed light on," guide, and correct reason, preventing it from becoming distorted, applied partially, or otherwise falling into egregious error. Distorted and misguided, reason has given rise to social evils like the slave trade and the totalitarian movements of the twentieth century. Religion, then, is like a mooring that tethers reason to justice.<sup>11</sup>

What happens to reason when it becomes unmoored? The philosopher Alvin Plantinga has argued that in the contemporary Western intellectual milieu, Christian theism has two major rivals. First there is naturalism, which holds that the universe is entirely material, consisting solely of physical causes. The other is creative anti-realism, which holds that the world is created and shaped by human beings who impose concepts and categories on it.<sup>12</sup> Plantinga's alternative worldviews correspond remarkably well to Benedict's alternative fates

of reason once it is detached from God. First, there is the predominance of technical reason, the manipulation of the natural world. Second, there is the reason of limitless freedom.

Although Benedict's genealogy of the splaying of faith and reason contains many mile markers, above all he identifies the Enlightenment as the fork in the road where these two wayward paths originate. To be sure, he does not reject the Enlightenment wholesale, often crediting it for advancing institutions and norms like the rule of law, civil liberties, and human rights, including religious freedom.<sup>13</sup> But he is skeptical that Enlightenment philosophy can ground these norms or even ground itself. Exceptional in world history, the Enlightenment developed a secular rationality. Having no external criterion, however, such rationality cannot establish its own validity. Benedict is highly skeptical of a pure reason that aspires to be self-sufficient.<sup>14</sup>

Technical reason, one of the Enlightenment's strands, holds that only what can be proved through experiments can be considered rational. While technical reason can be credited for great scientific progress, when it is considered the sole or even primary form of reason, it "entails a mutilation of man," as Ratzinger charged at Subiaco. When a technological, instrumental, and manipulative rationality predominates, human life loses its sacredness and morality loses its meaning. The upshot is a loss of a transcendent, universal criterion by which to render ethical judgment on any technological development, whether it is the atomic bomb or advancements in biotechnology.<sup>15</sup>

The other strand of Enlightenment thought is a freedom that is liberated from tradition, authority, and institutions, including, of course, God and the Church. In his book *Truth and Tolerance* Ratzinger described the freedom of the Jacobins as a rebellion against truth altogether. But freedom without truth, he counters, is no freedom at all. If freedom does not correspond to nature it will collapse under the weight of incoherence and the irresolvable claims made in its name. Ultimately, a freedom of absolute autonomy and self-definition is impossible for it lacks grounds that can establish or defend it against alternatives. So, it paves the way for the dictatorship of relativism.<sup>16</sup>



## RELIGION, BUT NOT WITHOUT REASON

What, for Benedict, is the role of religious faith in politics? Very small, it might at first seem, beyond the limited albeit important task of correcting reason and preventing it from veering off into the distortions by which it fails to offer sound criteria for justice. Faith serves as a mooring. In his most recent encyclical, *Charity in Truth*, however, Benedict calls for Christian faith to play a more ambitious role in the political order: contributing love.

Love (or charity), Benedict argues in this encyclical, encompasses and does not contradict justice, which is traditionally among the foremost of political virtues. Here, Benedict follows the classical Western definition of justice as the will to render another his due. In the modern West, “due” has come to mean rights. To do justice is to give “recognition and respect for the legitimate rights of individuals and peoples,” he says. But if love includes justice, it also exceeds it, he argues, involving mercy, forgiveness, generosity, and—the virtue that Benedict stresses most—gratuitousness, all of which exceed what people have a right to, merit, or deserve. Such love is the love of God in the Bible, revealed and shared through Jesus-Christ. Benedict’s striking claim is that political, economic, and social life must be informed by gratuitousness and other gifts of love if it is going to flourish. Economic development, for instance, requires more than the logic of exchange and contracts that characterize the market but also the gratuitousness that generates the trust and solidarity on which exchanges depend for their success. Even justice itself depends on the love that exceeds justice, Benedict argues.<sup>17</sup> Because Benedict believes that Christian love is crucial for sustaining political and social life, religion turns out to be quite important for politics in his thought.

As with reason, though, religion is prone to pathologies when it exists alone. One of the unfortunate mutations of the Christian heritage, in Benedict’s view, was the rise of voluntarism and fideism—religion decoupled from reason—that took place in medieval nominalism and the Protestant Reformation. Unless religion is “purified and structured” by the “controlling organ” of reason, as Ratzinger put

it in his dialogue with Habermas, it is liable to collapse into sectarianism and violence.<sup>18</sup> Benedict writes mindfully of the rise of religious terrorism around the world in the past couple of decades, manifested most vividly in the attacks of September 11, 2001.<sup>19</sup> He advocates, then, that religion be tethered to the mooring of reason just as he cautions against reason floating free from religion.

Altogether, Benedict believes that faith and reason each make a vital and distinctive contribution to politics, that each must complement the other, and that when twinned as they are in Christianity, faith and reason are crucial for sustaining just political orders. It is on the basis of these convictions that he worries about the marginalization of Christianity in the West. Unsurprisingly, the mutual necessity of faith and reason is also the central message in Benedict’s dialogue with other religions, especially Islam.<sup>20</sup> In both Islam and in the West, an absence of the synthesis of faith and reason creates the danger of a descent into the mass injustices so many of which Benedict witnessed in his own lifetime.

## RECONCILIATION: COMPLEMENTING AND ENACTING THE BENEDICTINE SYNTHESIS

Christian advocacy of reconciliation finds its setting in a global wave of political efforts to address massive past injustices of the kind that have influenced the life and thought of Benedict. In the past generation, over ninety countries have sought to leave behind dictatorships and make a transition toward democracy; since the end of the cold war, a historically dense spate of settlements of civil war and genocide has taken place; over the past decade, Western powers like the United States have struggled to leave behind stability and a modicum of democracy in the aftermath of interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. Efforts to deal with such past injustices include over forty truth commissions; two international tribunals and now an International Criminal Court; national trials; community-level justice forums; reparations schemes; an outbreak of apologies such as U.S. President Bill Clinton’s for not intervening in Rwanda; dramatic

instances of forgiveness; memorials, museums, commemorations, and ceremonies; and scores of forums, seminars, and initiatives conducted by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society organizations.

But what notions of justice govern these efforts? The thinking that enjoys the greatest prestige among the institutions and networks involved—the United Nations, Western governments, human rights organizations, international lawyers, and other activists devoted to “transitional justice”—is what can be termed “the liberal peace.”<sup>21</sup> The sociologist Jonathan Van Antwerpen has called the liberal peace the global orthodoxy for dealing with past injustices in the political realm.<sup>22</sup> Rooted in Enlightenment thought, some of whose ideas about law and institutions Benedict affirms, the liberal peace advances human rights, the rule of law, free markets, and judicial punishment, justified either on retributive or utilitarian grounds. Judicial punishment ranks as the queen of the virtues among international lawyers and human rights activists; the International Criminal Court is their signature accomplishment. The greatest mortal sin in their catechism is blanket amnesty: *‘Nunca mas!’* they cry.

Yet both leaders and ordinary citizens inhabiting sites of catastrophe have articulated and performed other efforts of repair that do not fit easily into the liberal peace: citizens acknowledge the suffering of victims through truth commissions and related forums; perpetrators confess and offer acts of reparation within community justice forums; political leaders apologize; victims forgive; the state builds public memorials; religious leaders seek to overcome hatred and enmity among citizens. Such activities often go under the name “reconciliation.” Defined most concisely and traditionally as “restoration of right relationship,” reconciliation has emerged recently and vigorously in numerous settings of past (and sometimes ongoing) war and dictatorship. *Reconciliation* was eponymous for truth commissions in Chile, South Africa, Peru, Sierra Leone, Timor Leste, and elsewhere.

Disproportionately, but not exclusively, it is the religious who advocate reconciliation. Religious leaders espousing reconciliation have exercised leadership in political proceedings regarding past injustices in South Africa, Sierra Leone, Timor Leste, Peru, Uganda, Chile,

Guatemala, and postunification Germany. Churches and religious NGOs have conducted reconciliation efforts within civil society in locales across the globe. Theologians have reflected on reconciliation in recent years as well.

If the liberal peace is the global orthodoxy, Van Antwerpen argues, reconciliation has become the global “heterodoxy.” In other words, it has achieved the status of a paradigm that poses an alternative to the orthodoxy but is less embedded in powerful global institutions and networks than the orthodoxy.

Like the global wave of efforts to deal with past injustices, reconciliation has entered the stage of global politics relatively late in history. It has little place in the Western tradition of political thought and practice. In Christian history reconciliation was long confined to the confessional, the church community, families, and other immediate relationships. It was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that theologians began to articulate reconciliation as a political ethic, the theologian John de Gruchy documents. Protestant theologians like Albrecht Ritschl, Scotland’s P. T. Forsyth, and Switzerland’s Karl Barth, who otherwise differed greatly in their orientation, commonly argued that Christian doctrines of justification, atonement, and reconciliation carried relevance for politics. De Gruchy follows reconciliation forward through the German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Czech scholar Jan Milic Lochman, whose theology influenced the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.<sup>23</sup> South Africa has indeed served as a prime site for reconciliation’s entry into global politics, an entry that dates to the 1960s and that laid the intellectual groundwork for Archbishop Desmond Tutu to make reconciliation the primary theme of South Africa’s famous truth commission of the 1990s.<sup>24</sup> Contemporary Protestant theologians of reconciliation include Miroslav Volf, Christopher Marshall, Donald Shriver, de Gruchy himself, and other scholars.<sup>25</sup>

In the Catholic tradition, it is Pope John Paul II who is most responsible for introducing reconciliation as a political ethic. His all too overlooked encyclical of 1980, *Dives in Misericordia* (Rich in Mercy), was revolutionary for commending the virtue of mercy to social and political orders, to be practiced through forgiveness and

reconciliation. Seldom found in statecraft, political forgiveness had been rare in Church teaching as well. Its only previous appearance had been Pope Benedict XV's urging of forgiveness on European states at the end of World War I. John Paul II would resound his teaching of reconciliation and forgiveness for political orders several times again, including in his call for an examination of conscience in the Church in the years running up to the Jubilee Year, 2000; his Message for the World Day of Peace in 1997; and, most famously, his Message for the World Day of Peace in 2002, when, months after the attacks of September 11, 2001, he appended to Pope Paul VI's famous dictum "no peace without justice" the corollary "no justice without forgiveness."<sup>26</sup>

Benedict has commended reconciliation for politics as well. In 2004 he gave two addresses, one of them at the German cemetery near Caen, France, on the sixtieth anniversary of the Normandy invasion, where he spoke of reconciliation between Germany and its allies after World War II. He grounded reconciliation in the atoning sacrifice of Christ and argued that it was a Christian notion of reconciliation that drove European statesmen like Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schumann, Alcide de Gasperi, and Charles de Gaulle—all Catholics, in fact—to promote European unity after World War II.<sup>27</sup>

After Benedict became pope, he took the opportunity of his first general audience in Saint Peter's Square to explain how he chose his name. In part he meant to evoke Saint Benedict of Nursia of the sixth century, but he also wanted to honor Pope Benedict XV, who, he said, "was a prophet of peace who struggled strenuously and bravely, first to avoid the drama of war and then to limit its terrible consequences."<sup>28</sup> "In his footsteps," Benedict continued, "I place my ministry, in the service of reconciliation and harmony between peoples, profoundly convinced that the great good of peace is above all a gift from God."<sup>28</sup>

Reconciliation defined Benedict's ministry from the outset. Over the course of his pontificate Benedict has invoked reconciliation frequently in political contexts. In the war in Lebanon in summer 2006, for example, he made reconciliation a central theme of his diplomacy for peace. Pardon and reconciliation were central, too, in his 2007 letter to the Catholic Church in China, where he sought to heal divisions within the Chinese Church and between the Chinese Church

and the Chinese government.<sup>29</sup> Then, in his Message for the World Day of Peace of 2011, he framed his central theme of religious freedom—a cause close to his heart that he associates closely with the synthesis of faith and reason—as a message of peace and reconciliation. Remarkably, he counseled Christian communities suffering persecution to practice forgiveness as a witness to the gospel, even as he called the global Church to show solidarity with these victims.<sup>30</sup> Benedict also established reconciliation as the governing idea for the Church's political and social engagement in Africa in his exhortation to the Church in Africa of 2011, following the synod of African bishops.<sup>31</sup> These do not exhaust the occasions when Benedict turned to reconciliation to frame problems of a political nature.

Benedict, then, has joined his powerful voice to that of other religious leaders who proclaim reconciliation in an era when so many societies are addressing dolorous pasts of massive injustice. His message of reconciliation, I believe, complements his preaching of the synthesis of faith and reason as a response to the political evils of the past century. As I argued above, not only does overcoming past evils require that a society recover sound shared beliefs about the foundations of justice, ones reflecting the synthesis of faith and reason, but it also requires that it address the wounds that past evils have left behind. As I am about to argue, political reconciliation also embodies and illustrates the very synthesis that Benedict calls for, incorporating and conjoining the distinctive logics of faith and reason.

I wish to promote this complementarity and embodiment by developing further some of the core ideas of an ethic of political reconciliation. If both John Paul II and Benedict XVI have introduced and ensconced reconciliation firmly in Catholic social teaching, many questions remain about the application of reconciliation to politics. How do its core theological ideas translate into the political order? How does an ethic of reconciliation confront ethical questions such as, What sort of punishment do human rights violators merit? Are amnesties justifiable? May trials be foregone in order to achieve a peace agreement? May leaders apologize on behalf of nations? Can states practice forgiveness? Does forgiveness imply compromising a struggle against an unjust regime or the waging of a just war? While



I cannot begin to answer all such questions here, I propose the broad outlines of an ethic.<sup>32</sup>

### AN ETHIC OF POLITICAL RECONCILIATION: CORE THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS

In Benedict's exhortation to the Church in Africa he declares that reconciliation is a "pre-political reality" and then goes on to establish its relevance to political orders. In Christianity reconciliation means above all God's reconciliation of the world to himself through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This "vertical" reconciliation, as it might be called, also makes possible a "horizontal" reconciliation between humans. Crucially for the argument at hand, Benedict makes the point that reconciliation is a matter of actual restoration of persons and relationships.

That reconciliation is restorative in character is evident in the New Testament, where the word *reconciliation* (or *reconcile*) appears fifteen times, twelve of these in the letters of Saint Paul.<sup>33</sup> English versions of the New Testament translate *reconciliation* and *reconcile* from the Greek *katallage* and *katallōsō*, which can mean either an exchange of goods or money or the transformation of enmity and hostile separation into a state of peace or friendship.<sup>34</sup> Both of these scriptural senses come together in the atoning action of God in Christ, who exchanges places with humanity, bears the burden of humanity's sin, and defeats sin and death, thereby setting humans free and enabling their right relationship with God and one another. Biblical reconciliation can be understood both as a process of restoring relationship and as a resulting state of right relationship.

A surprising upshot of the biblical notion of reconciliation is its resemblance to the biblical meaning of justice. Surprising, because to modern Westerners justice means a particular version of "due" that revolves around rights and desert: human rights, civil rights, rights to a distribution of economic goods, rights that arise from contracts, and the punishment that a criminal deserves. The resemblance to justice will be surprising as well to many advocates of reconciliation and even

more to many of its critics, both of whom understand reconciliation as something other than justice—something that stands in tension with or supplements justice but is not itself justice. From the Bible, though, arises the idea that reconciliation is a concept of justice.

In English versions of the Bible, the words that translate into justice also commonly translate into righteousness. Righteousness, in turn, means living by the duties that govern relationships in every sphere of life as specified by God's covenants. In Old Testament Hebrew it is the terms *sedeq* and *mishpat* that translators render as both "justice" and "righteousness." These terms often occur together, one denoting justice and the other righteousness. For example, Psalm 97:2 reads "Cloud and darkness surround the Lord; justice (*mishpat*) and right (*sedeq*) are the foundations of his throne." When the terms are thus paired they carry social and political implications, conveying a justice that kings and other officials are called to promote.<sup>35</sup> The New Testament Greek follows the same pattern, presenting a family of words that begin with the *dik-* stem (*dikaïosunē*, *dikaioō*, *dikaionma*, *dikaïos*, *dikaïōsis*, *dikaïokrisia*, *dikaïos*) that translate into English words that are rooted in "right" (righteous, righteousness, rectify, requirement, uprightly) as well as English words that are rooted in "just" (justice, to justify, justly, righteous judgment, and acquittal, which relates to justice).<sup>36</sup>

In the entire Bible justice words denote not only a condition of righteousness or right relationship but also a process of restoring a relationship after it has been severed. This restoration is holistic and variegated. The Old Testament speaks of justice as involving liberating people from poverty, debt, and slavery; alleviating the condition of the poor and the dispossessed; providing bread to the hungry; canceling debt; and judging and punishing oppressors.<sup>37</sup> It is in Second Isaiah (chapters 40 through 60 or so) that the restorative nature of justice is clearest. *Sedeq* here describes God's comprehensive restoration of the people of Israel, who have strayed from his covenant, and augurs a messianic suffering servant as the ultimate fulfillment of this restoration. Characteristic of this portion of Scripture is the term *seeing justice*, describing a renewal that is active and transforming. It is Second Isaiah that Jesus then quotes in the Gospel of Matthew, where he

explicitly identifies himself with this messianic servant, one who brings “justice to victory.” In like spirit, Saint Paul, in his letters, closely links justice with the idea of justification, by which he means the action through which God, acting through Jesus Christ, frees humanity from the bondage of sin but also, equally importantly—as the Council of Trent took pains to emphasize—restores the sinner to a state of righteousness, or right relationship.

If biblical justice means comprehensive righteousness or right relationship, understood both as a process of restoration and as a state of being restored, and if biblical reconciliation means a process of restoring relationship or a state of right relationship, then, in a biblical interpretation, we may say that reconciliation is a concept of justice.

How does this justice compare with the justice of rendering another what is his due? Again, the modern West has come to understand justice as due in terms of rights and desert. In my view reconciliation encompasses rights and desert but is also wider and more comprehensive than rights and desert. Rights, after all, and desert, too, themselves describe crucial dimensions of right relationship, involving complex duties and claims between persons. It is also my view that rights can be found in the Bible, especially the Old Testament.<sup>38</sup> They appear later in the Christian tradition as well, including medieval canon law and the thought of sixteenth-century Spanish scholastics, and have been affirmed strongly by the post-Vatican II magisterium, not least by Benedict.<sup>39</sup>

But in three ways the right relationship of the Bible exceeds the duties and claims that rights describe. First, there are duties of such sufficient width that they involve no corresponding right. Philosophers describe a wide duty as one whose discharge on the part of its performer is open-ended. The action is obligatory but unspecified as to when, where, how, and exactly toward whom it is to be performed. The biblical obligation to serve the poor, for instance, fits this description. To be sure, the poor have specific rights. But the obligation of those who are not poor to serve the poor is not limited by what these rights describe and is unspecified in the realm in which it exceeds these rights. Second, the Bible’s account of the justice of restoration—God’s saving justice, for instance—is also wider

than rights and desert. As recounted throughout Scripture, most sagely in God’s atoning act in Christ, and as affirmed consistently in Christian tradition, this restoration takes the form of a gift—that is, something to which recipients do not have a right or a claim. If this restoration is indeed justice, then it is a justice that involves no corresponding right. The third respect in which the justice of reconciliation is wider than rights again involves justice as a process of restoration. It is that even when justice fulfills a right it also restores wounds to right relationship that are not strictly entailed in the right. For instance, international law has developed rights to reparation and to knowledge of the truth on behalf of victims. The practices that fulfill these rights, however, involve more than just fulfilling rights. Acknowledgment, as it takes place at a truth commission, for instance, not only satisfies a right to know the truth but also involves the recognition of the victim by fellow citizens, thus redressing the wound of social isolation and ignorance. Such a restoration, whose value exceeds what rights describe, is also a part of justice when we are talking about the justice of reconciliation.

The justice of reconciliation, then, encompasses but exceeds rights. This account of justice might seem to diverge from Benedict’s account in *Charity in Truth*. There he defines justice as what is due and holds that love includes but also exceeds this justice. It would seem, then, that he defines love in the way that I define the justice of reconciliation. It turns out, however, that in separate discourses Benedict also affirms a justice that exceeds rights and that expresses the saving action of God. In his Lenten Message of 2010, for instance, he describes justice in terms of the restorative action of God. The meaning of *sedeqah* (using the feminine form of *sedeq*), he says, is linked to the God who “lifts the needy from the ash heap” (quoting Psalm 113:7) and to the command to give to the poor in restorative fashion. Discussing Paul’s concept of justification, he translates Romans 3:21–22 as “the justice of God . . . manifested through faith in Jesus Christ.” In a General Audience delivered in 2008, he makes clear that for Paul justification is a process whereby we become just and thus restored to righteousness (again as Trent would have it and in contrast to Luther and Calvin’s notion of justification merely *declaring*

us just).<sup>40</sup> In the Lenten Address, he goes on to say that the justice of God comes from grace and is the loving act of a God who restores. He even says that this is a justice of gift, of “the fullness of charity,” of salvation, enlivened by love, a justice that is in fact contrary to what everyone is due. Such divine justice is “profoundly different from its human counterpart,” he observes, drawing an explicit contrast with justice as due. Yet this divine justice is not detached from or foreign to human affairs. Strengthened by it, Benedict exhorts, “the Christian is moved to contribute to creating just societies . . . enlivened by love.” In these addresses, then, Benedict articulates a justice that goes beyond due or rights, that does not negate these rights, that converges with love, that is rooted in the biblical texts, that restores right relationship, and that converges substantially with what I have described as the justice of reconciliation.<sup>41</sup>

The justice of reconciliation takes on even more fullness through its connection with two other concepts derived from the Bible: peace and mercy. Peace, the first of these notions, converges with the aspect of reconciliation that is a state of affairs—a state of being reconciled, a state of right relationship, a state of justice. The word for “peace” found in the Old Testament, the Hebrew *shalom*, describes the proper life of the Jewish community and means health and prosperity, economic and political justice, and honesty and moral integrity in relations between persons—a condition much like comprehensive righteousness.<sup>42</sup> Certain Old Testament Scriptures explicitly spell out this intimate link between peace and the justice of right relationship.<sup>43</sup> *Eirene*, the Greek New Testament word for “peace,” is a direct translation of *shalom* via the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures, and here again involves the several dimensions of right order in a community.<sup>44</sup> The concept of peace informed by justice—what is often called “positive peace” and distinguished from a “negative peace” that is a mere absence of overt violence—has recurred in the Catholic tradition of thought, arguably present in Augustine’s writings, for instance, and is resounded time and again in modern encyclicals. Benedict’s exhortation to the Church in Africa is typical in arguing that “reconciliation and justice are the two essential premises of peace . . . and . . . to a certain extent, they also define its nature.”<sup>45</sup>

If peace converges with reconciliation as a state or condition of justice, the concept that converges with reconciliation as a process of restoration of justice is mercy. A notion of mercy that involves holistic restoration is, here again, one that will ring strange in modern Western ears, to which mercy is much narrower and more conditional—a departure from deserved punishment, as when a judge lets a defendant “off the hook.”<sup>46</sup> Mercy in the Bible, though—expressed by the Hebrew *hesed* and *rahamin* and the Greek *eleos* in the New Testament—means something far broader and more transformational. Pope John Paul II explained this biblical concept of mercy in his 1980 encyclical, *Dives in Misericordia*, writing that mercy is “manifested in its true and proper aspect when it restores to value, promotes and draws good from all the forms of evil existing in the world and in man.” Thus understood, mercy is quite close in meaning to the justice that restores relationship, the justice that is reconciliation.

From the Bible, then, we can argue that reconciliation is a concept of justice that involves a restoration of relationship, animated by mercy, and a resulting state of right relationship, equivalent to peace. To import these core concepts into politics is to manifest a vision resonant with what Benedict proposed in *Charity in Truth*. Reconciliation proposes a politics that is not confined to the justice of rights and due but is infused with virtues and practices that are grounded in God’s saving justice—or, as Benedict renders it in *Charity in Truth*, God’s gratuitous love. Reconciliation, then, involves a robust role for faith in politics that far exceeds performing as a corrective to reason. As we shall see, though, reconciliation also involves a robust role for reason, especially insofar as it involves human rights, which, as Benedict persuasively argues, find their strongest grounding in natural law.

## ENACTING RECONCILIATION IN POLITICS

How is this biblical notion of reconciliation to be realized in modern politics? Modern Catholic social thought has followed Thomas Aquinas in considering political authority indispensable for achieving important human goods in common. An ethic of political reconciliation



might interpret this idea as follows: political authority secures vital dimensions of right relationship. In the modern world governments rightly concern themselves with that dimension of relationship that involves people's roles as subjects of public law—the rights, duties, and virtues that go with being citizens of political orders or that are rightfully owed to or claimed by foreigners. Restoring such right relationship between citizens is indeed the primary goal of political reconciliation in societies that have suffered war, genocide, and dictatorship. Today the main site of political reconciliation is the state, though it might also take place between states that have warred or between an intervener state and its target state, the United States and Iraq, for instance. But if it is legitimate for states to pursue reconciliation, the political sphere also has its proper boundaries. The common good promoted by the state is only a subset of the comprehensive biblical justice of right relationship within a community and between its members and God, which also pertains to friendships, families, economic dealings, conduct in the religious community, and so on. It exceeds the authority, and usually the competence, of the state to promote reconciliation between people in these other respects. The state, then, may foster reconciliation—political reconciliation—and remain a limited state, much as modern liberal democracy envisions the state.

Reciprocally, post-Vatican II magisterial thought teaches that the Church ought to refrain from performing the state's governing tasks but rightfully contributes to the political order—including, arguably, by promoting political reconciliation.<sup>47</sup> In recent decades the Church and Catholic organizations like Catholic Relief Services have respected these roles as they have worked to bring repair to persons and relationships who have suffered great wounds in conflicts in Rwanda, Colombia, Burundi, Guatemala, and elsewhere; in publicly urging governments to address past injustices in Timor Leste, South Africa, Chile, El Salvador, and many other places; in offering its prelates as truth commissioners or even organizers of truth commissions; and in setting forth norms of justice for the state's activities.<sup>48</sup>

Carried out by the state and by the Church in interaction with the state, political reconciliation seeks to restore justice in political communities. Right relationship in political communities is broken by po-

litical injustices, which may be defined as unjust actions or structures that people perform or build in the name of political agendas and ideals. Perpetrators of political injustices include both agents of the state and soldiers in opposition forces. Most of the political injustices of concern here are systemic ones, taking place on a large scale and affecting not only combatants but also wide swaths of civilians. But then the question becomes, Which acts and laws are unjust? Here we turn to human rights. The actual institutions that have carried out practices of political reconciliation—truth commissions, courts, implementers of lustration policies, negotiators of reparations settlements, and practitioners of political apologies—have appealed repeatedly to the international conventions that define human rights and the laws of war to define political injustices as war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, torture, more recently, rape, and sometimes violations of other political, civil, social, and economic rights. Human rights, of course, also enjoy a strong place in Catholic social thought, especially in the encyclicals of the Second Vatican Council and afterward, which root human rights in natural law and in the dignity of the person created in the image of God.

But if human rights define political injustices, the respects in which these injustices wound persons and relationships are far wider than rights alone describe. Correspondingly, the practices that make up an ethic of political reconciliation aim not only to restore human rights but also to redress this wide range of wounds, as well as the emotions of hatred, fear, revenge, and alienation from the political order to which these wounds give rise. These restorative practices are legitimate for the political order because the wounds were inflicted within the political order and because redressing them helps to secure the strength and health of the political order. The reasoning runs strongly parallel to the logic through which Benedict argues in *Charity in Truth* that the sustaining of justice (the justice of rights and due) itself depends on love.

It is wounds and practices that give specific and practical definition to political reconciliation. The wounds take on at least six forms. The first one approximates the very definition of political injustice: the violation of the victim's basic human rights or prerogatives

under the laws of war. Human rights not only define political injustice, but their violation is one of the wounds of political injustice. Again, though, the wounds run far wider than violated human rights. A second form of wound encompasses the wide range of injuries that political injustices inflict on victims, including death, the death of family and friends, permanent bodily injury from torture or assault, trauma, humiliation, sexual violation, the loss of wealth and livelihood, and many other harms. A third wound, common in both war and dictatorship, is victims' ignorance of the source and circumstances of the political injustices that were inflicted on them. Commonly giving voice to this ignorance are the relatives of the missing and the dead. A fourth wound deepens the harm of political injustices even more: it is the lack of acknowledgment of victims' suffering, out of either ignorance or indifference, on the part of members of the surrounding community. The failure of public acknowledgment is "actually . . . a redoubling of the basic violation," writes the South African political philosopher André du Toit.<sup>49</sup> Such refusal, in a Christian theology of reconciliation, is a failure of the solidarity with the suffering that imitates Christ's identification with the poor and the afflicted. The fifth and sixth wounds focus primarily on the perpetrator. The fifth is what may be called the "standing victory" of the perpetrator's political injustice.<sup>50</sup> One of the harms that an injustice leaves behind is the undefeated "moral fact" of the perpetrator's disregard for the dignity of the victim. This moral fact is the standing victory of injustice. When human rights activists speak of the injustice of impunity, what they have in mind is something much like this standing victory. Finally, the sixth wound is the harm that the perpetrator inflicts on his own soul when he commits an act of injustice. In the Christian tradition sin does not merely result in a mark in a "debit column," but has real and debilitating consequences for the sinner; in cases of violence these frequently include severe psychological damage. "The wages of sin is death," as Saint Paul wrote in his Letter to the Romans (6:23).

Reflecting harms that political injustices impose directly, all these wounds may be called "primary wounds." In episodes of systemic injustice—civil war, dictatorship, and genocide—thousands, some-

times millions, of people, suffer them. But primary wounds also cause harm in a secondary and indirect sense, namely, by contributing to judgments through which citizens and collectives proceed to commit further injustices such as massacres, genocide, torture, and other war crimes and international aggression, or else to withhold allegiance from fledgling constitutional orders and peace agreements. Such further injustices may be called "secondary wounds," for they arise from emotions of fear, hatred, resentment, and revenge that emanate from the original injustices.<sup>51</sup> To understand secondary wounds and grasp how they can undermine political orders and relations between states, sometimes for generations, one need think no further than Rwanda, Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo, the Basque Country, Iraq, Israel and Palestine, Kashmir, the Rape of Nanking, Hiroshima, and Dresden.

Six practices, then, aim to transform wounded persons and relationships into a condition of greater human flourishing. Each practice addresses one or more wound in a different way; each reflects the restorative logic of an ethic of political reconciliation. The practices are interdependent and often complementary and together make up a holistic ethic of political reconciliation.

1. *Building regimes based on human rights and building relations between states based on respect for international law.* Again, human rights and respect for law between states are a crucial dimension of right relationship in modern political orders. Ensconcing human rights in the rule of law brings repair with respect to the wound of the violation of human rights. It is here that the ethic of political reconciliation most converges with the liberal peace, in which rights occupy center stage. This practice is indispensable if reconciliation is not to be cheap, taking the form of an amnesty, an agreement between enemies, or an otherwise "negative peace" that does not involve justice for all.
2. *Acknowledgment of the suffering of victims on the part of other citizens in the political community.* Acknowledgment is recognition, which addresses social ignorance of victims' suffering on the part of the community. Conferring such recognition are truth

commissions, as well as museums, monuments, commemorations, and rituals of remembrance. Theologically, acknowledgment reflects God's own remembrance and recognition of the poor, the victim, and the forgotten and his will for their restoration as recorded throughout the Bible and realized most fully in Jesus Christ.

3. *Reparations*, a material payment in the form of money, mental and physical health services, and the like, to victims of political injustices on the part of perpetrators, the state, or both. The purpose of reparations is in part to compensate victims materially insofar as that is possible. More deeply, the material payment expresses the community's recognition of the victim's suffering symbolically, much like acknowledgment does. The theological grounds for reparations are largely the same as those for acknowledgment, though they stress that God's restoration of victims involves a material dimension, as with the liberation of slaves and the granting of the just claims of the poor and the otherwise oppressed. Restitution, meaning something much like reparations, was in fact the central response to crime within the Jewish community, as the law of the Torah set forth. Reparations have also played an important role in the Christian tradition. In the sixteenth century, for instance, Bartolomé de Las Casas thought that reparations, or *restitutio*, were owed to indigenous peoples of the New World for a wide range of injuries done to them by European conquerors.
4. *Punishment*, today frequently pitted against reconciliation in debates about just responses to past evil around the world. Critics of reconciliation equate it with amnesty and thus reject it. An ethic of reconciliation, though, need not exclude punishment and can in fact justify it on a restorative rationale that promotes the restoration of relationships between perpetrators, victims, and members of the community. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* holds that "there is a twofold purpose [in judicial punishment]. On the one hand, *encouraging the reinsertion of the condemned person into society*; on the other, *fostering a justice that reconciles*, a justice capable of restoring harmony in social relationships disrupted by the criminal act committed."<sup>752</sup> Imprisonment,

even long-term imprisonment, need not be foreign to restorative punishment and is appropriate for masterminds of large-scale human rights violations. Restorative punishment is realized most fully, though, in community forums where victims, perpetrators, and community members gather in a common place and recite their stories and their claims and where community elders deliver a penance that takes the form of restitution or reintegrative community service.

5. *Apology*, growing increasingly common in global politics. A succession of German leaders, for instance, have voiced repentance for the Nazis' perpetration of the Holocaust, most dramatically in the case of Chancellor Willy Brandt kneeling at the monument to the victims of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1970 and in the case of President Richard von Weizsäcker's speech to the German Bundestag of 1985. In practicing apology, a perpetrator nullifies the standing victory of his injustice, commits himself to the restoration of his soul, and confers recognition on victims. When a leader of a nation or other collective performs an apology, he speaks on behalf of the political community in whose name the injustice was committed, though the leader may not himself have been involved in the injustice. In Christian theology, repentance, confession, and apology are essential for the moral and spiritual restoration of a perpetrator and his appropriation of forgiveness.

6. *Forgiveness*, the rarest of the six practices to take place in political orders but also the most distinctively Christian and, I would argue, the most potentially transforming. The liberal peace has little place for it; its proponents often criticize it. South Africa's Nelson Mandela is one of the few heads of state to have practiced it, though accounts of the aftermath of violence in countries like South Africa, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Uganda reveal that victims have practiced it more widely. In a robust Christian theological framework, forgiveness involves not only the victim's renunciation of resentment but also his or her construction of right relationship. "It is by granting and receiving forgiveness that the traumatized memories of individuals and communities have



found healing and families formerly divided have rediscovered harmony,” Benedict writes in *Africa Munus*. Jesus frequently commands forgiveness in the New Testament, even calling for it to be practiced seventy-seven times (or seventy times seven times in one version of the command). Forgiveness also can be viewed more deeply not just as a following of Christ’s teachings but also as a victim’s participation in the act of forgiveness that God performed through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For societies recovering from past injustices, forgiveness helps to defeat the standing victory of injustice, contributes to the restoration of victims, and helps to work against cycles of revenge and counter-revenge. Most vividly of the six practices, forgiveness expresses the mercy and the justice that wills to restore relationship, and it helps to restore just peace in political orders. Pope John Paul II indeed argued in his Message for the World Day of Peace of 2002 that social peace is possible only through forgiveness and reconciliation.<sup>53</sup>

To speak of reconciliation, peace, and forgiveness in sites of massive past political injustice admittedly sounds utopian. It is worth stressing that all six practices, wherever they take place, will remain partially accomplished, compromised by power, hindered by differing concepts of justice among victims, perpetrators, and other citizens, laden with sheer complexity, and hampered by political institutions that often have been wrecked and then repaired only partially if at all. Pertinent to an ethic of political reconciliation is original sin, which reminds us that the work of restoration will be accomplished in partial and fragmentary ways this side of heaven. To conceive of justice and peace holistically is not to insist that peace and justice will be achieved holistically in the political realm. In part, the function of an ethic of political reconciliation is to provide standards according to which we can assess the justice of efforts at restoration. Still, the ethic of political reconciliation is not an ethic of mere ideals. In the real world, all these practices do occur, even if roughly. In these occurrences we can find a mixture of breakdown and breakthrough, of terrible failures as well as instances when “hope and history rhyme,” in the words of

the poet Seamus Heaney. The resulting predicament is that restorative practices take place but are suffused with blemish. It is just this predicament that begs an ethic. Were the practices ineffectual, the ethic would be futile; if the practices did not involve partiality, compromise, and excruciating dilemmas, the ethic would be pointless.

## CONCLUSION

Much more can be said about the content of an ethic of political reconciliation. What I want to stress is how it reflects and complements Benedict’s synthesis of faith and reason. The ethic builds on and encompasses human rights, which define the political injustices that political reconciliation addresses as well as the basis of the regime or relationship between states that political reconciliation seeks. Reconciliation without human rights would be cheap reconciliation or perhaps an oppressor’s rationale: Drop your demands, and let us reconcile! Human rights, which Benedict believes to be grounded in natural law, serve to moor reconciliation much in the way that Benedict desires for reason to moor the influence of faith in the political realm.

Reconciliation also brings into politics a religious logic, one firmly grounded in God’s reconciliation of the world to himself and in scriptural concepts of justice, peace, and mercy. Resounding *Charity in Truth*, such reconciliation encompasses but also exceeds the rights that are “due” and is informed by God’s gratuitous and saving action. It is an ethic that the Church itself can advocate and perform out of its deepest purposes even while remaining differentiated from the state in its role and responsibility.

The ethic is situated in the aftermath of the kind of catastrophic evils that have informed Benedict’s life and thought. It is worth noting that regimes or factions that explicitly rejected God or for whom religious faith had very little import perpetrated virtually all the great atrocities of the twentieth century. Even those violations of human rights committed by professedly Christian regimes—Pinocchet’s Chile, Videla’s Argentina—were carried out in direct contravention of

the Church's ethical teachings. The prevalence of secular statist violence makes all the more urgent Benedict's call for reincorporating faith, moored by reason, into politics.

It is also practices grounded in faith that have the capacity to bring repair to the wounded persons, relationships, and societies that these massive injustices have left behind. The balm of reconciliation redresses wounds that are wider than those that human rights can describe, involves measures wider than restoring human rights, and indeed effects the kinds of restoration that greatly strengthen a regime based on human rights. Justice rooted in reason depends greatly on the mercy, love, grace—and yes, distinctive justice—found in faith.

## NOTES

1. Joseph Ratzinger, *Values in a Time of Upheaval*, trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006). On the theme of crisis in Benedict's thought, see also Samuel Gregg, *The Modern Papacy* (New York: Continuum, 2009); Tracey Rowland, *Ratzinger's Faith: The Theology of Pope Benedict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). In this essay I use the name Benedict when referring to him either in the inclusive sense, meaning throughout his career, or else specifically during the time when he has been Pope Benedict XVI, whereas I use the name Joseph Ratzinger only to refer to him prior to his papacy.
2. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Homily, Mass Pro Eligendo Romano Pontifice*, April 18, 2005. Available at [www.vatican.va/gpII/documents/homily-pro-eligendo-pontifice\\_20050418\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/gpII/documents/homily-pro-eligendo-pontifice_20050418_en.html).
3. Benedict XVI, *Faith, Reason, and the University: Memories and Reflections*, September 12, 2006. Available at [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20060912\\_university-regensburg\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_en.html). On the ensuing debate, see Miroslav Volf, Ghazi bin Muhammad, and Melissa Yarrington, eds., *A Common Word: Muslims and Christians on Loving God and Neighbor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010).
4. Jürgen Habermas and Joseph Ratzinger, *The Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion*, ed. Florian Schuller, trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006).
5. Joseph Ratzinger, "The Subiaco Address," reprinted in Rowland, *Ratzinger's Faith*, 158–59, 163.
6. Benedict XVI, "The Listening Heart: Reflections on the Foundations of Law," September 22, 2011. Available at [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2011/september/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20110922\\_reichstag-berlin\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110922_reichstag-berlin_en.html).
7. Habermas and Ratzinger, *Dialectics of Secularization*, 78.
8. Benedict XVI, "Address at Westminster Hall," September 17, 2010. Available at [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2010/september/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20100917\\_societa-civile\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2010/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20100917_societa-civile_en.html).
9. Benedict XVI, "The Listening Heart."
10. Habermas and Ratzinger, *Dialectics of Secularization*, 67–72.
11. Benedict XVI, "Address at Westminster Hall."
12. Alvin Plantinga, "On Christian Scholarship," [www.calvin.edu/academic/philosophy/virtual\\_library/plantinga\\_alvin.htm](http://www.calvin.edu/academic/philosophy/virtual_library/plantinga_alvin.htm).
13. See, for example, Benedict XVI, "Christmas Address December 22, 2006," at [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2006/december/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20061222\\_curita-romana\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/december/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20061222_curita-romana_en.html); Ratzinger, "The Subiaco Address," 164; Benedict XVI, "The Listening Heart."
14. Habermas and Ratzinger, *Dialectics of Secularization*, 76.
15. Ratzinger, "The Subiaco Address," 156–65, quote on 161.
16. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Truth and Tolerance: Christian Belief and World Religions*, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 247, 256.
17. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, June 29, 2009. Available at [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20090629\\_caritas-in-veritate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html).
18. Habermas and Ratzinger, *Dialectics of Secularization*, 77; Ratzinger, *Values*, 108–9.
19. On the tendency of religion to descend into violence when it is left alone, see also Benedict XVI, "Address at Westminster Hall," September 17, 2010; Benedict XVI, *Faith, Reason, and the University*, September 12, 2006.
20. Habermas and Ratzinger, *Dialectics of Secularization*, 73–76.
21. In her "conceptual history of transitional justice," Paige Arthur describes the field of transitional justice as "an international web of individuals and institutions whose internal coherence is held together by common concepts, practical aims, and distinctive claims for legitimacy" that formed in common response to practical dilemmas. "The field of transitional justice, so

defined, came directly out of a set of interactions among human rights activists, lawyers and legal scholars, policymakers, journalists, donors, and comparative politics experts concerned with human rights and the dynamics of 'transitions to democracy,' beginning in the late 1980s." She also discusses debates that occurred within this web despite their broad agreement on certain values—over the desirable extent and justification for judicial punishment, for instance. See Paige Arthur, "How 'Transitions' Reshaped Human Rights: A Conceptual History of Transitional Justice," *Human Rights Quarterly* 31 (2009): 324, 353, 354, 358. For other helpful surveys and assessments of transitional justice, see Bronwyn Leebar, "The Irreconcilable Goals of Transitional Justice," *Human Rights Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (2008): 95–118; Ruti G. Teitel, "Transitional Justice Genealogy," *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 16 (2003): 69–94.

22. Jonathan Van Antwerpen, "Reconciliation as Heterodoxy" (2010), unpublished manuscript. Van Antwerpen was discussing reconciliation in the context of transitional justice, a domain somewhat narrower than peacemaking or peace building, but his point applies rather well here nevertheless.

23. John W. De Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 67–76.

24. Erik Doxtader, *With Faith in the Work of Words: The Beginnings of Reconciliation in South Africa, 1985–1995* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2008), 35–73.

25. De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*; Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996); Christopher D. Marshall, *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime and Punishment* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001); Donald W. Shriver, *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). Most of the theologians—as well as practical examples—offered here are from Protestant and Catholic sources. What about the Orthodox Church? To be sure, it has always harbored a deep theology of reconciliation, one that reaches back to the early Church fathers and that is profoundly restorative, as in its concept of *divinization*. Orthodox theologians, though, at least to my knowledge, have not developed a theology of reconciliation for the political realm to the extent that Protestant and Catholic theologians did during the twentieth century.

26. The post–September 11 address was his "No Peace without Justice. No Justice without Forgiveness. Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace," January 1, 2002. Available at [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_20011211\\_1000-world-day-for-peace\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20011211_1000-world-day-for-peace_en.html).

27. Ratzinger, *Values*, 119–26, for the portions discussed here.

28. See "Pope tells why he chose the name of 'Benedict XVI,'" [www.catholicnewsagency.com/resource.php?n=493](http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resource.php?n=493).

29. See "Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China," [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/letters/2007/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_let\\_20070527\\_china\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/letters/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20070527_china_en.html).

30. Benedict XVI, "Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace: Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace," January 1, 2011. Available at [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20101208\\_xliv-world-day-peace\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20101208_xliv-world-day-peace_en.html).

31. Benedict XVI, "*Africæ Munus*: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace," November 19, 2011. Available at [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_exh\\_20111119\\_africae-munus\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20111119_africae-munus_en.html).

32. My arguments herein draw from Daniel Philpott, *Just and Unjust Peace: An Ethic of Political Reconciliation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). For a shorter statement of the book's argument in a Catholic context, see Daniel Philpott, "Reconciliation: A Catholic Ethic for Peacebuilding in the Political Order," in *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis*, ed. Robert Schreier, R. Scott Appleby, and Gerard F. Powers (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 92–124.

33. De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 46, 51.

34. *Ibid.*, 51.

35. Moshe Weinfield, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 25–33.

36. Marshall, *Beyond Retribution*, 38.

37. *Ibid.*

38. See Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice: Rights and Wrongs* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); Christopher D. Marshall, *Crowned with Glory and Honor: Human Rights in the Biblical Tradition* (Telford, PA: Pandora Press, 2001); David Novak, *Coenontal Rights: A Study in Jewish Political Theory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

39. Brian Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights: Studies on Natural Rights, Natural Law, and Church Law, 1150–1625* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997).

40. Benedict XVI, "General Audience," St. Peter's Square, Wednesday, November 19, 2008.