

We Have Sinned: When Churches Say we are Sorry and the Politics of Apology and Reconciliation

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Abstract

While there is considerable recent scholarship on the “politics of apology,” reparations, and “repairing past injustices” when it comes to nations, there is much less when it comes to churches (organizational manifestations of faith traditions, themselves implicated in some of the worst human rights crimes) and their recent efforts to acknowledge and apologize for their roles and seek reconciliation with victims (Evangelical Lutherans and the Catholic Church and Jews in the Holocaust, South African Reformed Church and black South Africans, Southern Baptists and African Americans in the US, and more recently Catholic clergy and the genocide in Rwanda). This article proposes to fill in some of the gap, providing review of the cases, and just as importantly, in these reviews and in the concluding section drawing broader conclusions and insights regarding the role of institutions in mitigating the divisions, domestic and international, produced by the crimes in which they were historically implicated. From silence and even ideological and institutional complicity to acknowledgement, apology, and reconciliation: it is from these that historic wrongs can be ameliorated.

Keywords: churches, apology, reconciliation, crimes, history, holocaust, segregation, apartheid

Introduction

Recent years have seen a torrent of apologies coming from Christian churches and leaders. From John Paul's and the Catholic Church's apology for anti-Semitism in the Church's history; to the Southern Baptist Convention's apology for providing theological and institutional support for slavery and segregation, apologies from respective churches have become almost mandatory.

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Apologies have also come from leaders of Germany's Evangelical (Lutheran) Church for its complicity or silence during Hitler's rise to power and the Holocaust. South Africa's Dutch Reformed Church is still grappling with its central role in justifying and participating in apartheid, while the Catholic leadership in Rwanda has yet to confront its complicity in the worst genocide since World War II.

What explains these failures, these "sins" against Jews, African Americans, black South Africans, Tutsis and moderate Hutus? What does "apology" mean, in theological and practical terms? What are the motivations behind these apologies? What are victims to make of these apologies? How should they respond? How have they responded? This article seeks to provide some answers to these questions. Too often the focus is almost exclusively on the (sometimes dramatic) apologies, with less attention to the responses to those apologies. After all, if apology is to lead to "reconciliation" then response is the necessary second part of the apology/"forgiveness" process. Nor is a positive response guaranteed, necessarily following on apology, no matter how sincere.

The next section provides a brief conceptual development, explanation of the central concepts of "sin" and apology as used in this article, along with response, forgiveness, reconciliation.

Concepts and Intellectual Origins

Sin, apology, forgiveness – these are freighted words that have typically been absent from academic discourse (for that matter political discourse). For a long time academic literature and research have regarded religious variables as either irrelevant or somehow not amenable or appropriate to social science. Religion is a "soft" variable, and such concepts as sin, apology, forgiveness, even reconciliation are perhaps seen as hopelessly spiritual or normative. Nevertheless, since the 1990s, there's been a growing literature on not only the dangers posed by religion but the positive role it can play in conflict resolution. Examples of the former would be Catherwood's *Why the Nations Rage* (2002), Kimball's *When Religion Becomes Evil* (2002), even Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" (1993); of the latter, there's Johnston's *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (1994) and *Faith Based Diplomacy* (2003), as well as Appleby's *The Ambivalence of the Sacred* and Gopin's *Between Eden and Armageddon* (2000) and *Holy War, Holy Peace* (2002).

It is in these latter works that one begins to find discussion of the role that religion generally, and of religious leaders and institutions specifically, can and in particular cases must play in creating the ground, the base for conflict resolution. Concepts heretofore avoided as normative in nature are now seriously addressed: for example Minow in *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness* (1998) and Diseger in *Political Forgiveness* (2001). These writers recognize that what was once the preserve of theologians and philosophers are necessary concepts for understanding conflict processes in the world. Ignoring them is no longer an option if we are to understand the sources of many conflict situations along with the possibilities of conflict resolution.

This article is intellectually inspired by and consciously draws on the themes so superbly raised and pursued by the works and authors above. But the original inspiration comes from first, Barkan's *The Guilt of Nations* (2000); as the title implies the focus is on nations, their governments, and how or not they have accepted responsibility in words and actions for past wrongs. The second is Gopin's *Between Eden and Armageddon*, whose subtitle expresses its concerns: *The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking*. However, this article will not address all the themes these and other works encompass or the broader topic of conflict resolution. The focus will not be inter-state conflicts, even those with a religious dimension, but will be limited specifically to the churches and those they "sinned" against. I wish to lay out the beginning of an analysis of what factors led specific Churches, as religious institutions or as denominations, to sin (using again this religiously freighted term) either contributing to violence or failing to prevent it, and what actions they can and have taken to repair the wrongs and thereby contribute to reconciliation between themselves and their victims. The choice of cases, specifically the Catholic and Protestant Churches and the Holocaust, the Dutch Reformed Church and apartheid in South Africa, and the Southern Baptist Church and segregation in the U.S., and the Catholic Church in Rwanda are the relevant cases and provide a broad comparative perspective. Of course it would take a book length effort to encompass entire histories and all possible cases, involving other faith traditions and institutions.

Specific research questions follow in the next section along with the analytical framework the article develops and deploys. What follows is a review of each case, a description of the "sins" perpetrated, the nature of apology, and the response of victims to apologies.

Research Questions

The article seeks to answer or address the following questions:

1. What was/were the sin/s committed by the church and religious denomination?
2. Who were the victims? It is the perception by the victims that is most important, once an apology has been proffered.
3. What factors explain the commission of wrongs?
4. What steps have been taken or are being taken to accept responsibility for wrongs committed? What acts of apology and acceptance of responsibility? How does one know if the apology is sincere? Beyond the apology what efforts have there been to establish interfaith dialogue, offers of restitution?
5. To whom is the apology directed? Who is receiving and accepting offers of reconciliation?
6. What response, if any, have these acts of apology elicited?
7. What further steps are being called for by victims' groups and their erstwhile allies in politics?
8. What linkages, both direct and concrete as well as less direct may be creating a changed base for conflict resolution?

Cases

Case 1: The Catholic Church and the Holocaust

Case 2: The Lutheran Church in Germany and the Holocaust

Case 3: The Catholic Church and the complicity of Catholic priests, nuns, and bishops in the Rwandan genocide

Case 4: The South African Reformed Church and apartheid

Case 5: Southern Baptists and slavery and apartheid

These cases were chosen because they are the most prominent, and notorious instances of church complicity in human rights violations – betraying the principles upon which they the churches are based. What follows is a case by case summary review. Rather than providing detailed historical reviews and extended discussion of theological and historical issues, the analysis is directed at answering the research questions listed above.

Case Summaries

The Catholic Church and the Holocaust:

Centuries of painful history have marked Catholic-Jewish "relations." Obviously this understatement merits considerable elaboration. This article will focus on the horror years of the Nazis, specifically the Church's and Pius XII's alleged silence, which for some bordered on complicity. The debate over the exact culpability of Pius XII shows no sign of ending, but perceptions are what count. One reads Kertzer's *The Popes against the Jews: The Vatican's role in the Rise of Anti-Semitism* (2001) and Cornwall's *Hitler's Pope* (1999); others argue for a more nuanced understanding of the Church's attitudes and Pius's alleged silence in the face of the Nazi tyranny and emphasise his part in the Vatican's rescue of Rome's Jews (Bottum, 2004).

As one reads the various histories and analyses, certain themes reappear. For some Pius's actions (or inaction) and the Church's ambivalent response to the Nazi's persecution stemmed from innate anti-Semitism. Among the Church's and Pius's apologists several explanations of the failure of both to speak and act forcefully on behalf of Jews stand out. Briefly, these boil down to three: distortion of Catholic/Christian theology, specifically regarding Jews, so that support was implicit in important respects for the racial nationalism ("national revival") and anti-Semitism of the Nazis (Krieg, 2003); concerns for the safety of the Church in Germany and elsewhere in Nazi occupied Europe, which is to say, the Vatican itself (Cornwall; Phayer, 2003); and a greater fear of Communism and the Soviet Union, where Hitler would be seen as either an anti-Bolshevik bulwark or the lesser of two evils (Cornwall; Phayer; Wistrich, 2001).

While Pope John Paul persisted in efforts to secure the canonization of Pius XII, he nevertheless took unprecedented steps to restore (if that's the right word) Catholic-Jewish relations, addressing specifically the silence of the Church as Jews were facing annihilation by the Nazis, as well as the two millennia history of Church wrongs against Jews. Actually as "early" as 1965, flowing from Vatican II, the document Nostra Aetate (In Our Time) was released which finally lifted the charge of decide against the Jewish people (Wistrich). John XXIII was also the first pope in history to ask forgiveness for "the curse which we unjustly laid on the name of the Jews" (Ibid).

But it is with John Paul II that the most sustained, and dramatic, efforts to seek forgiveness on behalf of the Church and reconciliation with Jews occurred. He was the first pope to visit the Jewish Synagogue in Rome; under his direction the Vatican established diplomatic relations with Israel (in 1993); and on the fiftieth anniversary of Israel in 1998 a menorah was lit in its honor in the Vatican. The Vatican also sponsored a concert specifically commemorating the Holocaust (Wistrach). Finally, after a decade of preparation, the Vatican issued (in 1998) We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah, in which the pope hoped would “heal the wounds of past misunderstandings and injustices” and help guarantee that the “unspeakable iniquity” of the Holocaust would never again be possible (Ibid). The pope’s visit to Israel, and moving act of contrition at the Western Wall, added to the image of a deeply apologetic pontiff acting on behalf of the Church he led.

Of course acts of apology are meant to evoke forgiveness and reconciliation. If apologies are hedged with qualifications or weakened by insufficient acknowledgement of guilt, then such forgiveness is less likely to be forthcoming and hopes of genuine reconciliation less likely to be realized. So what responses have the pope’s, and the Church’s, statements of penitence elicited? As Harvard Professor of Jewish Studies Jon Levenson (2001) concedes, this change of attitudes has, “as a political and cultural matter ... been warmly welcomed, if with occasional signs of wariness.” According to Levenson however, a considered historical and theological response is slower in coming. Specifically, should Jews still worry that Christianity is inherently anti-Semitic, or perhaps not see much that unites Christianity and Judaism in the same “spiritual grouping.” In this respect he is particularly critical of the document that emerged from a group of Jewish academics who assembled at the request of the Institute of Christian and Jewish Studies, A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity (DabruEmet, 2000). Indeed Levenson sees in this document “one of the great pitfalls in interfaith dialogue:” namely, a tendency to stress commonalities at the expense of candid recognition of differences. This weakness need not be prohibitive to efforts at interfaith dialogue, though genuine acknowledgement of wrongs – both past and present – is critical to the success of such efforts. Wistrach (Ibid) is Professor of Modern Jewish History at Hebrew University, who likewise sees serious inadequacies, specifically in We Remember and in the overall attitude of the Church in Rome.

While recognizing and welcoming “the general tone... of self-questioning, acknowledgement of the traumas of the past, repentance, and a desire for self-purification,” he describes why so many Jews are still disappointed in the document – particularly as the pope himself had made more forceful statements of apology, as had Bishops Conferences in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Poland, and Hungary. These latter might be seen as more trustworthy and acceptable as they lack prevarication and thus could ultimately lend greater credibility to future efforts at reconciliation.

The German Protestant Church and the Holocaust:

From Luther to Hitler (McGovern, 1941) may seem too extreme and hyperbolic. Nevertheless, German Protestants shared the general Christian attitude towards Jews, characterized at least by theological anti-Semitism even if modern “racial” anti-Semitism does not appear until the 19th century. But the question is: why did the German Protestant Church from 1933-45 remain silent, and in the case of the “German Christian” wing of the church actively or passively collaborate with and seek to accommodate National Socialism? It is true that many “Confessing Church” parishes fought to keep German Christian pastors from their appointments, defending ecclesiastical independence and the integrity of scripture and the Reforming Confessions (Jantzen, 2003). Moreover there were instances of criticism of why this “unrealized potential” for protest was so tragically unrealized (Ibid.). Jantzen and others rightly point to the essentially nationalist and conservative mind set of most Protestant pastors and a long history of deference to political authority. This is as true of Confessing pastors as German Christians; the latter however gained control of many Landeskirchen and sought to integrate Protestant Christianity and National Socialist ideas. What explains the behavior of the Protestant Church in Nazi Germany? Barnett (1998) identifies three factors shaping the behavior of the Christian churches: theological and doctrinal anti-Semitism; advocacy of a “Christian culture” that conforms to a “sacralization” of cultural (racial) identity; and giving priority to institutional/ecclesiastical independence by accommodating the Nazi regime. These factors coincide with those that shaped the Catholic Church’s response, suggesting a clear pattern of behavior.

How has the German Protestant Church responded to its role in the Nazi years, how has it “represented” its past? (Hockenos, 2003) In the years immediately following the war and Germany’s defeat, the conservative majority of the Confessing Church tried to stress their conservative and “churchly” resistance, while reminding the world (and in particular other Protestant churches in England and elsewhere) that they and other Germans also suffered under the Nazis (Ibid.). More liberal church leaders and theologians, such as Barth, Diem, and Niemoller, opposed these efforts and sought instead to force a thorough and honest evaluation of the Church’s willingness to accommodate the Nazis and their German Christian collaborators in order to protect the independence of their regional churches (Ibid.). The Evangelical (Confessing) Church did confess its guilt, in the Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt, this only three months after the war ended, but with the prevarications just described and that Barth found so objectionable. Over the years since the Evangelical Church in Germany has been far more forthright in admitting its share of responsibility for the Holocaust (Stohr, 2003). Martin Stohr, who served as president of the German Coordinating Council of the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation speaks with the full endorsement of the Evangelical Church (Ibid.). Jewish reaction to the Stuttgart Declaration is similar to its reaction to the Catholic Church’s apologies, and follows Barth’s, though more positive to later, more explicit apologies. Discussion seems to shift to German post-war (governmental) acceptance of responsibility, and the controversies surrounding appropriate restitution and memorialization – and relations with Israel.

Southern Baptists

Slavery for over two centuries before 1865, and de jure and de facto segregation in the century after the Civil War, represent the long history of racial injustice in the United States. Our question is what role the churches played in supporting this injustice and whether there have been any apologies for it. I have chosen the Southern Baptists, not because the other denominations escape their share of guilt, but because of the special place Southern Baptists have long held in the culture and traditions of the South. Moreover, compared to the other denominations, Southern Baptists have only recently accepted responsibility for supporting both slavery and segregation and have apologized for it.

Why did Southern Baptists support slavery and segregation? The short answer would be that, like the South African Dutch Reformed Church, the pastors of Southern Baptist congregations identified with their white congregants, sharing their fears and prejudices against a feared and despised black minority.

To be sure, as Stricklin (1999) details in his “genealogy of dissent,” there were more prophetic voices critical of their racist brethren. Nevertheless, the center of gravity of the denomination supported slavery, the Confederacy, and Jim Crow segregation. As with South Africa, the “Southern apartheid” system was defeated by both protest and civil disobedience from within (African Americans and liberal whites) and from without (in this case from the federal government and its courts enforcing new civil rights laws). And as with the Dutch Reformed Church, Southern Baptists had to adjust to new realities as well as their own past complicity.

What adjustments did Southern Baptists, as a denomination, make? The record is a mixed one, combining belated apology with slow progress towards bridging the gap between white Southern Baptists and black Baptists/Methodists. It was not until 1995 that the Southern Baptists formally apologized for their involvement in the “sins” of slavery and segregation, and asked for forgiveness and reconciliation (Emerson and Smith, 2000). Since then numerous “reconciliation conferences” have been held, a movement joined in by white Evangelicals, Pentecostals, and others (Ibid.). Bringing African American ministers into top positions in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has been slow. Indeed one minister has called for the SBC to “call a solemn assembly and repent for passive and intentional acts of racism. However this year (2012) the SBC elected its first African American President and renamed the denomination Great Commission Baptists (Washington Post, 9-11-2012). The name change was to separate the denomination from its pro-slavery roots (Ibid). It is too early to tell how far this goes towards effecting real reconciliation, but it is a move beyond what might have been expected not that long ago. How far remains may be seen in the fact that over 70% of pastors think the name should have remained Southern Baptist and over half have to plans to use the new name (Ibid).

South Africa and Dutch Reformed Church:

While the opposition to apartheid of the South African Anglican Church and the white members of the South African Council of Churches was not always vociferous, it nevertheless was consistent. Years of discussion of whether and how the ministry of reconciliation could be advanced to reduce political violence while contributing to an ending of apartheid, led in 1985 to the Kairos Document which challenged the legitimacy of the apartheid state (Doxtader, 2001).

The South African Council of Churches meanwhile declared that the state was a "tyrannical regime (Ibid). The history of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa is much more problematic, given its strong theological support for apartheid and constituting as it did "the Africaner people (whites) at prayer," for that matter the National Party at prayer. The Church was an integral part of the apartheid system.

What explains the attitudes and behavior of the DRCSA? To put it briefly, a theology that supported separation and the Africaner conquest of the land. As the Church now concedes, its "profound and justifiable identification with the destiny of the people whom it served in the first instance the Africaners that the Dutch Reformed Church often tended to put the interests of its people above those of other people" (Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, Western Cape, 1997). Further the Church concedes that "while, in a sense, the Dutch Reformed Church took the lead in establishing the apartheid concept, it was the National Party that later adopted it as a political policy." This of course smacks of equivocation, and one might find it difficult to separate the equivocation from sincere acceptance of responsibility and apology. In fact the Church acknowledges that people suffered because of the system of apartheid, and "the church sometimes raised its voice in protest and sometimes in compassion, but too often too softly ... for that we apologize." This report - to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission - closes with thanks to God for being able once and for all to "cast off the albatross [apartheid] from around the neck." It should be noted however, that the Church remains largely segregated, despite a formal call for desegregation: the Dutch Reformed Church is largely white, the United Reformed Church is mainly "coloured," and the Reformed Church in Africa largely Indian (Europa Publications, 1997). The door at least is open to future interfaith dialogue, or in this case inter-church dialogue. A first step might be for the Church to accept the Belhar Confession and the unification of the racially separate churches (Nieder-Heitmann, 2003).

Rwanda

Rwanda is the most recent case: in 1994, 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were brutally killed by extremist Hutu bands and even by neighbors exhorted by the state to exterminate Tutsis. At question is the silence or even complicity of the Church, especially the Catholic Church, in the genocide. The Vatican has maintained that any guilt rests at the level of local priests and nuns, who allowed their churches to be used as killing grounds or even encouraged the killing.

Thus for example the archbishop of Kagali was a member of the ruling party's central committee (Longman, 2001). Tutsis could become priests and pastors but the top leadership positions were occupied by Hutus (Ibid). Rwanda's churches sanctioned ethnic discrimination and urged support for the organizers of the genocide, making the mass murders more morally acceptable (Ibid: 176). Bishops and archbishops provided moral and political support to the extremist Hutus government (Longman: 171-172). There were exceptions, where priests and nuns tried to shelter Tutsis, but there were too many specific cases of complicity (Nieuwoudt, 2006).

Another way of viewing the church's complicity in the genocide is its own immersion in the colonially constructed "political imagination" that created and perpetuated a "Hamatic" division of society into two tribes, Tutsis and Hutus (Katongole, 2014). It is difficult to imagine genuine reconciliation in the absence of a sincere and full apology, following the prerequisite acknowledgement of the church's actions on the ground. But an apology by the Church would arguably be a necessary first step. The Church would have to ask for forgiveness and hold the guilty to account (McGreal, 2014). Maintaining that the Church as such is not culpable is unacceptable to survivors of the genocide (Ibid). Even the OAU describes the Church as bearing a heavy responsibility for failing to take a moral stand before and after the killings (Ibid).

Conclusions

"Apologies and forgiveness are important because intractable conflicts generate such deep and searing emotions" (Haus, no date). Instinctively we see apology and forgiveness in individual terms, as individual acts.

However, while individual leaders can perform these acts, they ultimately require that those people and institutions they represent share their sense of remorse and desire for forgiveness and reconciliation (Ibid.). Before there can be genuine reconciliation there must be mutual acknowledgement of wrongs, words and acts of apology for those wrongs, the seeking of forgiveness, and out-reach efforts at healing and reconciliation. In the words of diplomacy and conflict resolution, these acts become "confidence building measures."

If a conflict is to be transformed to provide the bases of peace, then religious actors can engage at three levels: conflict management – advocacy and dialogue (Appleby cites the Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement between Palestinians and Jews); conflict resolution – for example, religious mediation, particularly where appeals to religion have a place (as would be the case in the cases of Catholic-Jewish dialogue, Jewish-Muslim dialogue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as the South African and Southern Baptist cases); and structural reform – particularly important in post-conflict work, where religious actors can build on their reputations for integrity (if established). Religious actors can be high level leaders and representatives, engaged in "inter-religious diplomacy," or transnational religious movements (Appleby cites Moral Rearmament, a Swiss foundation that sponsors conferences and meetings: 225). Gopin too calls for much greater involvement by religious leaders in conflict resolution, pursuing a cultural and religious track to complement the political (2003: 98). All this is applicable to the cases analysed in this article and point to a widening and deepening of analysis – expanding the number of cases and developing further the theoretical bases of the analysis.

As this article lays out, the first step is specifying the "guilty" parties. This of course requires that the guilty acknowledges their guilt, which may be laborious and equivocal at first and take some time. One can observe the need for acknowledgement and apology in each of the cases described: the Catholic Church during the Holocaust and in Rwanda, the German Protestant Church and implicit support for the Nazis on the part of the Christian wing of the church; the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa and complicity in underpinning apartheid; and Southern Baptists. Once acknowledgement is made, acts of apology and repentance and pleas for forgiveness followed. What of the explanations for the wrongs committed, whether of silence or complicity?

There are two ways of apprehending “explanation:” first, as rationalizations that may be indulged in by the guilty; but second, after acknowledgement, they become means to understanding how wrongs were committed, and this knowledge can prevent repetition of past wrongs, even if in different contexts. The last but perhaps most important stage in the apology process, is how apologies are received by the aggrieved party, their reaction to acts of apology and repentance, even offers of restitution, which they may see as incomplete or inadequate. In each of the cases the response of the victims was mixed or ambivalent, in exactly this sense: apologies were seen to a considerable extent as equivocal or simply too late. In the Rwandan case acknowledgement is still not forthcoming.

It is difficult in each case to define who clearly is empowered to grant forgiveness, but until this is granted the apology process is not complete, as in Rwanda and in various degrees the cases analyzed in this paper. These cases are summarized in the following Table:

Case	Sin	Victims	Explanatory Factors	Apologies	Response
Catholic Church	Silence; Complicity	Jews	Theological; Ecclesiastical Protection; Anti-Communism	We Remember; Pope's Acts of Contrition	Ambivalence
Protestant Church in Germany	Silence; Complicity	Jews	Theological; Ecclesiastical Protection; National Renewal; Christian Culture	Stuttgart Declaration	Ambivalence
Dutch Reformed Church	Complicity	Black South Africans	Theological; Sociological - Identification with Afrikaner people	Formal Apology by Church	Mixed
White Southern Baptists	Complicity	African Americans	Theological; Identification with white Congregants; Racist culture	Formal Apology	Ambivalent/ Unconvinced
Catholic Church in Rwanda	Silence; Complicity	Tutsis moderate Hutus	Identification with Hutus	No Apology	Unappeased

In regards to the research questions posed at the beginning of the article clear answers have been provided for the first six: the “sins” were identified, as were the victim, explanations for the commissions or omissions that constituted these grievances, where apologies were proffered, were identified, as were any offers of restitution – though the latter needs further specification.

More problematic is identifying the responses of victims to apologies and offers of reconciliation. Victims groups may be in agreement as to the sufficiency of acknowledgements and apologies, or they may disagree as to their adequacy and over demands for justice over reconciliation. An expanded analysis would elaborate on these disagreements and on the nature of civil reconciliation itself. As stated in the introduction this would not be the focus of the article per se but would be required in a fuller analysis of all issues and ramifications of these issues. Indeed reconciliation is the aspiration of churches making the apologies and extending apologies and of many victim who are also interested in ultimate reconciliation. And as Gopin has described, inter-faith dialogue and reconciliation may be a necessary first step, certainly can contribute towards, a broader civil, even political reconciliation.

Finally, while expanding on the response category and elaboration of civil reconciliation, other cases can be added to further research. For example, the roles of Orthodox and Catholic Churches in the bloodshed accompanying the breakup of the former Yugoslavia; or the role, if any, in the violence leading to the Russian annexation of Crimea and further violence in eastern Ukraine. Non-Christian cases may also be conceived, such as the role of the Buddhist sangha in the Sri Lankan civil war; or the possibilities of inter-faith dialogue in the Hindu-Muslim tensions in India. Certainly as Gopin and others have discussed in detail the potential contributions of inter-faith dialogue in the in the stalled peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is worth examining. Of course to expand the research and analysis to such a broad encompassing of cases would necessitate a much longer work.

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