



Divinity Faculty, Fürstengraben 6; D- 07743 Jena  
Director: Martin Leiner / [Martin.Leiner@uni-jena.de](mailto:Martin.Leiner@uni-jena.de)  
Project Coordinator: Dr. Francesco Ferrari  
Phone: +49-(0) 3641-9 41145



# Reconciliation

- 1. Introduction: Why reconciliation studies?
- 2. The Christian Background: 2 Cor 5, 19 and the South African experience
- 3. Reconciliation practices, dimensions, phases, and scripts
- 4. Conclusion: Where we are standing today?

# 1. Introduction: Why reconciliation studies?

- Crisis of peace – crisis of War –
- **Crisis of studies on peace and war:**
  - - Poor description of wars. Who elaborates on the simple truth that there is almost no difference between modern warfare and genocide? Not clear to everybody that wars are rarely achieve their goals.
  - Weak prediction: Ukraine, 7.10.2023, Sudan.
  - Virtually no systematic prevention of wars.
  - Nobody who shows a way from today to peace.

## Five ways to create peace and security

- 1. Elimination of the ennemy
  - 2. Deterrence
  - 3. Control
  - 4. Contracts (cf. Kant)
  - 5. Reconciliation
- „Intractable conflicts“ require to adress the socio-emotional infrastructure, = reconciliation as a longterm project over several generations.





## 2. The Christian Background: a word with potential

- 2Cor 5:19 ὡς ὅτι θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ, μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν, καὶ θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς.

19 that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting/committing to us (Luther: “aufrichten” erecting/raising/straightening up ... between us) the word of reconciliation.

**Power of a word.** Applied in Eph: Jewish and pagan, Kol 1 Kosmos

## 2. „Reconciliation“ as political term in South Africa

- 1899: anti-2nd boer War activism:

South Africa conciliation committee.

After the Boer Wars: British and Boer: Reconciliation (2 capitals)

1913 Emily Hobhouse speech at Bloemfontein National Women's

Monument: reconciliation

Creation of Bantustans under apartheid sometimes was as well

framed as reconciliation

System change towards democracy, and the Truth and

reconciliation commission (1995-2002)

## Tutu and Mandela

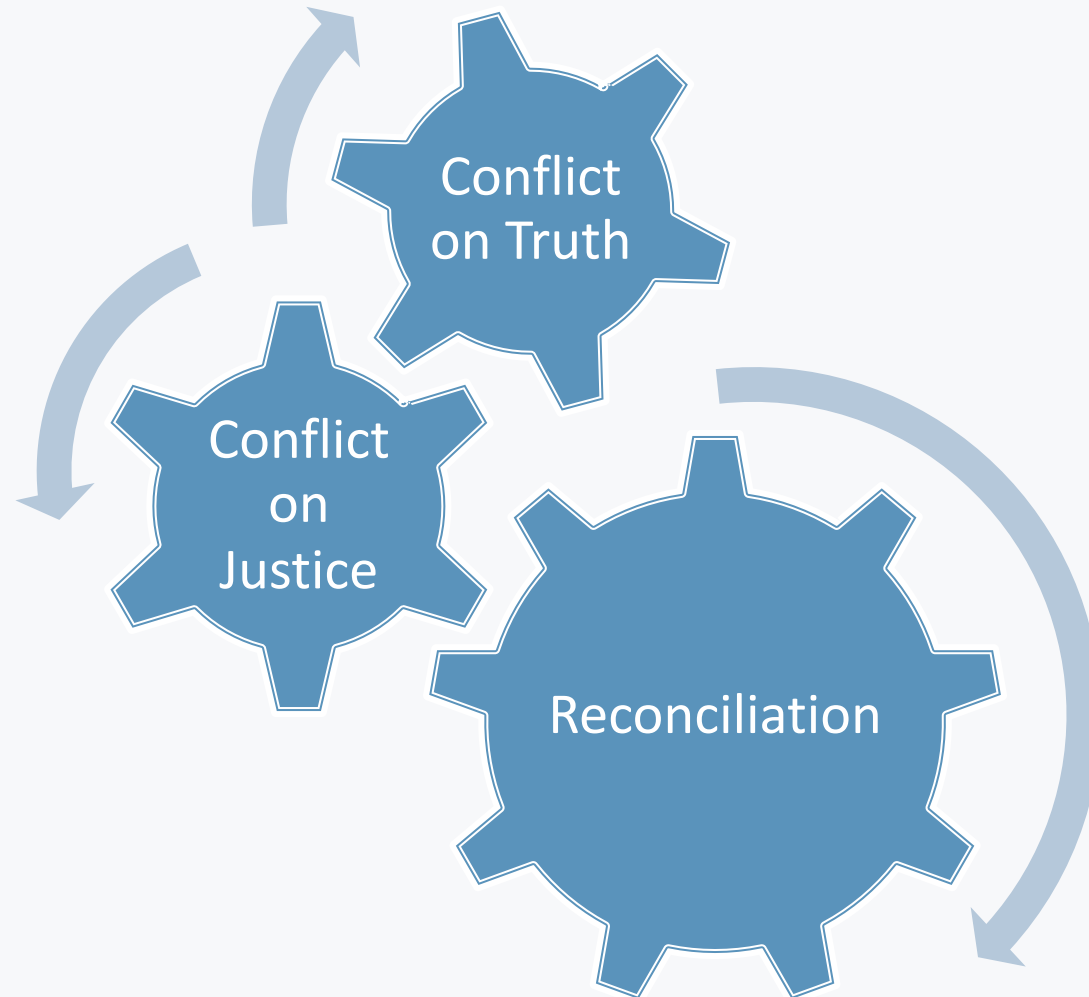




## 2. There are countries where the word of reconciliation is

- South Africa, Ireland, UK, Germany, Rwanda, Canada, ...
- Places in the world where the word is absent, difficult to translate:
  - Middle East: both Israel and Arab countries.
  - East Asia.
  - USA mixed.

- **Reconciliation Studies (proposition of a definition):**
- „Scholarly description, interpretation and evaluation of processes of creating „normal“ and if possible „good relationships“ (or just: „better relationships“) between states, groups, organizations, and individuals reacting against past, present or preventing future grave incidents such as Wars, Civil Wars, Genocides, Atrocities, Forced Displacement, Enslavement, Dictatorship, Oppression, Colonialism, Apartheid, and other Human Rights Violations and injustices.“
- Reconciliation is about truth, justice, love and trust.



## Effects of Reconciliation in Time

- Reconciliation is also about changing structural violence such as poverty and exclusion. And it is about creating a culture free from hatred, negative stereotypes about the other group and about mutual and sustained respect.

That process includes the establishment of mutual trust and cooperation and goes deeper into a confrontation with the violence and injustices inflicted by one group to another *in the past* by emotional repair of trauma and by organising situations of personal encounters between victims and perpetrators (as well as through apologies, forgiveness and reparations) *in the present* it should lead to an orientation towards a common future.

- 3. Reconciliation as an overarching concept for a process
- The word for the outcome is peace.
- Reconciliation practices
- Dimensions
- Phases
- And scripts



## Short list of 11 Practices of Reconciliation

- 1. Political and legal provisions
- 2. Creation of a common security architecture
- 3. Individual medical, psychological and social help, including trauma therapies
- 4. Cooperation regarding economic, legal, ecological and international issues, meeting the other, encounters
- 5. Cooperation in civil society, encounters on all levels
- 6. Confrontation with history
- 7. Sharing narratives and overcoming narrative divides

- 8. Humanize the image of the other in Media and public discourse
- 9. Modifying discourse of leaders, media, school books pro peace
- 10. Apologies and reparations
- 11. Elements of transitional justice such as trials against perpetrators, TRCs, restorative justice, ...

## Dimensions of reconciliation

- With oneself
- With others
- With own group
- With human environment
- With natural environment
- With transcendence/God/ ...

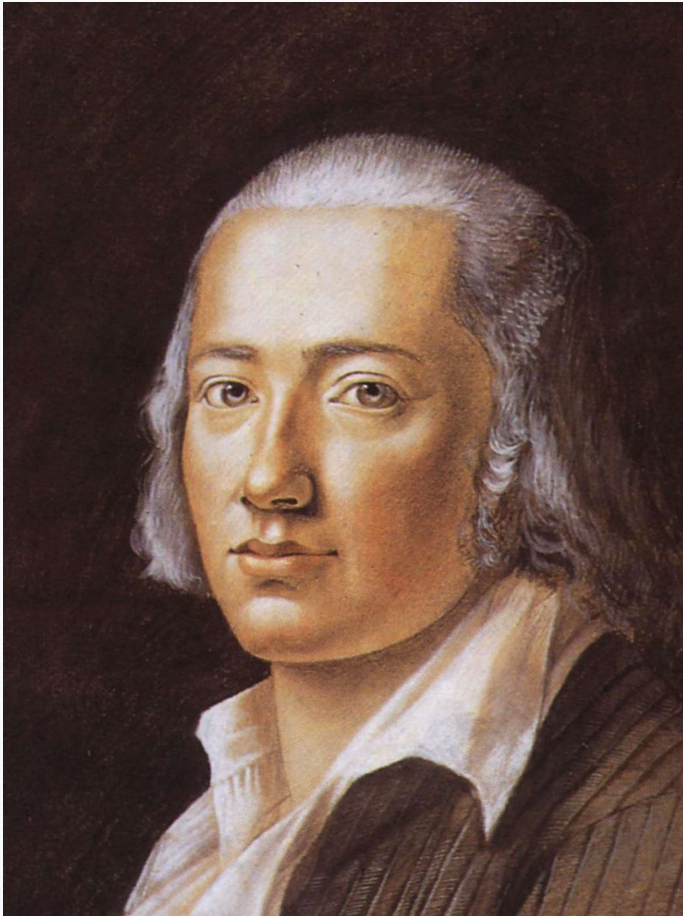
- Reconciliation is a overarching and a long-term project.
- Overarching: **Ask how you can bring reconciliation in everything**
- Long-term: needs generations
- Reconciliation as a life-style
- Reconciliation as a culture
-

## Phases of Reconciliation

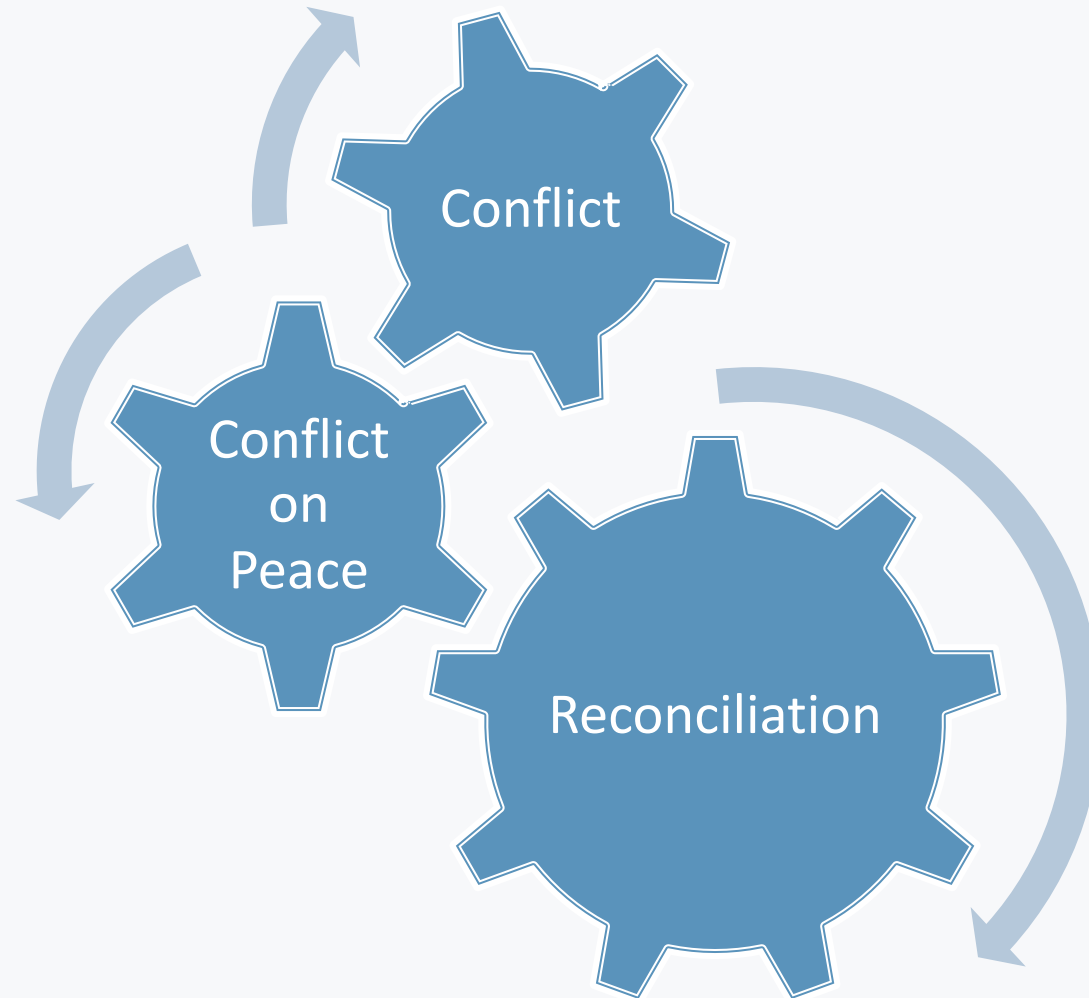
- 1. Catch the momentum for reconciliation, maybe the Patmos-moment (in danger what rescues us is growing as well, Hölderlin said in his poem Patmos). Simone Weil: Gravity and grace.
- 2. Times of defending reconciliation against attacks and spoilers
- **3. Times of building eco-systems.**
- Always not:
  - First violent conflict the peace and then reconciliation
  - But: Reconciliation in the middle of conflict transforming it from first violent phase to non-violent



## The Hölderlin-perspective



- Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1834):
- „Reconciliation is in the middle of strife and all things divided find each other again“.  
(Hyperion)



## Scripts for reconciliation

- There are scripts in the heads of the actors how in in which sequence reconciliation should happen. We have to find out about those scripts:
- Examples for such scripts:
- Also in private life.
- Christian script (mainly Catholic) like the sacrament of penance (called sacrament of reconciliation as well):
- 1. Repentance, 2. Confession of guilt, 3. Forgiveness, 4. Reparation by reconciling works.

# Georgetown University in Washington DC



## Scripts of reconciliation

- More free church (Mennonites, Methodists) script:
  - 1. (Absolute) forgiveness
  - 2. Then expectation of the perpetrator to confess,
  - 3. to assume punishment/take part in restorative justice and
  - 4. reparations



## Emmanuel's Church in Charleston (2015)



## Other Scripts of reconciliation

- Japan – Korea:
  - 1. Governmental reconciliation
  - 2. Reparations
  - 3. People's reconciliation
- Native populations:
  - Rituals very important !
- In books like Mervyn Love on Northern Ireland:
  - Protestants: peace and security first then justice
  - Catholics: first justice then reconciliation and peace

- 4. Where we are standing today:
- Many fracturing dynamics.
- Reconciliation must be applied on new topics such as migration-issues,
- heritage conflicts and decolonial thought
- international solidarity
- Pandemia
- Populism

## Tendencies to weaken reconciliation

- Not many memories on reconciliation
- Example Leipzig: a city refuses a monument for the nonviolent revolution.
- Weakening of Christian Churches who were often key actors for reconciliation
- Quite unreflected academic criticisms: no reconciliation but rapprochement or reconciliation-kitsch, reconciliation is always against somebody, Transitional justice against reconciliation.

- Conflict: is not negative, but expresses different interests and needs and thus often includes potential for social development.
- Conflicts can be in their violent or in their non-violent phase.
- Violent and hurtful Conflicts often have a starting moment, a basic transgression or trauma. This starting moment is leading to a **narrative divide**.



## Amsterdam riots Israeli version

- Pogroms against peaceful football fans
- Inacceptable antisemitic attack

## Amsterdam riots other version

- Football fans from Maccabi Tel Aviv were hooligans who celebrated the genocide in Gaza and intimidated Arab and pro-palestinian locals.
- It is unacceptable that the fans were allowed to come to Amsterdam and that the police did not stop them.

## For reconciliation

- Special attention to narrative divides.
- A consensus on narratives is helpful.
- No radically different parallel histories.
- Difficult in times of fake documents.
- Need a new willingness to live together, to have genuine interest in the other. Desire to know real people.
- But also: The present and the future are more important.
- Question: What vision of a common future will emerge?

## How to deal with extremists?

- Vaclav Havel: Extremists have seen or felt something important. They are also caring for the society and willing to give a lot.
- Extremists are often so violent because they feel not heard.
- Havel: What they have seen right should be elaborated and acknowledged, but taken back to the middle level.
- Our societies are too fast in excluding extremists or even calling people „terrorists“.

## Relationship are more stable than persons

- Transfer of hatred f.ex. to Muslims today. Belfast August 2024



## Dublin November 2023



## Wake up!

- The situation is much more dangerous than most people think.
- In Germany far right party and disappeared weapons, fighters in the underground or now as volunteers in Ukraine or Russia.
- A fragmented society can bring anti-human rights parties in power.

## But Jürgen Moltmann

- „Who has hope can act“ (quote of the wife of Johannes Rau)
- Desmond Tutu: I am a prisoner of hope.

## Are humans good?

- Are there good and bad people?
- Desmond Tutu: All are made for goodness. This way we should treat them. Of course not naive and without protecting us, but there are also big mistakes made through too much mistrust.



## Actual tasks in many places

Satoyama for Peace: Ecosystems for Peace and Reconciliation (S4P:EPR) in Jena.

- Building eco-systems for reconciliation.
- Building in Colombia in two phases:
  - - Diploma for religious leaders (9 months), asked for by the government of the province Antioquia. 200 candidates, 156 received the diploma. Creating a WhatsApp group: very active.
  - - Meetings in person and working on the actual topics brought up in the group.

## Ecosystems in many places now

- Poland: on memory and reconciliation.
- Colombia II municipal in Caicedo
- Colombia III academic & government
- Syria: digital
- Nepal: on restorative justice
- Rwanda: education
- Japan: Satoyama
- Bethlehem: educational. Diploma phase.

## Why ecosystems ?

- Think of a specific forest.
- „Ecosystems“ stay for generations.
- They have something natural, organic.
- They have an internal diversity, where big and small actors can be key actors.
- There is more openness to bring reconciliation with nature in.

**Invitation: Satoyama for Peace: Ecosystems for Peace and Reconciliation (S4P:EPR) housed in Jena with Laura Villanueva (17 years of quiet work)**



- Thank you very much for being with you!
- Happy to hear from you. My contact data are:
- E-Mail: [martin.leiner@uni-jena.de](mailto:martin.leiner@uni-jena.de)
- Address: Prof. Dr. Martin Leiner, Theologische Fakultät  
der Friedrich-Schiller Universität,
- Fürstengraben 6,
- 07743 Jena, Germany.