The Influence of Forgiveness on Radicalization into Violent Extremism among the Youth in Eastleigh Area, Nairobi County, Kenya

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Abstract

Radicalization continues to pose a serious threat to security in the contemporary world. Youth are at risk of radicalization and recruitment to militant groupings. Therefore, this study was carried out to investigate whether forgiveness can be used as an intervention to curb radicalization of youth into violent extremism. The study was guided by two theories: Relative Deprivation and Rational Choice Theories. Mixed method sequential explanatory design was adopted in the study. The target population was 460 people, aged 19–35 years, and 10 key informants. Purposive sampling was used to select St. Theresa's Catholic Church and Riyadha Mosque. Census sampling was used to select 10 key informants. A sample size of 212 participants was used. Data was collected using Heartland Forgiveness and Extremism Scales. Data was analyzed using correlation analysis. The study found a weak, negative, and insignificant correlation. The study recommended close evaluation and monitoring of the teachings of certain institutions.

1. Introduction

An inspiring area of research that made an appearance in the 1990s is the empirical investigation of forgiveness as an intervention in a variety of circumstances. Although the concept of forgiving is prehistoric, it has not been consistently investigated until relatively recently. It is important to radicalization and violence because of its personal and interpersonal nature. Forgiveness issues are relevant to the contexts of interpersonal relationships and are essential to such constructs as anger, resentment, and hostility which are likely to lead to violence.

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Conspectus

Bible-based. Christ-centred. Spirit-led.

Koehler (2019, 23–27) defines radicalization as an inactivated hostility and violent extremism as a manifestation of resentment and violence. This implies that one cannot readily see radicalization except through the likelihood of violence that may erupt as a result; violent extremism becomes its manifestation.

Radicalization is in this way taken to be violence which is present; this could easily manifest as extremism and terrorism. This may be the case with young people when exposed to overt information from social or mainstream media that could easily confuse them, even into radicalization to violence. Additionally, Devine (2016, 612) defined radicalization as a procedure through which a person or group of persons get to gradually embrace extreme governmental, social, or belief ideals and urges that weaken or sabotage current ideas and declarations of freedom to choose. Radical behavior in itself is not necessarily a bad thing. Non-violent radical behavior, particularly if undertaken solely in the political, economic, cultural, or even spiritual aspect, can help to promote constructive change. Violent extremism comes into play when radical behavior starts making use of non-selective violence as the means of expression.

Radicalization has been found to be common among the youth (International Institute for Strategic Studies 2015, 3–7). Studies show that youths are getting radicalized because the majority of them are jobless, resentful, idle, and they become potentially vulnerable when faced with a variety of social problems (Friberg and Martinsson 2017, 83–90). Similarly, Moghaddam (2005, 4–17) links youth with radicalization due to the perception of unfairness and injustice. Moghaddam further reported that when persons feel that their group does not have the same advantage as others, they build resentment which could easily translate to radicalization and violent extremism. Krueger and Malečková. (2003, 1–8) observe that absolutistic demands of fairness and the rigid "us" versus "them" leads to displaced aggression. This is supported by the Integrated Theory (see Stephan and Stephan 2000). This theory postulates that members who share interests and identity expect that those who do not belong to this group will behave in ways that are harmful to them. This implies that a group of radicalized members expects their perceived opponents to undergo an extremely harsh treatment in order to bring out a strong element of sadism in them. Ellis (2003, 4–10) reports that radicalization makes perpetrators feel worthless and powerless. This makes them punish others who are perceived as powerful, in order for them to gain a sense of justice and an increased self-esteem. It is, therefore, evident that radicalization is perpetuated by unresolved resentment and feelings of isolation and stigmatization.

Radicalization activities and violent extremism have been linked to terrorist attacks. As reported by the National Congress for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START 2017, 3–5), statistics show that in 2017, 10 900 terrorist attacks globally killed 26 400 people, if not more. Specifically, after the September 11th attack in 2001, there has been an escalation of similar attacks from 33 in 2002 to 65 in 2017 (START 2018, 3–6). It is noticeable that the number and lethality are escalating at a disturbing rate both in the United States and elsewhere.

2. The Local Situation

In Eastern Africa, just like the rest of the world, both radicalization and violent extremism have been witnessed. For instance, Botha (2014) found that 57% of the youth of Somali origin in Eastleigh, Nairobi joined the al-Shabaab warring group. Similarly, a study by Muhsin (2012) found that five of the fifteen youths interviewed admitted that they had joined al-Shaabab. This shows youths continue to be radicalized to join extremist groups. In Eastern Africa, it is apparent that this can be concluded from diverse examples extending from attacks on the Tanzanian US Embassy

and Kenyan businesses run in Uganda, the attack on Nairobi's Westgate Mall, the murders of students at Garissa University in Kenya, and most markedly, in the ongoing obvious antagonism in Somalia.

Kenya is no exception, and is similar to the rest of the world, as the nation continues to experience rising levels of radicalization and violence. Radicalization has manifested in Kenya in the recent past in terms of the emergence of separatist groups demanding the secession of some of the regions in Kenya, showing xenophobic tendencies, religious and political intolerance, and violent extremism, among others. According to Aronson (2012), radicalization of youths in Kenya can be attributed to persecution of minority groups, seen in extrajudicial killings by the state and military campaigns in suppressing dissent among affected people. Secondly, as reported by the Kenya media, there are several instances of young men embracing warring groups. The young men are enticed by the warring group purely by wealth, promises of food, shelter, and women to marry if they follow through in fighting for them (Mukinda 2016, 1–5). The newly recruited may not exactly agree with the claims of these warring groups, but the promises made are sufficient to persuade them that being on the warring side offers more opportunities than remaining in deprivation and accepting their current status. In addition, Kenya, being home to a large number of international organizations associated with Western countries, has been targeted by militant groups like Al-Shabaab which are targeting youths to join them and help in accomplishing their missions.

3. Efforts Put in Place

Due to this problem of radicalization of the youth into violent extremism, different global organizations such as the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism recognize the significance of averting violence and radicalization at the origin, and have persuaded various sectors of society to be part of this process (European Parliament COM 2013). Further, the European parliament declared that EU national policies tend to prevent radicalization and build *trust within and among the communities, advancing more understanding of each other's awareness and challenges*, involving all levels of society.

Secondly, while trying to address the problem of radicalization in Kenya, perceived reactions by security forces have been seen, especially following a terrorist attack. These responses have at times ended in tribal and racial reporting or particular categorizing of Somali young people. For example, at the time of the "Operation Usalama (peace) Watch" in April 2014, 4 005 Somali-resembling persons were apprehended in a move of mass actions whose intention was to remove al-Shabaab at the source. As reported by Chitembwe (2014), a total of 3 010 of them were freed after establishing they were Kenyan citizens without criminal information while the ones believed to be in the country illegally were deported. Such actions seem to be highly unproductive. They result in embarrassment, elicit anger and mistrust of the administration, and reinforce feelings of rejection, leaving the youth exposed to being hired as they search for an exit from their desperation and a sense of attachment to wherever else. Equalizing rights and justice therefore remains a major challenge, especially when common expectations of security personnel become intensified.

Despite all the efforts to counter radicalization among the youths, more are still being radicalized as predicted by the current study. Some studies have revealed that among the reasons why radicalization has continued to thrive among the youth is that radicalization has a lot to do with perpetrators' bottled-up emotions such as anger, resentment, and failure to forgive themselves and others.

4. The Role of Forgiveness

The current study examined alternative ways of addressing the rising tide of radicalization of the youth in Kenya. One of the ways examined was how forgiveness could be used as an intrinsic approach to dissuade the youth from being radicalized. Studies have indicated that forgiveness could be used to alleviate many psychological and emotional problems that face humanity. Forgiveness as we know it today first began as a religious ritual that people embraced when in need of forgiveness from their creator. In actual fact, it was not until the 1930s that some minor interest was shown in forgiveness as a construct in psychology. The construct of forgiveness was accorded serious and sustained recognition in empirical research in the 1980s (McCullough 2000).

Research has demonstrated that forgiveness has positive outcomes on measures of well-being. Accordingly, experiencing gratitude has been associated with extraordinary levels of mental contentment amongst young people (Wood, Froh, and Geraghty 2010, 50). A recent systematic assessment, conducted in the US, reports that forgiveness predicts the presence of future subjective well-being; it similarly activates mental health (Dickens 2017, 75). A study done in Brazil by Cunha (2019, 1–8), advances that forgiveness has the ability to enhance positive feelings and emotions, an individual's mental and emotional evaluation of self, and a favorable attitude towards life, hence lessening negativity and depressive indications. Therefore, it is against this background that this study was carried out to investigate whether forgiveness can be used as an intervention to curb the radicalization of youth into violent extremism in Kenya.

5. Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design. Correlation is the ability to sort out unrelated variables and form a link with regards to a particular subject, in this case, forgiveness and radicalization. The human mind, a gift to humanity from God, is an invaluable tool that allows one to relate forgiveness and radicalization. This ability is the one that comes into play when we discuss correlational research. The aim of correlational research is to pick out variables that have some sort of association to the extent that a change in one creates some change in the other one. The correlational approach utilized in this study measured the relationship of forgiveness with radicalization and drew conclusions, depending on results.

The study was carried out in three phases. Phase one involved interaction with the selected sample of young men and women, aged between 19 and 35 years. This elicited incidental information that could not be captured by the research instruments. This progressed to collecting quantitative data by administering the forgiveness and radicalization scales to the selected sample (referred to as the initial group) as a pretest. The pretest was the baseline measure for a treatment to be administered later to the experimental group; the difference between baseline and post-test phases was the effect of the treatment. The data was then analyzed.

In phase two, the group was divided into experimental and control groups, where the participants were assigned randomly. The experimental group was psycho-educated on forgiveness as a treatment for a period of two months once every week for a period of two hours. The individual members in the experimental group were encouraged to interact for one month based on the forgiveness awareness. They were encouraged to learn how to forgive themselves, others, and situations that hurt them and were out of their control. This was the treatment that distinguished the experimental from the control group. The control group was released and was called again after two months.

In phase three, after the two groups were reassembled, both experimental and control groups were given the forgiveness and

radicalization scales to fill in. Thereafter, correlation analysis was run on the two groups, and the initial group, in order to find out whether the forgiveness taught had had any effect on radicalization. The initial group referred to here is the group before splitting it into the experimental and control group. Similarly, the two (experimental and control) groups were put into four focus-group discussions where open-ended questions were provided in an effort to collect qualitative data. In addition, the experimental group was subjected to extremism scale screening to identify and capture radicalization to violence. By extreme case sampling the participants with high scores in radicalization were selected for further interviews and focus group discussions which provided qualitative data. This ended the steps of the research method in the field.

6. The Locale of the Study

This investigation was executed in Eastleigh area of Nairobi County, Kamukunji sub-county. This location has a large Somali Muslim population, bringing in an aspect of potential radicalization. The well-known history of terrorist attacks in Kenya by a variety of militant groups created a seedbed of fear and suspicion of Muslims as people and Islam as a religion. It was a given that most terrorists arrested were of Islamic origin. It is, however, untenable to argue that all Muslims are terrorists, hence the need to include Muslims in this study to debunk this myth.

The presence of a large number of radicalized youths who have previously attracted confrontation with government agencies in the area over time makes Eastleigh a suitable location for this study as well. Eastleigh is nicknamed "Little Mogadishu," after the unruly capital of Somalia from where many Somalis had fled to settle in Kenya for a peaceful business life. However, many attacks taken to be the responsibility of Islamic militants had invited the wrath of the Kenyan police, leading to crackdowns to flush out hard-core agitators from the area (Momanyi 2015, 25).

This study targeted 450 young adults (19–35 years) in one mosque and one Catholic Church found in Eastleigh area of Kamukunji sub-county, and 10 key informants. Preference was given to this mosque since the mosque was once raided by Kenyan government forces in the process of searching for violent extremists in 2015. Similarly, the church was chosen because a grenade had exploded outside of the building and it was thus considered a target for terror attacks.

Yamane's (1967) sampling formula was used to determine the sample size for the youth as shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{(1+Ne2)}$$

Where: n = minimum sample size

N = population

E = precision set at 95% (5% = 0.05)

Hence, n = 450/ 1+ (450 x 0.0025)

n = 211.7

Therefore, the sample size for the study was 212 respondents

7. Data Collection Research Instruments

One of the instruments used in collecting data was the Heartland Forgiveness Scale. This is an 18-item, standardized questionnaire advanced by Thompson et al. (2005, 150). Every item was measured on a seven-point scale that extends from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Respondents were requested to indicate the option which fitted appropriately for them.

During scoring, "Forgiveness" was classified in three subscales: forgiveness of self, of others, and of situations. The scores were summarized

with the lowest possible score being 18 and the highest possible score being 126. The findings were interpreted to mean that higher scores implied a higher-level tendency for forgiveness.

The scores for each subscale were summarized and the average computed. The least possible mean was 10 while the highest possible mean was 42. The results were interpreted that, if a respondent scored a mean of above 20, it meant that their level of forgiveness was above average. On the other hand, if a respondent scored a mean of below 20, it would be interpreted to mean that their level of forgiveness was below average.

The second part of the instrument used was the Extremism Scale. This is a 21-item, standardized questionnaire developed by Ozer and Preben (2018, 14). Every item was measured on a 7-point Likert Scale, starting from "strongly disagree" which was coded 1 to "strongly agree" which was coded 7. The respondents were requested take a position on declarations of the statements given concerning existence, community, and the individual's different perspectives to them, varying from 1 to 7. Scoring was done by obtaining the sum of all the items, with possible total scores varying from 21 to 147. The findings were interpreted to indicate that higher scores suggested higher degrees of radicalization.

To measure the different levels of radicalization to extremism, the total scores (0–147) on the extremism scale were transformed into four categories and analyzed. Those who scored 0–35 were classified as normal levels of extremism, 36–70 were classified as mild extremism, 71–106 were classified as moderate extremism, and those who scored 107–147 were classified as being severe extremists. Youth men and women participants and the key informants were put into four focus group discussions. This is a qualitative approach and a data collecting technique, using interview guides which helped gain an in-depth understanding of forgiveness and radicalization.

8. Results

8.1 Correlation between Forgiveness on Radicalization of the Youth into Violent Extremism (Experimental Group)

The study was seeking to establish the Influence of Forgiveness on Radicalization of the Youth into Violent Extremism among respondents trained on forgiveness. Pearson correlation analysis was used to establish this relationship and findings presented in Table 1.

8.1.1 Table 1: Influence of Forgiveness on Radicalization of the Youth into Violent Extremism (Experimental Group).

		Extremism	Self-Forgiveness	Forgiveness of Others	Forgiveness of Situations
Extremism	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	25			
Self-Forgiveness	Pearson Correlation	-.163	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.437			
	N	25	26		

		Extremism	Self-Forgiveness	Forgiveness of Others	Forgiveness of Situations
Forgiveness of Others	Pearson Correlation	-.141	.597**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.500	.001		
	N	25	26	26	
Forgiveness of Situations	Pearson Correlation	-.411*	.636**	.498**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.041	.000	.010	
	N	26	26	26	26

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The study findings in Table 1 indicate that there was weak, negative, and insignificant correlation between self-forgiveness and extremism (r= -.163; p>0.05). This was similar in the correlation between forgiveness of others and extremism (r=-.141; p>.500). However, the study found that the correlation between forgiveness of situations and extremism was found to be weak, negative, and significant (r=-.411; p<.005). This implies that the issues that push people into extremism would be mostly extrinsic, and that when individuals develop strong forgiveness towards these situations then low extremism would be realized. On the other hand, if situations are not processed they could become sources of historical injustices which in return would fuel extremism.

8.2 Correlation between Forgiveness and Radicalization of the Youth into Violent Extremism (Control Group)

The study sought to establish the Influence of Forgiveness on Radicalization of the Youth into Violent Extremism among respondents not trained on forgiveness (control group). Pearson correlation analysis was used to establish this relationship and findings presented in Table 2.

8.2.1 Table 2: Influence of Forgiveness on Radicalization of the Youth into Violent Extremism (Control Group).

		Extremism	Self-Forgiveness	Forgiveness of Others	Forgiveness of Situations
Extremism	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	10			
Self-Forgiveness	Pearson Correlation	.058	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.874			
	N	10	10		
Forgiveness of Others	Pearson Correlation	.405	.321	1	

		Extremism	Self-Forgiveness	Forgiveness of Others	Forgiveness of Situations
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.246	.366		
	N	10	10	10	
Forgiveness of Situations	Pearson Correlation	-.490*	.083	.269	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.151	.819	.452	
	N	10	10	10	10

The study findings in Table 2 indicate that there was weak, positive, and significant correlation between self-forgiveness and extremism (r=.058; p>0.05). This was similar in the correlation between forgiveness of others and extremism (r=.405; p>.500). However, the study found that the correlation between forgiveness of situations and extremism was found to be weak, negative, and significant (r=-.490.411; p>.005). This would imply that the issues that push people into extremism would be mostly extraneous, and that when people develop well-built forgiveness tendencies towards these situations, then low extremism will be experienced. On the other hand, if situations are left unaddressed, they could become origins of a lasting impact of abuse which in return would become "push factors" to extremism.

9. Theological Reflection

The theological reflection of this reality leads the author to a transformed understanding of embracing dispositional forgiveness to deter radicalization of youth to progression to violence. As it should, the process begins at the stage of an experience of the reality. This is not just any experience, but one that touches this author deeply as a human being: young people being recruited, radicalized, and exploited to execute violence on innocent citizens of the world, created in the image and likeness of the Creator (Gen 1:26). This is a phenomenon that could not be ignored.

The above stage lays the foundation for the next, that is, one of exploration which shows that Kenya, just like the rest of the world, continues to experience rising levels of radicalization and violent extremism. This is because Kenya generally, and in particular its capital city Nairobi, is a main hub for diplomatic actions, tourism, and other dealings. In addition, Kenya is home to quite a number of international organizations associated with Western countries. The aim of Al-Shabaab, a militant group, is to target interests associated with these Western countries.

This implies that unless and until Al-Shabaab is completely eradicated, attacks on Kenyan soil will continue. This is the reality on the ground. Theological reflection encourages the use of soft power such as a religious persuasive approach in churches and mosques to fight extremism at the roots to deter the youth from joining terror groups, as opposed to mastering the tactics of the war.

10. Discussion

As empirical studies were being undertaken, many tools to measure were developed to gauge forgiveness. Many of these tools gauge non-dispositional, or episodic forgiveness, meaning forgiveness of specific offences, persons, or circumstances. The current study gauged dispositional forgiveness, meaning the inclination/tendency to forgive anytime, and over various types of social and other occurrences, a more enduring type of forgiveness. The scores of dispositional forgiveness are powerful because they tend to relate to people's mental health (McCullough and Witvliet 2002, 13). Therefore,

results of dispositional forgiveness are for the most part significant for understanding mental links to forgiveness.

Forgiveness is the procedure of dealing with nursed resentment toward a wrongdoer with better, pro-social affect such as understanding (Worthington and Wade 1999, 385). It is not merely the reduction of resentment or removing the desire to take revenge, though that is part of the process. Escalated resentment and bitterness have been associated with considerable violence. For instance, over a number of inquiries, males who recorded more resentment and bitterness were more probable to be initiators of partner violence (Norlander and Eckhardt 2005, 9).

Pillay (2017, 6) examined the influence of faith in modifying, enlarging, and altering society, establishing that the modifying nature and the attributes of the present Church are not about what she believes but what she does. Accordingly, group modification is essential in the contemporary society. The proposed study holds that churches and mosques in Kenya can be instrumental in curbing misbehavior, instilling forgiveness, hence transforming the community.

Goldman and Wade (2012, 40) did a study to compare forgiveness and anger-reduction group treatments. A total of a hundred and thirteen (113) leaners from a vast Midwestern university were part of the study. They were randomly assigned to one of two treatments, one aimed at advancing forgiveness and the other at minimizing anger for previous hurts, or to a queuing list—a waitlist used as a control in this study. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups: an intervention designed to help manage and reduce anger (anger reduction), an established intervention designed to promote interpersonal forgiveness, and a waitlist (queuing) control condition

Treatment consisted of six one and half hour sessions conducted in small groups led by one (1) facilitator for 3 weeks. Results of three-level (time within participants within groups) in a hierarchy linear modelling indicated that the forgiveness treatment (n=41) resulted in higher cutbacks in hostility and mental symptoms and more understanding for the wrongdoer than the alternative treatment (n=39) and the waitlist (queuing) (n=32). Participants in both treatment conditions reported more cutbacks in inclinations for revenge than those in the waitlist (queuing) condition. All participants reported significant cutbacks in contemplation about the wrong done.

11. Forgiving Differently

In the current investigation, the concept of forgiveness considered a radical forgiveness influencing the fundamental nature of transformational and long-lasting change in people's behaviors and their lives. Forgiveness, which is a focal concept in this study, can be defined as construction of a viewed offence in such a manner that a person's response to the offender, offence, and weight of the offence are all transformed from pessimism to being harmless or even being beneficial. The origin of an offence, and thus where forgiveness is directed, could be the self, another individual, or a situation that one perceives to be out of one's control (McCullough 2009, 185). What this implies is that forgiveness transforms the way an individual reacts to the offender, to the offence itself, and to the destructive results or outcome of the offence.

Reactions of the individual, for example the offended, are his or her offence- and offender-linked thinking, feelings, and actions. These reactions have two facets to them. One is that they can range from being gloomy or defeatist, they can be unbiased or impartial, and they can also be optimistic and hopeful. The other facet is that these reactions can be intense depending on an individual's understanding of the potential injury as a result of the offence. A person who has a tendency to forgive or forgives is likely to

transform his or her gloomy or defeatist reactions to either unbiased or impartial to something better such as optimistic or hopeful reactions, or changing the intensity of the reactions (McCullough 2009, 188).

It goes without saying that forgiveness is important in social interactions, yet this concept seems to have been mostly obscure. However, in the last decade, forgiveness has received definite scientific observation/ investigations from multidisciplinary perspectives. A number of studies and researchers show that social scientists are progressively becoming fascinated by the possible applicability of forgiveness for holistic health (McCullough 2009, 125). Nevertheless, a lot of work is yet to be done on this captivating and significant construct.

Forgiveness advocates positive progression or perpetuity of interpersonal relationships by addressing the unavoidable bruises and wounding that naturally occurs in any social situation as human beings interact. This is very much like the upward thrust and positive values of social change which are associated with social transformation. It is an altruistic/prosocial change in the inspiration to steer clear of retaliation on an offender, thereby promoting the enhancement of quality of life leading to social transformation. My choice of this variable/concept is based on two philosophical assumptions.

One is that forgiveness is inspirational/motivational. Offended parties neither seek revenge nor do they want to see destruction come to the offender. Human beings experience social constructive transformations when forgiveness is an option and an intervention. The inspirational perception of forgiveness is simple but immensely powerful. It has a set of inspirational changes that lead to personal transformation.

The second is that forgiveness is intended to promote social acceptance (Prosocial). This means that forgiveness will impede or restrain destructive/ unproductive responses and promote constructive/practical responses in difficult social situations. Revolutionizing change at every level in society amounts to social transformation, beginning with the personal, to social, to community, and upward. Here the author begins with social acceptance of large-scale structural change; when this change reaches all or most parts of the structure or society, therefore impacting most behavior of the whole structure or the community, then transformation is seen to have taken place.

Forgiveness can be identified with other positive behaviors that promote social acceptance and friendship in society. Forgiving has an element of contributing to the betterment of another person or a relationship (Williams 2015, 180). It is anticipated that it will invigorate mutual relational behaviors: for instance, to repair relationships with an offender and to discourage others from taking revenge.

12. Possible Risks of Forgiveness

Most social researchers and social transformers focusing on the topic of forgiveness tend to highlight the benefits of forgiveness for health and well-being. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that forgiveness might not always be certainly linked with health and well-being. In certain circumstances, people who are eager to forgive might be risking their health and well-being. Some research suggests that forgiveness might be an indicator for an interpersonal relationship distress (Katz, Street, and Arias 1997, 340). Katz, Street, and Arias posit that people who are enthusiastic to forgive are more likely to remain passively in a distressed situation. By carrying out research intended to unearth such circumstances, where forgiving could raise concerns for psychosocial distress, we may assist in bringing to the fore the differences between the benefits of forgiveness and the potential hazardous consequences.

13. A Final Reflection

It is time for people to make collective and intentional or deliberate efforts to examine faith and science: to consider what it is that can be done to deter youth from being recruited in order to cause havoc to fellow human beings. When dealing with issues of vulnerability, religions by nature are on the lookout for deep insights, consolation, and motivation.

Research has been carried out to examine if radical forgiveness, among other social teachings, can be considered as an option to this phenomenon of radicalization. The end result should be a response of what God requires of the people created in his image given the situation. This should ultimately lead to new scenarios, new pictures, new experiences, more exploration, further reflection, and back to action. Amidst suffering by all people— without a doubt many Christians, Muslims, and other faiths as well—we must use the wisdom of sound theology and look for directions to react to the challenges of suffering, stressing personal and collective transformation.

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