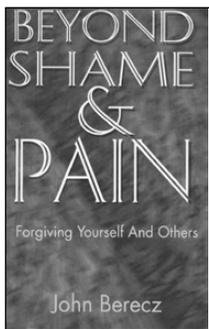


Primers on pain



Beyond Shame and Pain: Forgiving Yourself and Others

by John Berez, professor of psychology. C.S.S. Publishing, 1998. 160 pages.

It's not often that insights from the social sciences and religion are brought together in reflection upon a common Biblical theme. In this regard, Berez's book is indeed a rare and needful contribution. In his nine-chapter paperback, the author combines powerful literary skills and thought-provoking insights from various sources in his exploration of the concept of forgiveness.

Contrary to the view embraced by some, Berez argues that forgiveness is not a "static formalistic ritual," but rather, it constitutes a dynamic of our relationship to self and others. Conceptually, he grounds the dynamic within a three-pronged frame that includes the circumstances of our life, our personality types and our self-esteem. These three elements, Berez contends, mediate the extent to which we forgive others, accept their forgiveness and how we do so.

But, in all this, the author is careful to steer clear of the kind of determinism that frees the actor of responsibility for his/her action. Thus, while the circumstances of our life set limits within which we act, they do not unilaterally shape us, since, according to the author, behavior is impacted by the inner self as well.

The importance of self-esteem to the quality of our interaction with others has been well documented in the social sciences literature. However, while acknowledging the value of this sense of self-worth to how we treat ourselves and others, Berez introduces the rather

interesting notion of "alien dignity" (i.e. dignity derived from an awareness that God loves us in spite of our faults) as the basis of self-worth that makes forgiving self and others less difficult.

The author's use of the construct "psychological style" to explain the forgiveness process helps to

unmask the apparent mystery presented by the transpersonal variance in forgiveness patterns.

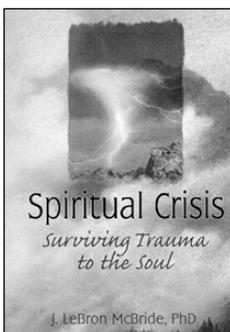
Drawing selectively and anonymously from the experiences of his psychotherapy clients, Berez illuminates our understanding of forgiveness, by showing us how the personality styles of his clients predispose them to give and accept forgiveness in certain characteristic ways. The impressionistic, feeling-driven histrionics are superficial, yet flamboyant in their forgiveness; the meticulous, perfectionistic obsessive-compulsives display a

calculation and cold forgiveness style, while the inferiority-burdened shamefuls and the appeasing dependents easily dispense forgiveness in a desperate effort to gain the approval and support of others.

With the variety of forgiveness styles discussed in the book, some contrasting and antithetical, one can easily become befuddled as to the meaning of forgiveness. But Berez takes care of the potential confusion by describing for us what forgiveness is not.

Beyond Shame and Pain is well organized and is written in a language and style that make for easy reading and sustained interest. References to relevant life events and individual experiences present a special appeal. Pastors and counselors as well as those caught in the throes of an unforgiving life should find this book especially interesting.

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Reviewed by Lionel N. A. Matthews, assistant professor of sociology.



Spiritual Crisis: Surviving Trauma to the Soul

by J. LeBron McBride (M.Div '80). The Haworth Pastoral Press, 1998. 207 pages.

One person experiences loss, grief or trauma and rails against God or leaves the Church. Another person experiences a similar event and emerges faithful and encouraging to others. What makes the difference, and how can ministers and psychotherapists help people move from pain to wholeness? J. LeBron McBride

attempts to provide us with many of the answers in his 14-chapter book *Spiritual Crisis*.

Life is all about how we interpret events. Chapter 13, "The Crisis of Ethics," seems to encapsulate part of the book's message: "We make sense of, organize, and define our worlds by the stories we tell and believe."

I was curious about the author's personal story and philosophy since I knew he had graduated from the SDA Theological Seminary and now works at the Georgia Baptist Family Residency Program. The broad strokes of his spiritual journey emerge in the inside

BOOK SHELF

page review from Desmond Ford, PhD, and Chapter 6, called "The Crisis of Denominational Identity." McBride spares us the troubling details yet alludes to the nature of his trauma and describes some events endured, such as: "Theological navel gazing became the favorite pastime." He goes on to state: "... I gradually found myself out of harmony with the beliefs of my denomination."

I found Chapter 9, "The Crisis of Personal Illness," much more illuminating with the personal story of his daughter's illness and ensuing treatment by medical-care workers. McBride hits the managed-care nail on the head with the statement "Pastoral counselors, physicians, and other professionals need to understand how the sick person explains his or her illness in order to adequately minister to the suffering person." His call for greater church involvement in preventative health education seems strongly reminiscent of SDA emphasis and may be one of his long-lasting points of agreement. I also greatly appreciated his honest incorporation of Anne Schaefer's material on addictive organizations in Chapter 10, "The Crisis of Religious Burnout."

Chapter 8, "The Crisis of Loss," does an excellent job of helping us deal with those difficult "why" questions that hurting people often ask of their friends, pastors, and counselors. McBride reminds us to be cognizant of the grieving person's context and to lay aside our own theological intimidation. "The response to 'How could God let this happen to me' may be something like, 'John's death is really a great loss for you.'"

His chapter on "The Crisis of Extremes" offers a good contribution to that often-difficult-to-grasp concept of the polarities that exist within a borderline, whether the term is used for a personality disorder or a church.

I believe that Sabbath or Sunday School classes or other groups will find the questions at the end of each chapter

helpful for discussion or reflection. I was originally skeptical of the many pages of diagrams and tables (Oh, no, another male-oriented fix-it manual!); however, most of them added to my ability to absorb the many theories that he draws upon. The notes at the end of the book reflect a wide range of theological and psycho-therapeutic sources from popular authors to classical theorists—Smuts van Rooyen and R. Brinsmead included.

Helpful, interesting and well-written books get loaned or underlined. *Spiritual Crisis* has already passed the test for books on my shelves. McBride has done the hard work and presented the distillation of numerous psychological

and theological theories helpful to the trauma victim or support person.

Last week I quoted from the book in a discussion with my cousin, at Sabbath School, and I recommended it to a former pastor friend. I'll probably even recommend it to my husband's curriculum for medical residents at Florida Hospital Orlando East.

Unfortunately, the author did not survive the doctrinal crisis of the early 1980s as a Seventh-day Adventist, yet the transformation of that event can give his readers a greater understanding of the impact and dynamics of spiritual crisis.

*Reviewed by Karen Spruill
(BA '74, MA '95).*

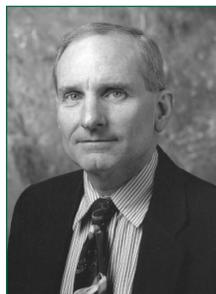
ANDREWS IS READING . . .



The Leader of the Future—New Visions, Strategies, and Practices for the Next Era
by Frances Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith and Richard Beckhard

Loretta Johns
Assistant Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Thirty-one authors contribute to the first book in the Drucker Foundation Future Series covering the best thinking in the world on topics such as leadership, organization, change and innovation. Peter Drucker notes in his foreword that "regardless of their almost limitless diversity with respect to personality, style, abilities, and interests, the effective leaders I have met, worked with, and observed also behaved much the same way." Leaders begin with the question "What needs to be done?" rather than "What do I want?"



Something to Smile About
by Zig Ziglar

Jack Mentges
Associate Director of Men's Residence Halls

This book is wonderful inspiration for anyone reading it. It's full of words of encouragement for both high and low times. *Something to Smile About* is a compilation of stories on how to keep a positive attitude through everything that life throws at you. It also has some accompanying quotes that reaffirm that there is something to smile about. My favorite quote is one by Booker T. Washington: "You can't hold a man down without staying down with him."