

Opinion Page

Can we forgive and also forget?

By REV. FRITZ SCHMITT
Immanuel, Georgetown

Is it possible to forgive a War Criminal? Since Emperor Hirohito of Japan died we have heard much complaining from veterans who remember painfully the suffering brought on by the Japanese actions. Their complaints came on strongest when it was suggested that our Prime Minister might attend the emperor's funeral, or in England they came up because Queen Elizabeth or one of the royal family might attend.

Emperor Hirohito was never tried as a war criminal because of General MacArthur, a general who held Christian principles and who saw the need to forgive the defeated, even though thousands of his own men suffered greatly because of what was done in the name of Emperor Hirohito. Yet those who complained about honoring this national leader - war criminal or not - cried that they could forgive, but never forget what had happened. But is that truly forgiveness, especially that now, even in death, punishment or censure must still be considered?

Is forgiveness real without forgetting what was done in the past. When studying conditional and absolute discharges and pardons we can see that if a record still exists concerning a prior offence then forgiveness is not total. It is actually put on hold until one proves one has earned it.

But what about ourselves? Because of our sinful nature we are constantly in rebellion against God, carrying on terrorist activities against His rule in our lives and the lives of others. Not recognizing any truce, a day doesn't go by that won't find us thinking or acting in some way to sabotage God's love in our lives, or the lives of others. Worse still, we are war criminals because our ac-



CLERGY COMMENT

tions and thoughts caused the only innocent man who ever lived on this earth to be executed, Jesus Christ. God's very own son was put to death because of our treachery. So should we be forgiven, and can God forget what we have done in order to make that forgiveness stick?

God does not feign forgiveness, making it conditional or saying that He will forgive us, but only so far. No, God tells us, "I am the One who will wipe away your wrongs for My own sake and will not remember your sins anymore." (Isaiah 43:25). With a faith that counted on the promised Saviour removing all his sins from God's sight the Psalmist states, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He put our sins away from us." (Psalm 103:12).

God knows all about us and needs no further evidence to convict us of many war crimes. Yet we should feel greatly relieved that He has instead chosen to forgive us by having His Son, Jesus Christ take our punishment instead, giving us an absolute discharge, and a place in His eternal kingdom. If we really understand this we will then exercise a similar measure of forgiveness to those around us. They may not seem like war criminals, but we often treat our family and friends, coworkers and fellow students in such a way.

May God help us to recognize and appreciate, and then share the forgiveness He has for us.

This user just isn't friendly

Let me be blunt. I hate computers.

I purely and simply do not like the things. I have never liked the things. And I am disliking them more with each passing day.

There, I trust there is no ambiguity on this point.

Naturally, my animosity toward computers leaves me sadly out of step with a society that believes they are the greatest innovation since indoor plumbing. And naturally, this leads to endless arguments with friends who are convinced that my bleak little life would be filled with sunshine if I just embraced the computer age.

Computer-loving friends keep trying to tell me I cannot possibly hate the personal computer, since I have never tried one and thus have no way of knowing what it's like.

My reply to this is simple. Mom tried the same argument, with regard to parsnips. She lied.

When this fails, my friends try to convince me that I simply have to learn something about computers. The schools, they warn, are full of 12-year-old computer whizzes who are leaving me hopelessly in their dust.

This is undoubtedly true. These adolescent experts may very well be the wave of the future. In which case I don't like them either.

In short, it's high time for the computer-illiterate to state their case. It's time to point out the pure and unvarnished truth about computers.

A computer is a pocket calculator with delusions of grandeur. It is an abacus that has grown too big for its britches. And it richly needs a few lessons in humility.



Weir's View

By Ian Weir
Thomson News Service

It's possible I'm unusually sensitive to computer arrogance, since computers have always been notoriously high-handed with writers. Just for starters, there are all those computers which check and correct your spelling.

This, of course, is reprehensible on two counts. Number one, it's cheating. Number two, it is an intolerable infringement on the imaginative process.

As any journalist will tell you, spelling is not a mechanical function. It is meant to be a creative act. If you're incapable of spelling a word more than one way, you should restrict yourself to composing technical manuals. The true writer must be free to sore with the eagles.

But now, computers have gone a step further. According to a ghastly little news item, there is now a computer program that criticizes your writing style.

Let's not mince words. This is despicable. Or dispickable. Take your pick.

Apparently, a document fed into this program will come back on the

LETTERS

Community's response appreciated

Dear Sir,

The Acton Christmas Hamper Committee, consisting of The Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul, Lakeside Chapter I.O.D.E. and the Rotary Club, wish to express our sincere appreciation to the schools, churches, community groups, and individuals who willingly donated cash, food, toys, clothing, and a variety of other useful items to help us accomplish the task of serving needy families at Christmas.

The response from the community was tremendous and enabled us to meet all the needs we were aware of. Sharing is the first evidence of caring, and we salute all who expressed through their giving that they are concerned about the plight of people in need.

We also wish to commend and thank the Good Neighbors of Georgetown, and the Rockwood Lionettes for their involvement in meeting the needs in their respective communities. The task was

much easier than it might have been due to the fine spirit of co-operation which prevailed on the part of all who were involved.

We are truly grateful to the people of Halton Hills for helping us to help others.

Yours very sincerely,
Wade Budgell (Captain),
Corps Officer,
The Salvation Army

Blue box program may need work

Dear Sir,

I am writing in response to the blue box recycling. I think this is a superb idea, although there are some faults with it.

What are we going to do about townhouses, apartments and adjoining homes? How are the people in these places going to take part in

recycling? What about plastics like milk bags and plastic wraps? When will we be able to throw these in there, so they too can be recycled?

I'm not complaining, I just want more improvements or else what difference is this blue box going to make? As the saying goes, "do the

job right or don't do it at all."

We need to recycle everything or there will always be garbage. So the more we recycle the closer to perfection we get.

Yours truly,
T. Wainwright,
Acton

Businesses make important contribution

Dear Sir,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many merchants who participated by donating gifts to our charity drive.

As secretary of the No. 1 District Social Club I would like on behalf

of the club members to publicly thank Halton Hills merchants, whose generosity has helped us provide The Halton Centennial Manor Senior's Day Program with much needed furniture.

We hope you had a happy and

safe holiday and wish you all the best in the new year.

Dianne Chisholm,
Secretary,
No. 1 District Social Club

Halton's History from our files

30 years ago

Some 400 hockey fans watched what could well have been a mid-winter preview of intermediate B playoff hockey at Georgetown Arena last night where Hunter's Realtors jarred the league leading

Bradford Fords 8-5 to move within a single point of the top spot.

Knox Ladies auxiliary held their annual meeting in Knox Church parlour on Jan. 13. The secretary's minutes of the 1958 annual meeting were read. The following were elected to office for 1959, president, Mrs. Robert Reeve, 1st vice-president, Mrs. Jack McGibbon, 2nd vice-president, Mrs. G.E. Mitchell, secretary, Mrs. G.W. McCallum, treasurer, Jean Ruddell, bazaar convener, Mrs. Robert Lane, catering convener, Mrs. Ernie Currie, flowers and card convener, Mrs. Alex Calder.

Assistant accountant at the Bank of Commerce, soon to be transferred to Port Colborne, Bob Burke, was honored at a social evening at the North Halton Golf and Country Club on Saturday, jointly sponsored by the businessmen and the Chamber of Commerce. Mayor Jack Armstrong attended the affair and on behalf of the sponsors, made the presentation of a lazy boy chair to Mr. Burke.

15 years ago

This month, a small group of cross-country skiers and families from across the province have formed themselves into an association and are now busy looking for supporters to join with them. As a non-profit group dedicated to helping each other, the new association is much needed with the literally thousands of sports enthusiasts rushing to outfit their families with the low cost equipment.

Mrs. Janice Smith, 10 Chipper Ct., opened her home for the annual meeting of Georgetown Arts and Crafts, Jan. 17. Mrs. Helen Agg, retiring president, thanked her executive of the past two years and all the members for their co-operation and excellent participation and wished her successor well. Miss Dorothy Stone conducted the election and installation of the officers.

10 years ago

Ray Evans has been elected the Georgetown Chrysler Raiders Player of the Month for December. Evans has just had an excellent month, as has the Raiders. Georgetown has played nine games in December and came out on top in eight of them. Meanwhile Evans has been on a tear as he is now among the league's top scorers.

Georgetown's Rob Masson made an excellent showing at the Ontario

Winter Games in Kingston. Mr. Masson won two swimming events and finished second in another. Mr. Masson won the gold medals in the 1,500 metres and 400 freestyle. His silver medal was taken in the 200 butterfly event.

If a group is formed to help recently widowed women in need of support, those doing the contacting would be more than welcome to train with volunteers for the Contact Centre, according to a member of the Centre's executive. Speaking to a meeting of members of the Georgetown Contacts for the Widowed, Rev. Walter Ridley said that if the group decides to form some type of contact group to help the newly widowed women, one of the first things these contact people will need to learn is how to listen, not only to what is said, but, "even to the silences between the words."

Family, friends and neighbors met together on Sunday afternoon to honor an esteemed lady in the person of Mrs. Agnes McEnery, who was celebrating her 85th birthday. The gathering took place at the home of her son Lloyd and daughter-in-law Irma. The dining room table was decked up with beautiful lace cloth. It was centered with a beautifully decorated birthday cake. The occasion was a very happy one. Later in the evening there was a family dinner party in the same home.

5 years ago

The latest meeting of the WI was held Jan. 11 at the home of the president, Mrs. Jamieson. There were four visitors present, which helped to make good attendance for the first meeting of 1984. The president opened the meeting with a tribute to Robbie Burns as his birthday is in January.

Two big wins over the weekend have propelled the Georgetown Raiders back into the thick of a seven-team battle for first place in the Ontario Senior "A" Hockey League. The Raiders delighted the home fans at Gordon Alcott Arena Friday night by whitewashing lowly Woodstock, 10-0. The following evening they proved they are legitimate contenders by hammering the Flamborough Real McCoy's 7-3 in Rockton.

Norval Women's Institute Historical Research meeting took the form of Open House at the Norval Community Centre Thursday afternoon and evening. Tweedsmuir History books were on display for the community.