

Patrons: Rt Hon the Lord Woolf, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Anita Roddick, Lord Stone of Blackheath, Tim Newell, Emma Thompson, Jilly Forster, Simon Fanshawe,

The **FORGIVENESS** project

January 2007

Issue: No. 6

Dear Friends and Supporters.

Happy New Year!

2007 we hope will see The Forgiveness Project growing into a bigger and more robust organisation. The F Word exhibition launched three years ago in 2004 and since then has been seen in over 250 venues worldwide with an estimated 25,000 visitors. The website continues to draw 500 visitors a day and we still attract much media attention. We are also recruiting for trustees. Please see below.

EVENTS



Phyllis Rodriguez and Aicha el-Wafi

Our thanks to Phyllis Rodriguez whose story you can read on <http://www.theforgivenessproject.com/stories/phyllisandaicha>. Phyllis visited London from the US in November and took part in a seminar at the American school with Jo Berry, as well as doing several media interviews for us. Significantly, the Good Morning programme with ten million viewers dropped an item with her at the last minute because Phyllis did not fit into their set idea for a storyline: in other words hers was not a simple story of having started at a point of hatred and ended in forgiveness. This episode highlighted the challenge we sometimes face. People expect TFP to propagate forgiveness alone, whereas rather we explore the journey, the struggle for understanding and the complexity of a word which seems to excite and affront in equal measure.

Around the same time I was invited to comment live on BBC News 24 about Norman Kember forgiving his kidnappers in Iraq and in particular on viewers' complaints that he was ungrateful, naive and plain wrong. I suggested that Kember was not condoning what the kidnappers did but,

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by talking of understanding and Restorative Justice, was presenting a radical alternative to stopping the cycle of violence.

Phyllis also took part in a TFP circle of debate at St Ethelburgas Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, co-hosted by Simon Keyes, St Ethelburga's Director. Talking alongside her were Gill Hicks and Khaled al Berry (also from The F Word). The subject was "The Limits of Love": whether too much love of your God, your nation, yourself, or your partner can have explosive consequences. It was well attended by a small invited audience who grappled with the subject for three hours.

In November, to the backdrop of The F Word exhibition, I took part in lively debate at Stockton Baptist Church alongside the Rev Julie Nicholson who last year gave up her ministry because of the difficulties she had preaching forgiveness following her daughter's murder in the don bombings.

In December we presented to the UK Youth Parliament. 150 young delegates took part in a Circles of Influence conference at the British Museum. Guest speakers from TFP were Richard Levy, survivor of the 7/7 bombings, and Camilla Carr who was taken hostage in Chechnya. The New North London Synagogue also invited TFP back to talk to a group about the subject of reconciliation and forgiveness.

SCHOOLS

Last autumn TFP took part in seminars and conferences at Tonbridge Boys School (for the third time), Leighton Park School and The Towers School near Brighton from where every student wrote to tell of the impact the day had on them, including one who said, "*by coming into our school and telling our generation about your work, we are one step closer to a better future.*" At Leighton Park School, Gill Hicks spoke powerfully alongside award winning journalist and MP, Martin Bell, in a "Peace in Our Time" conference for five sixth forms in the Reading area. We are planning to go into many more schools this year, as well as working with teachers to create a teaching resource.

PRISONS

In October TFP took part in a three-day intensive programme of speaking engagements and workshops at Onley YOI near Rugby. Pat Magee, Jo Berry, Marian Partington and John Carter gave presentations and workshops to 200+ prisoners. Positive feedback was received from staff, prisoners and visitors, and articles were published in four local newspapers. As one of the prison officers wrote afterwards, "it was amazing from our point of view to have in the region of 30 - 40 prisoners in one room where you could hear a pin drop!" Later in the year we will return to build on this work and will also be going into HMP Grendon Underwood.

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NEW STORIES

We have collected several new stories for the website, some of whom will be incorporated into a second exhibition to be printed and shown this year. These include that of Gill Hicks whose book 'One Unknown' is to be published by Rodale this April.



Gill Hicks

On July 7th, 2005, 26 people died and many were severely injured and maimed on London Underground's Piccadilly line tube train between Kings Cross and Russell Square stations. A suicide bomber was responsible. Australian born Gill Hicks miraculously survived but lost both her legs due to the explosion. Gill is also an ambassador for Peace Direct.

Read Gill's story: www.theforgivenessproject.com/stories/gill-hicks

USA

In America The Forgiveness Project is gaining a wider profile and The F Word has now been shown in several states. Do take a look at the short film made by Balcony Films on the website. It beautifully captures our purpose while also being a promotion for the film Balcony intend to make. (<http://www.theforgivenessproject.com/news/>)



The F Word at Lomb Wintergraden, Pittsford, New York State

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SOUTH AFRICA

The F Word continues to tour South Africa alongside a remarkable play, 'Truth in Translation', about the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). "Can we forgive the past to survive the future?" This is the question that Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu asked of the people of South Africa. The ethos that underlies this question lives in the heart of TFP as well as the play that has toured Rwanda and is now touring South Africa. The F Word accompanied 'Truth in Translation' during it's Johannesburg run where audiences said that the exhibition gave them an opportunity to explore many of the themes and issues raised in the play. The play and the exhibition have been in Cape Town for the month of January. For more about 'Truth in Translation' go to: www.truthintranslation.org



Truth In Translation

South Africa will be celebrating 'Forgiveness Day' toward the middle of the year when SoulCircle (the organization that supports TFP in SA) joins forces with CIDA City Campus to make forgiveness a focal point for the media and people of Johannesburg. CIDA is South Africa's only virtually free university and offers liberation through education to students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. CIDA is driven by the vision of a stable SA society, with a vibrant economy, buoyed by the economic contribution of graduates of an effective tertiary education system. TFP is honoured to be joining the bright young minds of the students at CIDA.

FUNDING

We are extremely grateful for grants from the trust funds and individuals who have supported us in the past six months:

- CIT – Christian Initiative Trust
- Trust Greenbelt
- The Hilden Charitable Fund
- 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
- The Paul Lunn-Rockcliffe Charitable Trust
- The Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust
- McGrath Charitable Trust

And a big thank you to Gordon Ramsay Holdings Limited. We wrote to Gordon Ramsay following his Channel 4 TV programme, The F-Word, suggesting that although his extremely popular food show may have eclipsed our F Word exhibition, conflict resolution was surely an area he had some interest in! He generously responded.

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HOW YOU CAN HELP

We have set up a new easy way of making either a one-off or more regular small donation to help our work. We're hoping that a significant proportion of the large amount of visitors to our website will take up the chance to help us out. We know that a great deal of our website visitors come to the site from recommendations of friends and family. If you feel you could help by sending an email to even a small group of people, suggesting they take a look at our site, read the stories and if possible text a £5 donation, we would be really grateful.

**You can make a £5 donation by texting FORGIVE to 82023.
To make a monthly commitment of £5 text
SUB to 82023.**

WE ARE ALSO LOOKING TO RECRUIT TRUSTEES WHO ARE WILLING TO GET INVOLVED AND ARE COMMITTED TO THE ETHOS OF TFP – AN ORGANISATION WHICH AIMS TO EXPLORE FORGIVENESS THROUGH REAL HUMAN STORIES AND PROMOTE DIALOGUE ABOUT ALTERNATIVES TO REVENGE. SKILLS NEEDED ARE FINANCE, FUND-RAISING, VOLUNTARY SECTOR MANAGEMENT.

email: marina@theforgivenessproject.com

AND LASTLY.....OUR THANKS TO

Matthew Davis, Colinne Bartel, Crispin Truman, Sarah Scott, Annabel Yates, Fran Jones, Sarah Green, Gill Hicks, Richard Levy and Phyllis Rodriguez - for their pro bono support. It is hugely appreciated.

With very best wishes

Marina Cantacuzino
Director
www.theforgivenessproject.com