

The road to reconciliation begins with an apology

G. Raumati Hook

Abstract: The recent upsurge in the issuing of political apologies by governments around the world presages a previously under-appreciated, significant social phenomenon. Political apologies have opened the door to reconciliation with marginalized ethnic minorities and triggered changes in government policies that have the potential to affect the lives of millions of citizens. The phenomenon of political apologies bears watching very closely because of their sentinel value in signaling policy changes to come. Political apologies appear in four different basic forms categorized by their underlying self-explanatory motivational purposes. These I have named humanitarian, academic, economic, and personal. The issuing of political apologies based upon humanitarian, academic, and personal reasons can result in the movement of resources towards the recipient of the apology; however, the economically motivated political apology can have the opposite effect, namely, the movement of resources in the direction of the apologizer. While economic apologies offer some benefits for the recipient, in the overall scheme of things it is the apologizer who generally benefits the most. Apologies motivated by economic reasons appears to be a practice that has been adopted by the Japanese government post World War II as a means of influencing consumer markets in the Asian and other regions of the world. Regardless of motivational principles all political apologies have the effect of moving the source of the apology and its recipient closer together; reconciliation begins with an apology.

Keywords: categories of political apology; reconciliation; war apologies of Japan

Introduction

The political apology is a recent social phenomenon fueled by an upsurge in national conscience. Many nations are at a point where the need to confront and deal with the injustices of their past has become a priority. The digital imagery of the information age often reminds us that nationhood is built on the bloodied bodies of the displaced, the replaced and the marginalized. Government by deceit, armed aggression, and the exploitation of disadvantaged ethnic groups by colonial expansionists is a repetitive history well known to indigenous peoples around the world. The driving force for this upsurge in national apologies may have arisen in the 1990s because of the exhortations of that reformer priest Pope John Paul II, who demanded that his Church confess, repent, and cleanse itself in preparation for the advent of the third millennium (Hook, 2008a).

Although the issuing of political apologies peaked around the turn of the last century (Hook, 2008a), the effects of conscience continues with the most recent example being the extraordinary apology by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd for injustices inflicted by past Australian governments on the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Rudd, 2008). While the apology by Mr. Rudd is an outstanding example of its genre, it is not the only one that has been issued to indigenous peoples around the world. Several were issued in the 1990s including apologies made to the Sami by the Finns (Anonymous, 1997), the Aborigines of North America by the Canadians (Depalma, 1998), the Hawaiians by the Congress of the United States (Joint Resolution 19, 1993), and the Māori people of Tainui by Her Majesty the Queen of England (Barber, 1995). With so much apologising going on one has to wonder what it all means for indigenous people and what the future holds.

In this essay I examine this phenomenon called the political apology and ask what is its value and what does it mean to those to whom the apology is targeted? Do modern day apologies by politicians mean anything at all, or are they just ceremonial puffery aimed at pacifying disgruntled citizens and diverting them from their intended goals? Are apologies the beginning and the end, or only the beginning of the end? In other words is an apology sufficient and does the matter end there, or is it just the beginning of a long journey to a place called reconciliation? This essay is a follow-up to a previous essay on political apologies where an explanation was sought for their upsurge at the end of the last century (Hook, 2008a). It is also a prequel to a third essay concerned with whether or not the New Zealand government owes its Māori people an apology for past abuses (Hook, 2008b).

The significance of the political apology

Political apologies, wherein a national government or major institution apologizes to a group of its own citizens or to that of another country for past aggressions, war, racial intolerance or injustices, has seen a marked upsurge in recent years (Hook, 2008a). Many nations around the world have issued apologies to those who have suffered at the hands of previous governments, especially those with a colonial past. The significance of political apologies has reached a point where it appears to have become an important instrument in the pursuit of national goals.

The frenzy of political apologetic activity immediately preceding the turn of the last century seemed to suggest that the phenomenon was tied to the millennial change itself and, therefore, touched with the ambitions of the Church. The numerological significance of the year 2000 is meaningful only to certain sub-cultures of the Western world, but in particular to the Church since it identifies with the advent of the Third Christian Millennium. Other non-Western cultures such as the Chinese and Japanese do not count their years from the Christian experience, although the Western calendar has been adopted for the facilitation of communicating and doing business with the West.

Categories of political apologies

There are four basic forms of political apology; these I have categorized as humanitarian, academic, economic, and personal. These categories are based upon the motivational criteria that fuels or gives impetus to the apology.

Humanitarian

Humanitarian political apologies are those that seek to correct an injustice inflicted upon a group of citizens of a country by past actions of its government or other political leaders. In the case of New Zealand, 150 years of racial discrimination and racist policies left Māori impoverished and almost landless. Recent, negotiations with the government have tried to restore a degree of balance by giving back to Māori some of the land that was confiscated by earlier governments, and monetary settlements for that which will not be repatriated because that land now resides in private hands. This restoration is driven to a large degree by humanitarian motives as well as the demand for justice under the Treaty of Waitangi legislative requirements. Thus this particular variety of political apology sits well under the title of “humanitarian” even if some of the emotions involved have been less than charitable. As settlements with individual tribes have been achieved the government has apologised for its past actions against those specific tribes, but the Māori people as a nation has not been so privileged.

Academic

Academic political apologies seek to correct a past wrong simply because it should be corrected. The relevance of some academic apologies may not be immediately obvious to most present day observers, but to others national transgressions do not carry a statute of limitations, and even if the transgression occurred a thousand years ago a correction may and perhaps should still be made. Institutions with long histories appear particularly active in this arena; for example, the Roman Catholic Church has a long history with a large collection of "errors." In 1979, for example, Pope John Paul II indicated that the church might have erred in its handling of Galileo Galilei's trial by the inquisition of 1633 and in April 1993 following an investigative report to Pope John Paul II (Poupard, 1992), Galileo was formally acquitted 360 years after his indictment for heretical support of Copernicus' heliocentrism. This particular political apology bears little relevance to the modern world or to the descendants of Galileo and I have, therefore, called it "academic" in spite of the fact that the Church doctrine that resulted in the persecution of Galileo was applied with torture and imprisonment.

Economic

Economic political apologies are those motivated by economic desires. These apologies are given because there are potential financial benefits for the apologizer if only the relationship between the recipient and the offeror can be improved to a point where, for example, becoming a trading partner is possible. Economically motivated political apologies may not be primarily motivated by a desire for reconciliation other than through the possibility that reconciliation might bring with it economic benefits. Some of Japan's apologies to its neighbours can be placed in this category. Although the primary motivation might be economic it does not mean that humanitarian outcomes are necessarily absent.

Personal

Personal political apologies are those given for stupidities enacted by politicians, usually for some outrageously embarrassing act performed when the offender thought that no one was watching. Some of these include the mistakes of President Bill Clinton involving staff members. More recently are the confessions and denials of Senator Larry Craig who was arrested in a Men's toilet room at the Minneapolis Airport on June 11, 2007 for allegedly soliciting for "gay sex" (Phillips, 2007). These are personal mistakes and the apologies presented are, therefore, labelled "personal." With personal political apologies the presenter may not be really apologizing for his transgression; it is more likely to be an apology that has been forced upon the individual, and even if stated probably does not reflect his inner state of mind. Quite possibly the individual does not regret the activity that led to the revelation, but does regret getting caught. Neither Clinton nor Craig would have said a word had they not been caught and history would have been none the wiser. They apologized simply because they got caught.

Categorising political apologies is useful for social analysis because it helps us understand the motivational aspects of the apology; it helps us determine just how serious an apology is, and it helps us to decide how to deal with it. Of all of these, the economic political apology may be the most difficult to assess and categorize. It is also possible that a particular political apology might be driven by multiple reasons and to simply place it in a particular category could result in misinterpretation.

Each of these types of political apology can result in the movement of resources between those issuing an apology and those receiving. Political apologies based on humanitarian, academic, and personal reasons have the potential to move resources in the form of money or land or anything of value from the apologizer to the recipient of that apology. Consider the humanitarian apology by Prime Minister Rudd of Australia to the "stolen generation," for example. Although Rudd claimed that reparations are not on the table the expectation is that sooner or later the Australian government will be forced to attempt some form of restitution. Political apologies motivated by academic reasons have the potential for reparations but are

unlikely to achieve any transfer of resources simply because, in the main, the abuses targeted lie so far in the past that those engaged are long forgotten. The apology by the Danish Culture Minister, Brian Mikkelsen for Viking raids on the Irish coast 1200 years ago (Erikson, 2007) will not result in the transfer of resources because basically, who cares? However, in spite of the academic nature of the apology it has a potential for reparative claims, but is unlikely to achieve them simply because of a lack of public interest. Personal apologies also have the potential for the transfer of resources from the person issuing the apology to those most effected by that individuals's past actions. This could also be in the form of court fines or the results of litigation in a court of law.

The most interesting political apology is, however, that which is motivated by economic reasons. It is the most difficult to analyse and as well as the most convoluted to unravel. This type of apology can have the exact opposite effect of the other three types of apology. Here resources, in a sense, can be made to move in the direction of the apologizer and in this regard a closer examination of the apologies issued by the Japanese government post World War II is pertinent. The economic apology is offered primarily for the purposes of the apologizer and not so much for the benefit of the recipient; however, when it comes to international trade both parties could gain from the arrangement. If a government is in dire need of increasing its market share, but old prejudices arising from historical grievances makes this difficult, the doorway could be opened with an apology and with patience old enemies could become new friends. Both parties benefit, but usually to a greater degree for the apologizer because new markets help maintain a positive balance of payments, providing work for workers and bread on the table for all.

While the basic motivations differ widely insofar as political apologies are concerned all of them without exception, retain a hope for reconciliation. With humanitarian apologies, reconciliation with the marginalized underdog is envisaged. With academic political apologies, reconciliation between the institution and its membership is intended. Economic political apologies are given in the hope of reconciliation so that economic benefits might be achieved by the apologizer. Even personal apologies hope for reconciliation between the apologizer and those colleagues or family members who have been offended.

It is also possible that apologies issued for one reason might end up being motivated by another with the original reasons for the apology becoming obscured. Economic motivation, for example, could end up as humanitarian simply because once one door is open another more appealing lies beyond. Indeed, in examining the apologies made by Japan for its war-time excesses there is an evolutionary change that seems to move motivational underpinnings away from what are clearly economic in the early years towards humanitarian in the later. Here I am referring to recent apologies by the Japanese government made to the so-called "comfort women" of World War II.

Apologies issued by successive Japanese administrations

The value of a political apology varies with its reasons for being and its range of purpose is broad. However, there are recent examples where the economic value of a political apology can only be measured in billions of dollars, where the long term goals of the action have been incorporated into national policies and practices, driven by government needs to provide markets and value to its people.

At the end of World War II, Japan was occupied by the Allies and found itself surrounded by old enemies; its economy was dependent upon the good graces of the United States. The Japanese economy at that time could barely feed its own people. How does a nation then move from a subsistence economy to a super economy in just fifty years? The road to prosperity is complex consisting of good luck, hard work, and intelligent management;

however, examination of the Japanese example suggests that the political apology itself could have played a significant strategic role.

With political apologies come potentially huge financial risks because under some circumstances reparations could be worth billions of dollars; however, the absence of political apologies also has its financial risks. At the end of World War II the Asian world found itself bruised and battered by the armies of the now defeated Japanese. The colonial history of Japan is brutal and not forgotten by its once subjugated neighbours. Japan, is a nation poor in natural resources such as oil and minerals, but rich in manufacturing know-how with a high educational achievement index. For the Japanese, the question became one of survival that involved somehow turning past enemies into friends, and more importantly, into customers.

How exactly does a nation turn enemies into customers? The occupation of Japan ended in April 1952 with its economy still in bad shape; however, slowly the economy recovered especially during the period of the Korean War where Japan was used as a staging platform and supply depot by the United States armed services. However, Japan received a severe jolt during the 1973 oil crisis revealing its dependence on foreign oil and quite clearly it became a national priority to move away from this dependence as much as possible. Japan moved its economy towards the manufacture of high tech goods and services. All this was achieved within roughly the working life of a single generation.

With the development of high tech industry came the need to develop new markets. The amount and variety of goods manufactured by Japanese industries touches nearly everyone on the face of this planet be it in shoes, clothing, or technical goods such as TVs, computers, and automobiles. Having the know-how to manufacture high tech goods is great, but of little value without foreign markets. The need to expand markets became urgent in the 80s and 90s and continues to today. The arrival of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the world stage offered huge market potential and Japan has not been slow to see the possibilities. The story of a nation, turning old enemies into new friends and thence into customers is a story of the triumph of reason over pride and prejudice.

How one changes an enemy into a friend may be a long and difficult journey, but undoubtedly that journey begins with an apology and the history of Japanese political apologies is a lesson in itself. The first political apology offered by Japan for the war, was given primarily for economic reasons. This was offered by Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka on September 29, 1972 to the People's Republic of China. In a joint communique between the governments of Japan and the PRC, diplomatic relations were established between the two governments. In this apology no mention was made about being sorry, no actual apologies were offered although responsibility for the war was accepted by Japan. Japan simply "reproached" itself.

The Japanese side is keenly conscious of the responsibility for the serious damage that Japan caused in the past to the Chinese people through war, and deeply reproaches itself. Further, the Japanese side reaffirms its position that it intends to realize the normalization of relations between the two countries from the stand of fully understanding 'the three principles for the restoration of relations' put forward by the Government of the People's Republic of China. The Chinese side expresses its welcome for this (Joint Communique, 1972).

Since then the art of writing political apologies has advanced considerably. Compare the 1972 Joint Communique with the PRC, with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's recent statement regarding the 60th anniversary of the ending of the war which he delivered on August 15: 2005:

In the past, Japan, through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries particularly to those of Asian nations.

Sincerely facing these facts of history, I once again express my feelings of deep remorse and heartfelt apology, and also express the feelings of mourning for all victims, both at home and abroad, in the war. I am determined not to allow the lessons of that horrible war to erode, and to contribute to the peace and prosperity of the world without ever again waging a war (Koizumi, 2005).

“Deep remorse and heartfelt apology” makes a much more satisfying apology than simply “reproaching oneself”. The word “apology” raises the credibility level of the apology substantially. The only word missing is “sorrow” or “sorry” words that express personal engagement, but that might be purely a cultural thing. One cannot deny that the apologies issued by the Japanese for their misadventures during the war have evolved to a point where they have become masterpieces of the genre.

Of 41 statements listed by Wikipedia regarding Japanese statements of apology regarding their actions in the war only two include the word “sorry.” Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu during the State visit to Japan of President Roh Tae Woo of the Republic of Korea on May 25, 1990 (Kaifu, 1990) and Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa upon his State visit to the Republic of Korea on January 17, 1992 (Miyazawa, 1992) both used the word “sorry,” but these are quite exceptional because the word does not appear to have been used since.

Table 1. Successive Japanese administrations over the period 1983 to 2005 and the number of political apologies made to neighbouring nations and other war time adversaries for transgressions during the colonial period of Japan.

Prime Minister No.	Prime Minister	Start of Term	End of Term	Apologies Issued
72	Yasuhiro Nakasone	27/12/1983	22/7/1986	3
73	Yasuhiro Nakasone	22/7/1986	6/11/1987	0
74	Noboru Takeshita	6/11/1987	3/6/1989	1
75	Sōsuke Uno	3/6/1989	10/8/1989	0
76	Toshiki Kaifu	10/8/1989	28/2/1990	0
77	Toshiki Kaifu	28/2/1990	5/11/1991	4
78	Kiichi Miyazawa	5/11/1991	9/8/1993	8
79	Morihiro Hosokawa	9/8/1993	28/4/1994	5
80	Tsutomu Hata	28/4/1994	30/6/1994	0
81	Tomiichi Murayama	30/6/1994	11/1/1996	6
82	Ryūtarō Hashimoto	11/1/1996	7/11/1996	3
83	Ryūtarō Hashimoto	7/11/1996	30/7/1998	7
84	Keizō Obuchi	30/7/1998	5/4/2000	4
85	Yoshiro Mori	5/4/2000	4/7/2000	0
86	Yoshiro Mori	4/7/2000	26/4/2001	7
87	Junichirō Koizumi	26/4/2001	19/11/2003	9
88	Junichirō Koizumi	19/11/2003	21/9/2005	2

The cultural subtleties surrounding the expression “I am sorry,” are beyond my capacity to appreciate but to Western ears the expression helps to personalize the statement thereby enhancing its sincerity. The statement does not confuse the fact that the Prime Minister is speaking on behalf of his people, but it does tend to recognize and emphasize the humanity of

the person speaking at the time. Rudd, in his apology to the “stolen generation” used “I am sorry” to perfection, at least to western ears.

While there is a strong case for the view that on a world-wide basis, the offering of political apologies appears millennial driven, the influence the millennial change had on the Japanese strategy of economic apologies is uncertain. On the one hand the upsurge of political apologies issued by the Japanese in the 1990s may have been purely coincidental (Figure 2) being as it was primarily market-driven. On the other hand it is also possible that the concept of contrition driven by John Paul II as he dealt with historical issues of the Christian church, struck a cultural resonance with the Japanese and that they too set about correcting issues arising from their recent history.

In the arena of political apologies Japan has been very active and it is instructive to follow the development of the apologies as issued by Japan since around the early 1980s. Both number and quality of apologies issued improved over this 20-year period from 1983. At the beginning of the Nakasone period in 1983 to 2003 the end of the Koizumi period, 59 apologies were issued all to prospective trading partners especially those within Japan’s sphere of influence (Table 1). Prime Minister Takeshita clearly did not embrace the idea of apologies issuing none during his administration. Prime Minister Kaifu understood the benefits and from then on the apologies got better and more numerous.

The use of apologies by Japan as a means of opening the doors to economic development did not become commonplace until the 1990s (Figure 1).



Figure 1. The number of apologies issued by Japan during 1984-2007 for human rights violations during the period of Japan’s aggressions in South East Asia including World War II and before.

It takes time to build an economy and the Japanese investments in time and resources over the last 10 to 20 years are now yielding their rewards in terms of economic development. Today the Japanese economy is one of the most stable in the world and stronger than it has been in twenty years (Patrick, 2007). According to Patrick:

Export growth continues to be a major source of aggregate demand and corporate profits. In real terms, exports of goods and services, 10.9% of GDP in 2002, expanded to 15.3 percent in the second quarter of 2007 while imports increased from 9.6% to 11.0 percent. Adding to the trade surplus has been increasing financial inflows of dividend, interest, and profit income. Japan's current surplus, 2.9 percent of GDP in 2002, steadily rose to 4.1 percent in 2006 and is expected to be 4.6 percent in 2007. More than half is net financial income receipts (Patrick, 2007, p. 17):

And Patrick goes on to state that:

Japan is a stable democracy and society. Its economy is technologically sophisticated and capital intensive, well founded on a high degree of human skills. Japan has a high standard of living, with a GDP per capita in purchasing power terms of about \$32,620. Japanese are able, ambitious, hard working, and creative. Incremental improvements will proceed; history demonstrates that has been a good path (Patrick, 2007, p. 20).

The United States has been Japan's biggest customer, but exports and imports are now shifting towards Asia with China becoming Japan's largest trading partner (Patrick, 2007, p. 17). The road to this stunning success began with an apology. One can only speculate what the Japanese economy might have been without that willingness to apologise and begin the process of turning old enemies into new friends. Whether the Japanese have been forgiven for their transgressions may be immaterial when faced with the bottom line.

The culture of apology

The culture of apology is not universal in either its functional significance or its frequency of use. Attitudes and thus willingness to apologise is to a large degree culturally influenced. The oral apology so desired by Māori in their dealings with the Crown today, in pre-contact days may not have existed at all; that is, restoration of balance between individuals and tribal groups was achieved via processes involving *murū* and/or *utu* whereby goods were offered or an act of equal misfortune applied in order to restore balance. For Māori, the offering of words indicating remorse or regret may be a recent acquisition from their Pākehā colonizers indicating a significant cultural change.

History indicates that apology served significant functions in Western European societies although history also indicates a certain reluctance to engage. Within Western societies the apology required a degree of humility or the humbling of the giver and to a degree brought with it a sense of shame thus apologies were considered very seriously and tended to be given only rarely and with reluctance especially by Heads of State.

For the Japanese, the attitude towards apology is somewhat different than that found in the West. Tavuchis (1991, also see page 37, 2002 edition) goes into some detail regarding the attitude of Japanese towards apology and the importance of the apology in projecting the image of respect and politeness. For the Japanese there is a cultural willingness to apologise that is more akin to the acceptance or recognition of responsibility. This cultural willingness to apologise to those who claim offense may in fact be the very foundation of Japan's success in converting old enemies into new customers.

Apologies, reconciliation and forgiveness

Apologies are not in themselves definitive or complete in any way. Political apologies occupy a critical nexus between the original transgressions and the ultimate goal of reconciliation and forgiveness (Figure 2). The historical facts of repression may take considerable time to

overcome with many years of accusations, recriminations or denial. Ultimately, a full confession may be agreed upon or in the case of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of South Africa an acceptance of the “truth” may be achieved for any number of reasons. Not everyone will embrace the “truth” preferring to remain in denial; however, without acceptance of responsibility progress will not be made. Thus the apology must include acceptance of responsibility, an expression of sorrow, and a promise not to do it again. The apology sets the tone for what comes next and an apology poorly done will not achieve peace or reconciliation.

Looking at the Australian experience, the period immediately following Rudd’s apology seems to be somewhat confused where both parties need to spend time recovering. The apologizer may need time to recover from the initial euphoria and release achieved by confession, and the recipients having achieved a long sought after goal feels that thrill of achievement followed by a loss in focus. Basically, it is a period of asking, “What now?” Resolutions might falter with “Oh my goodness, what have we done?” Hearts may harden with, “I didn’t do anything and those damn natives aren’t going to get a penny of my hard earned cash.” A period of confusion may ensue, or the journey to reconciliation can all progress nicely with sincerity and good will on both sides leading to some form of restitution. Restitution will open the door to reconciliation although I would suggest that the degree of reconciliation might be dependant on the size of the reparations.

Reconciliation might lead to forgiveness or it might not; it probably depends on just how badly the injured party had been treated. The relationship between reconciliation and forgiveness is complex each being at least partially dependent on the other. Consider the relationship between blacks and whites in the US; following the civil war a degree of reconciliation occurred but forgiveness did not. An apology is owed to the blacks for their enslavement by whites (Lee-St. John, 2007), and until an apology is given the hoped for reconciliation can never be complete and forgiveness is impossible. Apology, reconciliation, and forgiveness are the three doors to ethnic harmony. However, the human heart has a great capacity to forgive and time ultimately heals all.

Figure 2 evolved partially from the processes developed and followed by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) of the Republic of South Africa established soon after the collapse of apartheid. For the TRC the path to reconciliation began with confession which then led to apology followed by forgiveness and thence reconciliation. The emphasis on “truth” is unique and I have here, in Figure 2, represented “truth” by “confession.” The emphasis on “truth” was unique in the history of revolution because of the non-fixed nature of “truth.” (Gibson, 2004). Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki, the President of the Republic of South Africa, described the search for truth and its value to South Africa as follows:

At a critical moment in our history, as a people, we came to the conclusion that we must, together, end the killing. We took a deliberate decision that a violent conflict was neither in the interest of our country nor would it solve our problems.

Together, we decided that in the search for a solution to our problems, nobody should be demonised or excluded. We agreed that everybody should become part of the solution, whatever they might have done and represented in the past. This related both to negotiating the future of our country and working to build the new South Africa we had all negotiated (Mbeki, 2003).

Although the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is no longer active (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) its approach to reconciliation was rapid, unique, and in the main successful. Any person who felt that they had been a victim of apartheid could come forward to be heard by the TRC. Perpetrators of repressive acts could also come forward give testimony and seek amnesty. The process leading to reconciliation used by the TRC avoided

the bloodshed of revolution and in the annals of human conflict is unique. It will be interesting to see what the long term effects of this approach to reconciliation are and whether the rest of the world learned anything from the experience.

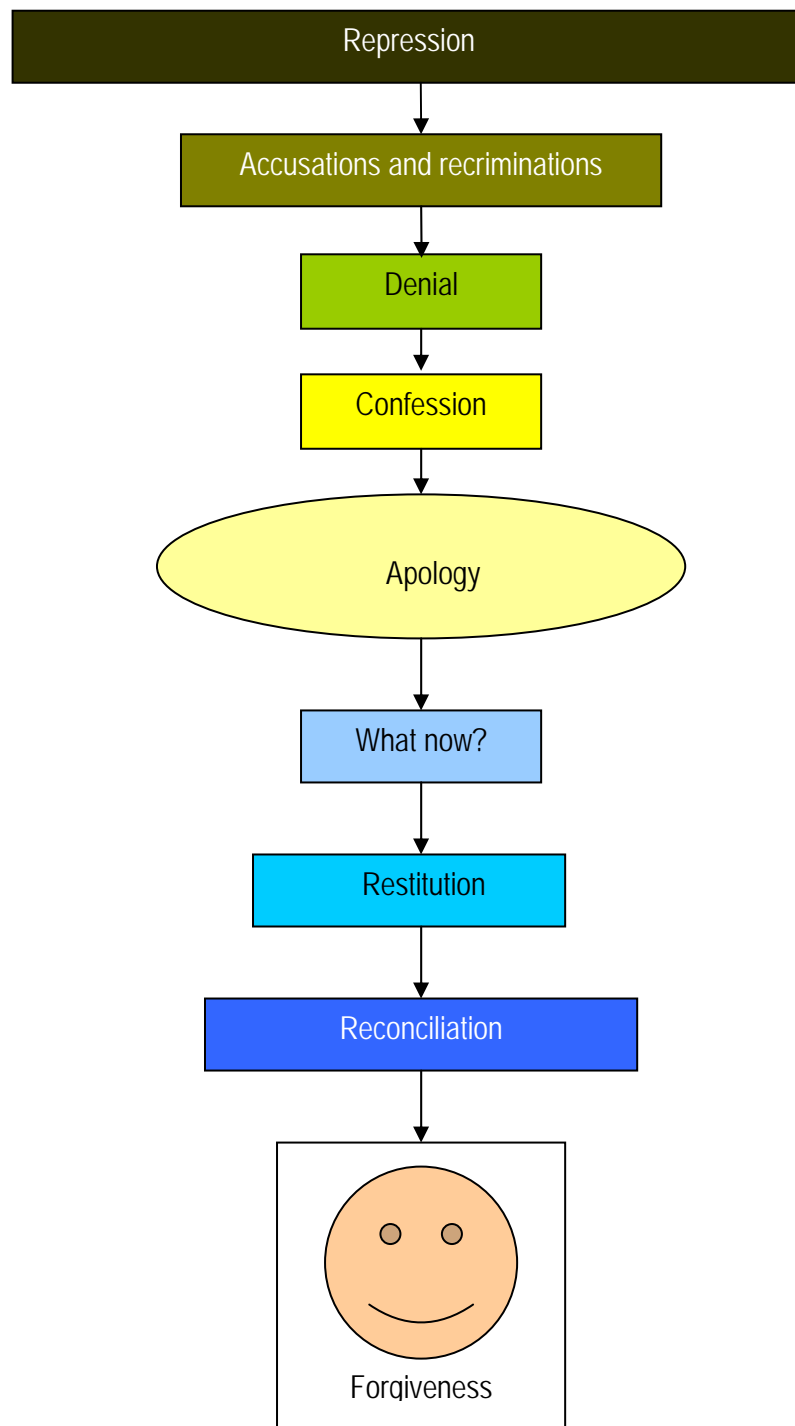


Figure 2. Stages in the process that leads to reconciliation and forgiveness for past repressions inflicted on citizen groups by governments.

Summary and conclusions

Political apologies are always greeted with a degree of skepticism. People tend to know and understand the weakness of the human heart and the presentation of apologies by political leaders often viewed as a kind of circus intended more for entertainment than moments of catharsis and revelation. Nevertheless, political apologies have the potential for doing great good to all who are involved including both the apologizer(s) and the recipients. Regardless of motivation, all apologies both great and small, provide some small impetus that allows people to draw a little closer together and in this alone there is value.

While I have emphasized the political apology motivated by economic reasons using the Japanese as an example of how such apologies might work, it was not for purposes of denigration or to point out callousness or insensitivity to those who gave and who that received such apologies. Ultimately all apologies are good and even those motivated by greed may be transformed in the process of bringing people of the world together. The political apology is the first step towards reconciliation and probably the most important. Some causes are ennobled by men and women who are endowed with that human attribute we call greatness. Men like Abraham Lincoln and Pope John Paul II helped define moral consciousness, and the causes they embraced were raised up simply by their attention. Political apologies have a similar ability, to raise up those who embrace the underdog, ennobling those who embrace their causes, conferring greatness on those who are strong enough to bend the knee.

References

- Anonymous. (1997). King apologized to Samis. Settlers In Support of Indigenous Sovereignty. October 10. Retrieved March, 2008, from <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/61/321.html>
- Barber, D. (1995). The Queen says sorry to wronged Maoris. *The Independent* (London). Retrieved March, 2008, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_19951102/ai_n14015635
- Depalma, A. (1998). Canada's Indigenous Tribes Receive Formal Apology. *The New York Times*, January 8. Retrieved March, 2008, from <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=980DE1DF1E30F93BA35752C0A96E958260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=all>
- Eriksen, L. (2007) Dane guilt. *Guardian Unlimited*. August 16. Retrieved March, 2008, from http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/news/archives/2007/08/16/dane_guilt.html
- Gibson, J.L. (2004) *Overcoming Apartheid: Can Truth Reconcile a Divided nation?* HSRC Press. Retrieved March, 2008, from <http://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/product.php?productid=2014&freedownload=1>
- Hook, G.R. (2008a). The political apology as a millennial phenomenon. *MAI Review*, 2, 13 pages, <http://review.mai.ac.nz>
- Hook, G.R. (2008b). Does the New Zealand Government owe Māori and apology? *MAI Review*, In press.
- Joint Communique. (1972). Joint Communiqué of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China. September 29. Retrieved March, 2008, from

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint_Communique_of_the_Government_of_Japan_and_the_Government_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China

Joint Resolution 19. (1993). An apology to Native Hawaiians on behalf of the United States for the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii. United States Public Law 103-150. November 23. Retrieved March, 2008, from <http://www.hawaii-nation.org/publawall.html> See also <http://www.AlohaQuest.com/apology/apology13.htm>

Kaifu, T. (1990). Summit meeting with President Roh Tae Woo in Japan. Retrieved March, 2008, from <http://www.ioc.utokyo.ac.jp/~worldjpn/documents/texts/JPKR/19900525.S1J.html>

Koizumi, J. (2005). Statement by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the ending of World War II. August 15. Retrieved March, 2008, from http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/koizumispeech/2005/08/15danwa_e.html

Lee-St. John, J. (2007). Should States apologize for slavery? Time. March 27. Retrieved March, 2008, from <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1603581,00.html>

Mbeki, T. (2003). Statement to the National Houses of Parliament and the Nation, at the tabling of the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation commission. April 15. Retrieved March, 2008, from <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/show.asp?type=sp&include=president/sp/2003/tm0415.html>

Miyazawa, K. (1992). Policy speech at the occasion of the visit to the Republic of Korea. Retrieved March, 2008, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_war_apology_statements_issued_by_Japan

Patrick, H. (2007). Japan's Economy: The Idiosyncratic Recovery Continues. Working Paper Series. Columbia University, August, No 253. Retrieved March, 2008, from http://digitalcommons.libraries.columbia.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1247&context=japan_wps

Phillips, K. (2007). Craig Apologizes; 'I Am Not Gay' The New York Times. March 21. Retrieved March, 2008, from <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/08/28/craig-apologizes-i-am-not-gay/?scp=4-b&sq=Larry+Craig+apologies&st=nyt>

Poupard, P. (1992). Faith can never conflict with reason. L'Osservatore Romano, October 31. Retrieved March, 2008, from <http://www.unigre.it/cssf/comuni/documenti/chiesa/Galilei.html>

Rudd, K. (2008). Kevin Rudd's Sorry Speech. The Sydney Morning Herald. February 13. Retrieved March, 2008, from <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/kevin-rudds-sorry-speech/2008/02/13/1202760379056.html>

Tavuchis, N. (1991). Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation. Stanford University Press.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truth_and_Reconciliation_Commission_\(South_Africa\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truth_and_Reconciliation_Commission_(South_Africa)) and <http://www.doj.g-ov.za/trc/>

UN General Assembly. (2007). Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. September 14. Retrieved March, 2008, from <http://www.iwgia.org/sw248.asp>

Author Notes

The author acknowledges the assistance of L. Parehaereone Raumati in researching and debating the content of this manuscript. This research was funded by the Institute for Māori Research and Development, Ohope.

G. Raumati Hook (Ngāti Mutunga, Ngāti Toa, Te Atiawa) is an Adjunct Professor at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand and Director of the Institute for Māori Research and Development.

E-mail: raumatihook@clear.net.nz