

Place and forgiveness

In one of the sections of a previous article,¹ I gave some consideration to place in a treatment that dealt more with the connection between identity and forgiveness. Here the emphasis is the other way around, bringing place to the forefront and expanding its significance for forgiveness.

The significance of place

In order to respond adequately to place with respect to forgiveness, the significance of place itself must be

acknowledged. This significance is the more obvious when it is different from what is expected, and is particularly clear to New Zealanders when

they hope that there will be a more positive relation with their own place. In *My Home Now* (the title of which indicates that a place in New Zealand is significant for the contributors), a reviewer points out, however, that “[w]ith a small number of exceptions, the main character is not New Zealand, but the countries left behind.”²

Why do first generation immigrants remain rooted in the country left behind? The reason may be that, although they live literally in their adopted country, they are not really *inhabiting* it. Certainly, the significance of place is sometimes expressed in terms of inhabiting it. John Inge refers to the work of Martin Heidegger,³ who sees the relation between people and places as that of inhabiting them. He considers this relation as a well-considered inhabiting that gets at the very essentials of the matter.⁴

Heidegger has been criticised: Inge quotes David Harvey who “accuses Heidegger of ‘simply wanting to withdraw from the world of the market and attempt to find

methods of recovering authentic human existence by meditation and contemplation.”⁵ Inge himself, however, has already countered this by linking the inhabiting of place with community.⁶

He refers as well to Wendell Berry who writes of “common experience and common effort on a common ground to which one willingly belongs.”⁷ Inge also quotes Daniel Kemmis: “To *inhabit* a place is to dwell there in a practised way, in a

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way which relies upon certain regular, trusted, habits of behaviour.... We have largely lost the sense that our capacity to live well in a place might depend on our ability to relate to neighbours.”⁸

Part of this “relating to neighbours” may of course involve questions of forgiveness: if people have pursued the matter of relating to neighbours comprehensively, and especially if they have seen it as common experience rooted in common ground, the place concerned may become an essential factor in the memories that do not allow the question of forgiveness to be stifled. This can also be expressed in Heidegger’s terms: a *well-considered inhabiting of place* may lead to remembering happenings connected with place for which forgiveness is required.

New Zealanders do in fact remember happenings connected with place for which forgiveness may be required. For example, they may go to a place where someone has been killed through dangerous driving, leave flowers there and erect

a cross. The place is not merely a neutral background to what has happened,⁹ but is closely connected with the event.

This is probably all the more so when people leave flowers and other memorabilia at a place where someone has been murdered. It is much more likely that the bereaved will pass by this place in the course of their daily lives than they will pass the place of an accident on the open road. Questions of forgiveness

can certainly arise in connection with what has happened at this place.

Those close to the murdered person who are interviewed by news media are

often asked whether they can forgive. The frequency of the asking of these questions, and even the vehemence with which some people deny that they can ever forgive, show that the issue of forgiveness is still alive among New Zealanders. It is taken to a further dimension when some interviewers give the impression that they are disappointed if interviewees say they can forgive, and/or they imply that interviewees are naïve to think this. Their own naiveté may be shown, however, when they ask, “Can you forgive and *forget*?” This implies that it will not be possible to forgive if the event is remembered. It raises the question whether it is possible both to remember and forgive.

It is in this connection that place becomes relevant again. For part of place’s significance is that it may not allow people involved to forget what happened there. Dennis C. Duling points out that already “[t]he ancient Greeks and Romans observed that we often remember events in relation to *where* something happened, that is, in relation to *place* or *space*”.¹⁰

Place as an agent of remembering is essential for forgiveness because, far from it being dependent on forgetting, *remembering* is its condition. As Vladimir Jankélévitch expresses it, "Nothing could be more evident: in order to forgive it is necessary to remember."¹¹ Paul Tillich also writes: "Forgiving presupposes remembering." He does not see this as the kind of remembering that continues to harbour rancour; but the kind where guilt has been acknowledged and can now be lived with.¹²

It is true that Jeremiah 31:34, at the culmination of the new covenant passage, writes of Yahweh forgiving the people's iniquity and no longer remembering their sin. But, for one thing, people cannot "be like God", and do what God does; for another, it is possible that the force of "not remembering" here is that God no longer allows the usual consequences of breaking the covenant to operate. God no longer remembering sin is a more personally and decisively theological way of expressing what Tillich does when he writes of acknowledging guilt and now being able to live with it. For this, people need all mediation possible and place may be one source of such mediation. Standing and meditating at the place of an accident or murder may at least lead to wondering about the kind of people the perpetrators are in a more considered way than would have been possible at the time of the event.¹³

The end of Jeremiah 31 (vv. 38-40) could also be seen as grounding the forgiveness of verse 34 in place when it promises in almost brutal concreteness that the city will be rebuilt, and even that a whole valley of dead bodies and ashes will be sacred to God. "Cities" can be rebuilt in more ways than one.¹⁴

There are also biblical passages specifically relating forgiveness to *inhabiting* places ("inhabiting," as mentioned above in connection with Heidegger). Isaiah 44:21-28 begins strikingly by calling on the people to remember that God will not forget them, and this is justified by the assurance of forgiveness: God has swept away their transgressions. The

prophet then bursts into a hymn calling on *places* to sing: the heavens, the depths of the earth, the mountains, forest and every tree are to sing of God's redeeming the people, who on that basis then hear God as the creator of all things. It might be said that God's assurances are a startling instance of Heidegger's well-considered inhabiting that gets at the very essence of things because, while God frustrates the omens of liars and turns back the wise, God also confirms the word of his servant, promising that Jerusalem will be *inhabited*, that the cities of Judah will be rebuilt, and the foundation of the temple laid. It could even be said that this lays the foundation for inhabiting a place as "common experience and common effort on a common ground".¹⁵

The prophetic flow shows God's forgiveness as the foundation for re-establishing place, and place as essential for continuing renewed life of community as the necessary fruits of forgiveness. God's forgiveness is experienced in matters that people do not usually combine: the witness of others that God forgave them and did not forget them; a response to this that is so comprehensive it encompasses literally everything; a forgiveness so deep and so high that people also know God as the creator of everything. The forgiveness is then grounded and worked out in the places where people live, however devastated they may be by accident or murder.

Jesus' forgiveness of a woman in Luke 7:36-50 is set more intimately in place than in Isaiah 44: the place is a house with those present reclining around a table,¹⁶ where a woman of the city comes and anoints Jesus' feet. The host of the house himself, however, has neither washed Jesus' feet, kissed him, nor anointed him. In the words of Kemmis, we could say that the host has not inhabited place in a practised way with regular, trusted habits of behaviour. But the woman does inhabit place in such a way: hers is a response given to person and place provoking forgiveness. At the end of the story, we are back at the table: those sitting there are talking among themselves,

but Jesus is talking to the woman assuring her of the peace that is the result of the forgiveness proceeding from the trusted habits of behaviour of the place, which the host did not practise but the woman did. Previously the place had not been used in a trusted way just as places of accident and murder in New Zealand are not. In the New Testament story, the woman and Jesus make something different of the place; the challenge is whether something comparable could be done in New Zealand places.

Place as preparatory ground for forgiveness

It is certainly not automatic that New Zealand places of accident and murder can become places of forgiveness, nor is it automatic that any place at all, without any necessary connection with accident or murder, can be a medium of forgiveness. In any place, it takes time to link "common experience on common ground" (Berry) with forgiveness. It may be more that place is the preparatory ground for forgiveness, which works itself out over a period of time as a factor in the memory necessary for it. It is a process that may also draw in the significance of a combination of places.¹⁷

Indeed, the significance of a combination of places that could ultimately have some bearing on any place in New Zealand may begin to be expressed in one country before it continues in another. Different people could provide many different examples, but for some it might begin, for example, at a university in one country where there are groups with different tribal origins. To a large extent, they work together well, but an outsider hears of underlying tensions, and these do surface in a crisis.

All this happens in a place that makes itself seethingly obvious, the humid air seemingly causing a pulsing growth almost overnight, trees blossoming at apparently wrong times, a sudden shower tempering the aridity, but then disappearing as quickly as it appeared. It is a place without rest or

respite, and both the active life and the unexpected phenomena of the place are reflected in the creative and problematic relations of the people. Both place and people blow up together, in one way creatively, in another disruptively.

Outsiders, receiving their impressions from both the place and the people, realise reticently that one of the main tribes needs forgiveness for seeking to become too dominant, while another needs forgiveness for imagining a lust for dominance that is not present. The possibility of God's forgiveness may also arise through place because some members of different tribes worship together in the chapel with its walls open on two sides to the world.

Here, there is common experience on common ground, combined with the challenge for two or more sides to accept each other as equally forgiven by God, without allowing their forgiveness of each other to be swept away by ethnic fear. This common experience on common ground in the chapel can be the place mediating God's forgiveness worked out in the tensions of their lives together as a restored relationship that overcomes ethnic fear.

Outsiders are caught up in the place, the people, the issues and the possibilities, yet realise they are on the periphery here, both in the place and among the people. This is where the significance of places in combination becomes clear: when the outsiders return to their own place they realise that they are not on the periphery, and they experience the places familiar to them from childhood doing nothing less than causing peace to well up from the land.

At the same time, however, since those who have returned to their own place *remember* the other place associated with people and forgiveness, they wonder whether there are not comparable questions of

forgiveness in their own place as well. They may realise, for example, that there are places in Aotearoa New Zealand that some sections of the community associate with defeat and deprivation. It is not quite the same as a present place of accident or murder, but it can also be a question of associating places of past significance with places of the present and to be reminded by them that forgiveness is necessary between the people who have been involved.¹⁸

Thus, places are preparatory ground for forgiveness. Andrew O'Hagan writes in a novel of a

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character's former school: “Ampleforth was a merciful place and a truthful one. It gave me the means of forgiving others before I sought to be forgiven myself.”¹⁹

Indeed, it may be the very combination of physical places, buildings, people, and what happens between them that leads people to recognise, if only subsequently, a relationship that transcends them all, which is realised as God's forgiveness. The place as preparatory ground for forgiveness goes beyond any “thing”. The new life of forgiveness does come through things and people, but is not confined to them. It burns like anything, but is not burnt out. As Inge puts it, specifically in connection with Christianity, “the Christian religion is not the religion of salvation *from* places, it is the religion of salvation *in* and *through* places.”²⁰ As preparatory ground for forgiveness, place is behind and before us; we never know how it might yet work on us, even in a place of accident or murder. God's forgiveness is known not least in New Zealand places, and it is in being taken out of their isolation from each

other and from places elsewhere, and in their combination with people's witness and responses, that the scepticism often heard in New Zealand concerning forgiveness can be overcome.

Place, identity, and forgiveness

I noted above that when people return from overseas to their own place, and when they remember the overseas place with its questions of forgiveness, they ask themselves whether comparable questions arise in their own place. They do this because they have become different people, having changed their identity in the workings of the two places together. In the strange place, they change to people who realise that there are needs of which they previously had no knowledge. Further, whatever the deficiencies of the

people in the strange place, the outsiders learn to know them well enough to realise that they are not acting inadequately only because they belong to a different ethnicity: they face many problems that outsiders have not heard of. Thus the outsiders have changed their attitudes and may even have experienced forgiveness from the natives of the strange place because of this change.

When people return to their own place, they are relieved to be away from the strange place, the familiarity of the home place contributing to the relief. But the very peace welling up from the land, in such contrast to the place just left, causes them to wonder whether the peace itself is not concealing stresses that require forgiveness. So, returning people proceed into another degree of different identity. They become those who no longer assume that there are no comparable problems in their own place; they are open to forgiveness being necessary in their own place as well. The change in identity is crucial, and the

change has been accomplished at least partly by place and the combination of places.

Place playing a role in changing people fits in with Inge's contention that "[c]ommunity and places each build up the identity of the other."²¹ This mutual building of identity is perhaps clearest when childhood impressions are seen from the point of view of adults. Adults realise that, when they were children, there was no question about who they were. They were totally accepting of, and accepted by, everything that went to make up their environment. They belonged, it was all totally natural; what else could there be?²² People, especially their parents and siblings, their religion and their place all belonged together in one seamless whole. The place, the house, the streets, the buildings, the school, the church, the bush, the hills framing them all provided the only world that existed. Even when these people left, whether as children or adults, they were likely to return to that place, as much in imaging mind as in body, and know that this place and the people who were there define who they are.

So the place builds people's identity. As adults they may realise that they also build the identity of the place. Especially if they go back later, they may find that they have built up an identity of the place that is no longer completely accurate, and perhaps never was.²³ But that has its own significance. The *picture* they have built up has become part of their identity. In any case, they have built up the identity of the place by *inhabiting* it both in body and imagination. This has been done through their family and community life, what they learned at school, the presence they knew in church, which may have streamed out from there into the streets, up the country roads, down the rivers, and into the bush and the hills – and the rest of their lives.

The limitation of this mutual building of place and community is that people may bask in it for itself, or they are not fully conscious of it. But the mutual building of identity by place and community can be

applied to forgiveness when people do realise that they may be able to translate this relational identity into relationships with other people in other places.

Such a question is posed urgently when people are faced with others from another country who are now disorientated in a new place.²⁴ These others might know where they have come from, but do not know where they are going. They may also become aware that their presence in this new place is resented. Newcomers themselves, however, may not have taken advantage of whatever opportunities they have been given to acclimatise, and so retreat into their own groups, ignoring the place as much as they can.

This situation means that there is need for forgiveness on both sides. The native-born people need to be forgiven for their resentment, the newcomers for their reticence and indifference. But if the native-born become aware of an effective being of belonging in place, they realise they are able to use it as a foundation for improving relations. They realise the significance of what the newcomers have left behind, and, instead of asking them how they like "our beautiful country" (perhaps with the implication that they are lucky to be here), ask them about their own place, being prepared to appreciate its significance. Since they are now aware of the significance of their own place and of the different significance of the other place, they become different people; they have changed their identity in no longer being resentful.

When newcomers observe and accept this changed identity, they are able to forgive the resentment of the native-born. They may be able to do this because the native-born have pointed out to them the qualities of the present place and suggested ways in which they can respond to it. If they respond, they give the place a new identity that in turn changes theirs. When the identity of newcomers is changed in respect to place, this in turn enables the native-born to forgive them their indifference and reticence.²⁵

"Community and places each

build[ing] up the identity of the other"²⁶ is the most fundamental connection between place and forgiveness because of the close relation between forgiveness and the building of (changed) identity. An essential factor for many people in this is the relationship of a sacred place with the community where God's forgiveness may be responded to as the most fundamental factor in the relationship between place and people: when people know that, for example, a church building is an essential element of their identity, they may be reminded of the challenge of forgiveness in the community of the church. Perhaps the very deficiencies of relationships in this community, and the challenge they pose, are a channel for changed identity where people know they are able to live with the deficiencies of relations in a place that means so much to them. Some members of the community are at peace in living with deficiencies, others are not. When it is possible to live with both sides, however, some realise it is because of God's forgiveness. God's forgiveness is entirely bound up with the place and the community, but in nature it surpasses even the forgiveness they achieve together. Those people who have experienced God's excess of forgiveness, and are aware of it happening in one place, the church, may be the ones able to stimulate those who have suffered accident or murder in other places to contemplate the possibilities of forgiveness.

When those who have been so affected return to the place where these things happened, they may find there a renewed channel for God's forgiveness. I wrote above that people returning to a place later may find that, in the meantime, they have built up an identity of the place that is no longer completely accurate – but their recreated identity may be more genuine now, and not only with places of accident and murder. This is especially apt for many of the people reading this article (as well as the one writing it): when former students return to their schools, colleges or universities for example, they are often more positive about the place than they were when they

studied there. At that time, they may have been resentful that their views (possibly especially theological ones) either were not or did not seem to be accepted; they were unforgiving of some of the staff and students.

But when they return to the place and view it in terms of their subsequent life experience, since this has made them into different kinds of people, the very place seems to stimulate them to forgiveness. They are glad to be back; they walk into the lecture rooms, the chapel, the common room, the library, and pause, looking all around them, taking it all in again with new, forgiving eyes. If they can do this, it is because they are themselves being forgiven. The presence of the forgiving God does

not so much stream out of the place as come welling back in from the country roads, the city streets, and the buildings of workplaces. Staff members or fellow students who know they were not necessarily guiltless in the previous lack of forgiveness have also changed their identity, for example from being only teacher or student to being fellow Christian, and, from this new identity, they come to know the interaction of people, places, attitudes and experiences as more than the sum of its parts – as God's forgiveness for them all together.

Such forgiveness may take place only after some time, but it is a gift worth waiting for. Forgiveness may also be achieved, however, in a place in much shorter time. Universities and colleges including theological ones, for example, do not always fail in the present when the need arises. Nor does the need necessarily arise only with newcomers to the country. It is possible that indigenous students who come to study among students of the settler culture feel diffident about their position. It is especially difficult for indigenous people not only to be placed in the minority but also to be treated as only one more "ethnic" minority. At best

they may be obliged to explain their culture, at worst, be forced to be apologetic about it – all this in their own country. It is not surprising that they can be so diffident that they hardly seem to be relating to anyone or anything at all. They have lost their identity.

There is a striking contrast, however, when such students invite others to a traditional meeting place (in Aotearoa New Zealand, to a marae). Suddenly, the visitors can be addressed by confident, lively voices,

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welcoming and explaining what is about to happen. The voices fit in perfectly with the traditional meeting place and its buildings, surrounded by the hills, bush and sea that could only be in this country.

At first the visitors do not recognise the self-assured voices, and they realise only gradually that they belong to indigenous students who, in the life of the college, are so nervous and diffident that they often give the impression of being totally out of place. Now they are behaving with such self-assurance as to give the impression that they are at home. They *are* at home; this is their place. They sound like different people – they *are* different people. Here they can speak their own language in more ways than the literal. In this place they can express their true identity. The visitors begin to realise that their own place, their buildings, may alienate other people.

A redeeming feature is that those visitors who recognise and appreciate a different identity in a different place are now able to forgive the diffidence of the indigenous. Then (what is more to the point), since the visitors are also changed people, having dropped their resentment to diffidence, the

indigenous people are also able to forgive them for not understanding their diffidence about being in a place that was strange to them. Both sides may have been simply incapable of forgiveness beforehand because only those who recognise and affirm the identity of each other in the place where they are can forgive. That some people do not realise how closely their own and others' identity is bound up with a particular place and that the place they take for granted is alienating to others may be the reason why they cannot understand the diffidence of others who do not have the same relationship with their place. But place revealing identity to both sides can itself be an agent of

forgiveness.

This example of people from different kinds of places indicates that forgiveness is not only for deliberate wrongs done, but, more essentially, for what we fail to recognise and fail to be; it is forgiveness for what we are. In *The Spire*, a novel by William Golding, the following conversation takes place: “Well. Forgive me then.” “Naturally I forgive you. I forgive you.” “I beg you. No forgiveness for this or that, for this candle or this insult. Forgive me for being what I am.”²⁷

There is something so basically exposing, challenging and invigorating about recognising and accepting our identity, *who we are* in relation to people and place, that it is perhaps above all in such experience that people know God's forgiveness. There is no greater acceptance than being accepted for who we are, where we are.²⁸ This exposure that challenges us to recognise God's forgiveness also invigorates us to attempt forgiveness again and again with our human fellows – and possibly in connection with a different kind of place such as one of accident or murder.

For, in realising who we are and

how this relates to forgiveness, place can have a crucial role to play. Indigenous place, for example as described above, can constantly prompt us towards forgiveness, both in accepting it for ourselves and in offering it to others. This does not apply only to indigenous places. As Inge puts it, referring to the experiences of John Wesley and Thomas Merton, “The fact is that invariably those who recount what they believe to have been what we might term a ‘sacramental experience’ never forget the location of that experience”.²⁹ Place can then jump from that experience to people who have never been there. Aldersgate Street has become significant for many people after Wesley, and not only Methodists.

This may be the climactic feature of the relationship between place and forgiveness: we take it for granted that forgiveness can jump from God to people, and then through them, to different people. But this “jumping” quality applies to places as well. When people have experienced forgiveness in a place, such as the indigenous place described above, and knowing this has become a place effecting forgiveness, they are challenged to make their own places places of forgiveness too. Forgiveness may jump from any place even to a place of accident and murder, or vice versa, and cause both places to demonstrate their own particular capacity for forgiveness. The forgiveness effected by place, being of such a nature that it can jump to another place, is then capable of jumping from one group of people to another as well. This “jumping” can also have so much of the “surprised by joy”³⁰ quality that the surprise reveals God’s forgiveness.

Conclusion

The question of forgiveness arises in New Zealand places including those that have been the scene of accident or murder. Those who say they can forgive are sometimes regarded as naïve. This may be partly because questioners do not consider the potential of place for causing remembering and forgiving. They forget that people may return to the

place and find new directions through their meditations there. Indeed, the place itself may work on us. Isaiah 44:21-28 draws us into this, beginning with an assurance of God’s forgiveness, but then calling on all sorts of *places* to sing, and proceeding to promise that places will be rebuilt and inhabited. The foundational assurance of forgiveness and its consequences are expressed through places.

New Zealanders may be stimulated to forgiveness in their places when they realise that the Isaiah passage actually begins by calling on people to remember, and realise further that God is known in their response combined with the astonished apprehension that everything about them can be responding with them as well. Such forgiveness is grounded and worked out in the very places where people live, and this can be no less so in New Zealand places however devastated they may be by accident or murder or even just diffidence.

God’s forgiveness may also be mediated through a religious place where contending parties worship together and where they are challenged to accept each other as equally forgiven by God, without allowing their forgiveness of each other to be swept away by prejudice towards each other. There can be a fundamental connection between a religious place and forgiveness when people see the relationship between forgiveness and their identity in that place. For, when they know that a church building is an essential part of their identity, they can be reminded of the challenge of forgiveness in the church community. This community has its deficiencies, but people recognise that it is because of God’s forgiveness that they are able to live with these deficiencies. People who have experienced God’s excess of forgiveness and are aware of it happening in a particular place, may be able to stimulate those who have suffered any kind of deficiency or indeed even accident or murder at other places to contemplate the possibilities of forgiveness.

But it does not need to be a

religious place for this to happen. The combination of any place with people and what happens between them there may lead the people to recognise a relationship that transcends them all, and which is realised as God’s forgiveness. God’s forgiveness lies in the total experience coming through the relationship of place and people, but it bursts the confines of them both. People come to know the interaction of their attitudes and experiences as God’s forgiveness of them all together. When this happens through a conscious return to a former place, the very place is redeemed, and continues to channel forgiveness.

There is something so basically exposing, challenging and invigorating about recognising a changed identity both of ourselves and others at a redeemed place that it is perhaps the experience above all in which we know God’s forgiveness. God’s forgiveness is known in that exposure that does not leave us naked but challenges us to be clothed, and invigorates us with the right mind to offer forgiveness to other people as well. It is God’s forgiveness because it does not allow us to keep it private, but invigorates us to try “seventy times seven” with our human fellows.

But God’s forgiveness does not allow us to assume either that forgiveness cannot possibly be connected with the effect our ordinary places are having on us. We discover God’s forgiveness too as the kind that is able to jump from one place to any place, and then to people everywhere, and even to New Zealand places of accident and murder, to the people suffering there, and not least to those who are sceptical about forgiveness. The person forgiven by God will encourage the sceptic to change from someone who turns away in severance to someone prepared to re-establish relationships.

When we change ourselves, have our identity recognised, and also recognise the identity of others in different places, the ensuing reciprocal forgiveness finds a richness that surpasses the forgiveness of either side singly. It is

such a revelation of new creation that it can be the vehicle for recognising God's forgiveness that works through the vehicle but surpasses both sides of it more than the relation of human forgiveness surpasses the forgiveness of each side singly. It is of the very excess of God's forgiveness that no New Zealand place of any kind can be excluded from its revelation.

Endnotes

1. Maurice Andrew, "Forgiveness, Identity, and Witness", *Stimulus* Vol. 15 No. 3 (Aug 2007): 2-6.
2. Linda Olsson, review of Gail Thomas and Leanne McKenzie (eds), *My Home Now*, stories of first generation immigrants to New Zealand (Auckland: Cape Catley, 2005) in *New Zealand Books*, Vol. 16 No. 1 (2006): 19. Digby Hannah, "Experience of Place in Australian Identity and Experience", *Pacifica* Vol. 17 No. 3 (2004): 305, writes that there is the same "strong sense of alienation" among recently arrived immigrants to Australia.
3. John Inge, *A Christian Theology of Place* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 18-19.
4. Martin Heidegger, "Bauen Wohnen Denken" in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Teil II (Fullingen: Neske, 1967), 32. "Building Dwelling Thinking" in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, tr. Albert Hofstadter (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1971), 157. The German is: "Das Verhältnis von Mensch und Raum ist nichts anderes als das wesentlich gedachte Wohnen."
5. Inge, *A Christian Theology of Place*, 129.
6. Inge, 127.
7. Inge, 131.
8. Inge, 131.
9. Inge, 33, referring to Anthony Giddens, writes that the setting of Genesis 2 in the Garden of Eden "is not some neutral backdrop". Michael Jackson, *The Accidental Anthropologist* (Dunedin: Longacre Press, 2006), 288, describes how even a neutral place can be transformed into a place of your own. Even in the desert when you "build a fire, boil a billy, lay out your swag, an area that has no prior or particularly personal associations begins to take on meanings that are uniquely yours." It is one of the miracles of human life that something other, "it", can become uniquely "ours".
10. Dennis C. Duling, "Social Memory and Biblical Studies: Theory, Method, and Application", *Biblical Theology Bulletin* Vol. 36 No. 1 (2006): 2 (Duling's emphasis).
11. Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Forgiveness*, trans.

Andrew Kelley (Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005 [1956]), 56.

12. Paul Tillich, *The Eternal Now: Sermons* (London: SCM Press, 1963), 23.
13. Miroslav Volf, *Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 173-177, has a more literal understanding of God's forgetting and believes that people who forgive can at least let "the forgiven offense slip into oblivion." In *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006), Volf has a much more variegated approach. Here he writes of God forgetting being in a metaphorical sense, and in the course of the book too, it is clear that he has not forgotten his harsh interrogator during the Yugoslav crisis, though he has forgiven him as far as he is able. He lays great stress on people remembering rightly, truthfully for healing and learning by people committed to overcoming evil with good. As becomes clear in the last part of the book, Volf's primary concern is that forgetting, or as he would rather put it, "not-coming-to-mind" is possible ultimately in "the world of perfect love". That is, he sees it eschatologically, though reconciliation now is also reaching for completion in that world of love. Thus the word "end" in the title is in the sense of goal: "the proper goal of the memory of wrongs suffered – its appropriate end– is the formation of the communion of love between all people, including victims and perpetrators" (232).
14. David Brown, *God and Enchantment of Place: Reclaiming Human Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 182, writes of the shapes of streets and appropriate vistas raising vision beyond the mundane; involvement with the history of the street draws us into a sense of interdependency and thus perhaps towards a sense of dependence on God. See Brown's whole section on "The City as Place of Encounter" (163-189).
15. Wendell Berry as cited by Inge, 131.
16. Brown, 152, points out too that the grounds for giving value to place can sometimes be domestic.
17. Brown, 232, sees present placedness as worthwhile and intelligible only if set in a larger context for which a spiritual journey is necessary, with the journey itself being indispensable, and both places being transformed in the process.
18. This is one illustration of travel being about more than reaching a destination.

Brown, 306, sees the significance of travel's destination in giving value to one's tasks in life; "put in more explicitly religious terms, it is all about the dignity of vocation and providential direction."

19. Andrew O'Hagan, *Be Near Me* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), 101.
20. Inge, 92.
21. Inge, xi, 125-136.
22. See Anne Salmond, "Ancestral Places" in Kynan Gentry and Gavin McLean (eds), *Heartlands: New Zealand historians write about places where history happened* (Auckland: Penguin, 2006), 135: "In my own childhood in Gisborne on the East Coast, our large family was the heart of the world, and our house in Childers Road was the hub of the universe."
23. See Kynan Gentry, "Introduction: Place, Heritage and Identity", *Heartlands*, 15-16.
24. See also my previous article, "Forgiveness, Identity, and Witness", *Stimulus* Vol. 15 No. 3 (Aug 2007): 4-5.
25. As in the article mentioned in the previous note, the expressions here and elsewhere are partly an adaptation of Christopher Marshall's excellent description of forgiveness in *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment* (Grand Rapids, MI / Cambridge: Auckland/ Sydney: Eerdmans/ Lime Grove House, 2001), 277.
26. Inge, xi, 125-136.
27. William Golding, *The Spire* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), 203.
28. See H.R. Mackintosh on Wilhelm Herrmann in *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness* (London: Nisbet, 1927), 46-47.
29. Inge, *A Christian Theology of Place*, 70. (Other references to place and sacramental experience are to be found in Inge, x, 36, 39, 45 and 100.) Inge is not the only writer to relate the sacramental to place: Brown, *God and Enchantment of Place*, 88, gives his overarching theme as "the way in which God can come sacramentally close to his world and vouchsafe experiences of himself through the material."
30. The title of C.S. Lewis's autobiography (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955), itself a quotation from Wordsworth.



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