

# Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace

By Miroslav Volf



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We are at our human best when we give and forgive. But we live in a world in which it makes little sense to do either one. In our increasingly graceless culture, where can we find the motivation to give? And how do we learn to forgive when forgiving seems counterintuitive or even futile? A deeply personal yet profoundly thoughtful book, Free of Charge explores these questions – and the further questions to which they give rise – in light of God's generosity and Christ's sacrifice for us. Miroslav Volf draws from popular culture as well as from a wealth of literary and theological sources, weaving his rich reflections around the sturdy frame of Paul's vision of God's grace and Martin Luther's interpretation of that vision. Blending the best of theology and spirituality, he encourages us to echo in our own lives God's generous giving and forgiving. A fresh examination of two practices at the heart of the Christian faith – giving and forgiving – the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lenten study book for 2006 is at the same time an introduction to Christianity. Even more, it is a compelling invitation to Christian faith as a way of life. "Miroslav Volf, one of the most celebrated theologians of our day, offers us a unique interweaving of intense reflection, vivid and painfully personal stories and sheer celebration of the giving God ... I cannot remember having read a better account of what it means to say that Jesus suffered for us in our place." - Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury



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## **Editorial Review**

### From Publishers Weekly

Arguing that Christians are called to imitate God's generosity, Volf, a theology professor at Yale Divinity School and Director of the Yale Center for Faith & Culture, explores what that looks like in the area of giving and forgiving. Volf relies heavily on Martin Luther's writings in this accessible book that demonstrates how to build "a bridge from self-centeredness to generosity." The first half of the book, on giving, and the second half, on forgiveness, are divided by a short interlude that tries to connect the two parts. While there is a relationship between the two, this book might have been more successful as two separate volumes. Nonetheless, Volf's thinking and writing are lucid and instructive. He eschews pop psychology, relying instead on biblical, ethical and theological understandings of God's generosity. Volf never shies away from the difficult personal and communal issues that giving and forgiving pose; the result is a practical and hopeful resource for those struggling to understand their responsibilities in these areas. Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote the foreword.

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#### From the Back Cover

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### About the Author

Miroslav Volf is the Henry B. Wright Professor of Theology at Yale Divinity School and Director of the Yale Center for Faith & Culture. He has published and edited nine books and over 60 scholarly articles, including his book Exclusion and Embrace, which won the 2002 Grawemeyer Award in Religion.

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