Dear Madam/Sir

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by RMIT University, that is supported by various religious institutions such as the (a) Islamic Society of Victoria, (b) Swanston St Church of Christ, (c) City Life Church, (d) Crossway Baptist Church, and (e) Kollel Menachem Lubavitch. This information sheet describes the project in straightforward language, or ‘plain English’. Please read this sheet carefully and be confident that you understand its contents before deciding whether to participate. If you have any questions about the project, please ask Professor Trang Thomas (see contact details above).

Who is involved in this research project? Why is it being conducted?

Adam Fox is conducting this research as a Fourth Year Psychology student and Professor Trang Thomas at RMIT University will be acting supervisor. The RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, have all given their written support for this research. The aim of this research is to help psychologists understand the way forgiveness is viewed by different individuals.

Why have you been approached?

You have been approached on the basis that you identify yourself as belonging to either the Muslim, Christian or Jewish religion, or because you do not identify yourself with belonging to a particular religious group. You have not been approached randomly, but rather, have been identified by one of the researchers or by one of your friends, family or acquaintances that might be aware of you being affiliated or not affiliated to a particular religious group. This is referred to as a snowball sampling technique and it involves people who have already been participants in a research project providing the names of other people who might be suitable participants.

Because your participation is voluntary, we will not be asking for informed consent from you. Instead, it is assumed your participation will involve completing questionnaires online or in hardcopy, on your own, at a time of your own choosing, and by voluntarily submitting your responses online or by reply paid postage.

What is the project about? What are the questions being addressed?

This project will be about understanding how forgiveness is perceived by different individuals, with different beliefs. A total of 400 participants will be participating in this study.

If I agree to participate, what will I be required to do?

Participation will require the full completion of various questionnaires that will take approximately 20 minutes of your time. Questionnaires will ask you about your religious identity, the extent that you believe in religion, your perceptions and attitudes towards forgiveness. An example question related to forgiveness would be, “I am likely to harbour grudges”. An example question related to
how you perceive religion would be, “Ultimately, there is only one correct answer to each religious question”. If you feel uncomfortable to respond to a particular question, you may discontinue at any point. You are asked to answer questions as honestly as possible. As a rule, your first reaction to a question is usually the best to use.

**What are the risks or disadvantages associated with participation?**
There are no foreseeable risks for your participation outside your normal day-to-day activities.

**What are the benefits associated with participation?**
The results of the study will assist in various forgiveness therapies for individuals with different religious and non-religious backgrounds. The results will help psychologists understand how different religious beliefs and backgrounds are important factors to consider in therapeutic settings.

**What will happen to the information I provide?**
Your completed questionnaire is anonymous and will not ask for your name or any information that can identify you personally. Your questionnaire will be kept confidential at RMIT University for 15 years before being destroyed. Only a small number of people may will have access to this information for research purposes. Results may be published in psychological journals, made available to various religious groups, conferences, and various other sources.

**What are my rights as a participant?**

- You have the right to withdrawal your participation at any time without prejudice.
- You have the right to have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed, provided it can be reliably identified, and provided that so doing does not increase the risk for the participant.
- You have the right to have any questions answered at any time.

**Whom should I contact if I have any questions?**
Please contact Professor Trang Thomas in the first instance on 9925 3294. If your require support for any issue that may have resulted from your participation, you may approach any one of the following contacts below that can assist you in finding a support service appropriate to addressing your needs:

- **Islamic Council of Victoria**: Rowan Gould (Chief Executive Officer), 9328 2067
- **Kolbel Menachem Lubavitch**: Rabbi Groner (Rabbi), 0438 613 770
- **Swanston Street Church of Christ**: Alan Baker (Associate Pastor), 9623 9199
- **City Life Church**: Ask for ‘Pastor on duty’, 9871 8300
- **Crossway Baptist Church**: Ask for ‘Pastor on duty’, 9886 3700

Yours sincerely,

Adam Fox
B. App. Sci. Hon. (Psychology)

Trang Thomas
Professor of Psychology

Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Executive Officer, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, Research & Innovation, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. The telephone number is (03) 9925 2251. Details of the complaints procedure are available from the above address.