DOE/016/00071

22/11/91

The Role of Religion and Religious Institutions in the Dismantling of Apartheid

Final Report of The Seminar of The World Council of Churches and The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

FINAL REPORT

OF THE SEMINAR

ON THE ROLE OF RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

IN THE DISMANTLING OF APARTHEID

NOVEMBER 22 - 25, 1991 GENEVA - SWITZERLAND

PREFACE

The World Council of Churches welcomes the publication of this report of the seminar which its Programme to Combat Racism cosponsored with UNESCO's Human Rights Unit in November 1991.

In welcoming it, we wish to express appreciation for the cooperation between these two international organisations which combined their efforts to advance not just the struggle against apartheid, but also to find ways of helping South Africans to live together in peace as neighbours of all faiths and none. As they construct a new path towards lasting peace, South Africans recognise only too well the potential for conflict of ethnic cleavages—even those expressed by religion and culture. This concern for the future of South Africa is a logical extension of the many years of solidarity action with the liberation movements in South Africa in which our two organisations have played no small part.

Secondly, we wish to pay tribute to the witness of the Christian churches in South Africa and to the religious community at large. It was only when the churches took the responsibility to undermine one of the most vital pillars of apartheid, that the apartheid regime and the churches which justified the policy of apartheid, lost their moral authority. Once that theological legitimation had gone, the policy and practice of apartheid had to follow suit. We applaud the efforts of Rustenburg, however, to wrestle with the legacy of those "seven lean years" of apartheid. In uncoupling religion from the practices of apartheid, the churches have done all religion a great service.

One of the critical issues now facing South Africa and one which this seminar did not flinch from tackling is that of religious liberty. In a country which assumes too easily that it is founded on Judeo-Christian principles, calling for a recognition of religious pluralism and especially a constitution based on secular principles, tests the conscious of religious people in a very fundamental way. But this debate has to be undertaken. It is the people of South Africa who must lead the way. The task of the friends of South Africa is to provide a forum for this thinking to find expression.

Oh Jae SHIK
Convenor, Unit III: Justice, Peace and Creation
World Council fo Churches

FOREWORD

UNESCO became publicly involved in action to eradicate apartheid as long ago as 1965, with the publication of an exhaustive study on the subject requested by the UN Special Committee against Apartheid. Re-edited in 1967 and 1972, this publication was undertaken together with a series of parallel studies on the theoretical and ideological basis of the political phenomen of apartheid. During the period covered by the first and second medium-term Plan, UNESCO put the emphasis principally on mobilizing the international intellectual community by organizing meetings, workshops and conferences on subjects connected with the various facets of apartheid; the findings of these were given wide distribution and undoubtedly served as a leaven in the struggle both within the national liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and in civil society outraged by the unending vicious circle of oppression–violence–repression. In the last two decades religious forces have emerged as a crucial element in the struggle against apartheid, providing a channel for all the voices which did not necessarily identify with the different liberation movements but nonetheless rejected the unacceptable political system whose days seemed to be numbered. That being so, UNESCO, concerned to encourage reflection on possible alternative policies, defined the role that religions could be called uopon to play in this transition period, in helping to build an egalitarian, reconciled, non-racial society by influencing the attitudes of their members.

The seminar organized in cooperation with the World Council of Churches is part of this effort and in this respect it amply fulfilled its promises in that all the religious confessions existing in South Africa were represented at it. The participants examined their respective positions vis-à-vis apartheid, in frank but invariably courteous debates marked by tolerance and understanding. The "traditional African church", which had always been marginalized, was also able to speak and thus at last achieve recognition *de facto*. UNESCO saw this as an encouraging sign for the future dialogue between the communities, leading to the establishement of the free, tolerant and democratic society which UNESCO has never ceased to work and pray for.

Federico MAYOR
Director General
United Nations Educational, Scientific &
Cultural Organization

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INTRODUCTION

To examine the role played by religion and religious institutions in the history of South Africa and the recent political changes in the country, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and the Cultural Organization (UNESCO) contracted the World Council of Churches (WCC) to organize a seminar in Geneva, Switzerland, 2225 November 1991, on the "Role of Religion and Religious Institutions in the Dismantling of Apartheid."

Part I

Since it was impossible to include papers on all the religions of South Africa within the limited time available, a professor from the University of Cape Town gave a general historical overview of religion in the country. Two papers on two Christian denominations and two on Islam were delivered during the seminar, and two oral reports on Hinduism and Judaism were made which are summarized in the report by the secretariat of the conference.

One participant said that in South African history religion was contested ground. It was used to justify the conquest of "backward" people and, later, apartheid. On the other hand, African resistance to European conquest drew liberatory ideas from religion. Hence, throughout the history of black-white relationships religion has been used as an ideology of both oppression and resistance. Underlying all the religions of South Africa is the ambiguity of subjection and obedience to authority, and resistance against it. There is a great need to be informed by past experience so that South Africans can begin to break away from their dark and ugly history, and achieve true reconciliation between the races and tribes.

A professor from the University of Stellenbosch - who made it clear he was addressing the meeting in a private capacity and not representing the views of the DRC - spoke of the complex history of the white Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), not only in the ideological formation of apartheid but in its difficult and complicated relationships with its "daughter" churches, the black Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC), the Coloured Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA), and the Indian-Reformed Church in Africa (IRCA). He said that the DRC should not be looked on as monolithic.

A participant from the University of Durban Westville described the circumstances under which Indians came to South Africa, first as indentured labourers to develop the sugar industry and later simply to seek a better life. The Indian community suffered a great deal following the Group Areas Act of 1950, when 50 percent of the Indian population was relocated. Because of the Indian government's strong stand against South Africa internationally, the Pretoria government victimized the Hindu community which was the most isolated in the diaspora. Indians were granted citizenship only in 1961.

Hindu theology has been greatly influenced by the struggle to overcome oppression. There has always been a close alliance between the Natal Indian Congress and the Hindu community. The primary motivating factor in Indian consciousness was to preserve Indian society, steeped in culture, religion and traditions, and the tendency to isolate themselves was strong. Despite the congress tradition, many Indians are very suspicious of the ANC and seek assurances on the protection of minority rights in a future South Africa.

The director of the Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Cape Town spoke on Judaism. The first Jews arrived from England in the 1820s but most of the Jewish population came from Eastern Europe in the 1880s. Their identity in South Africa is equivocal: on the one hand, they have "difficulty" in balancing the tension between their citizenship and loyalty to South Africa, and on the other they support the state of Israel. A major concern is how the Jews will continue to maintain this tenuous balance if and when an African majority government supporting the Palestinians' right to a state (a view strongly opposed by the present government of Israel) comes to power.

In 1948 South Africa was one of the first states to recognize Israel, and Jewish support for Israel is strong. Jews tend to keep a low profile and obey the laws of the state unless they violate the observance of Jewish religious traditions. Yet individual Jews are prominent in the struggle, for example Joe Slovo, Helen Suzman and Nadine Gordimer. Many Jewish women play a leading role in Black Sash, the Five Freedoms Forum, Jews for Justice, etc. Religious authority is not strong, fundamentalism has not flourished among South African Jewry, but religious observance is necessary for the community's social cohesion.

The Jewish community tends to be authoritarian – dissent is generally discouraged because it might invite persecution. Before the 1980s Jews in the main supported the English-speaking liberal parties, but since then there has been marked support for the nationalist party.

A representative of the Southern African Catholic Bishop's Conference (SACBC) gave a paper on Roman Catholicism. When Catholicism was established in South Africa in 1838 it was considered a minority religion and was persecuted by the authorities. The majority of Afrikaners saw the Catholic church as a triple danger: (1) because of its work among Africans it was considered a black and red danger that would encourage black nationalism and communist ideas; (2) Catholics were a "Roman" danger because they believed that there was only "one true" church – the Roman Catholic; and consequently (3) the DRC feared that Catholics would proselytize among its adherents.

It was difficult for the Catholics to evangelize in the third world because of the extreme poverty and dehumanization of the ordinary people: rather, it was the poor and the blacks who evangelized the church and made it more prophetic. It soon became clear to the Roman Catholic Church that in South Africa justice was the only basis upon which peace could be built, and that the church was not confronting the government but was being confronted by the scriptures.

A paper on Islam said there was ambivalence towards authority among Muslims as well as among Christians. The small Muslim community in the Cape has survived "against tremendous odds". Their survival as a distinct religious and cultural community "may be attributed to a sense of exclusivity, even superiority vis-a-vis non-Muslims". This has "often led to Muslim identification with the other 'superior group' [the whites] – the ruling class". Unlike Christianity, in Islam there is no theological justification for apartheid even though one might find "feeble and largely undocumented attempts" to obey the "lawful authority" and not resist it.

Interfaith co-operation in the anti-apartheid struggle was at times difficult for Muslim leaders on theological grounds – how could Muslims march side by side with priests? But in the end, the conditions of oppression and the urgent need to remove them overcame these theological/ideological ambiguities.

A philosopher from the University of Dakar, Senegal, delivered a paper on "Islam and the Struggle for Freedom". Coming from a country where Islam is the majority religion, he gave the seminar a different view of the relationship between religion and freedom, human rights, justice, violence and racism.

Muslims approach these issues from two perspectives: from the Qur'an and the Hadith (traditions or acts of the prophet Mohammed), and from the practice of Muslim believers. The Qur'an and the Hadith reject extremes in politics and economics – they oppose tyranny, greed and exploitation. To achieve justice and equality in society one must do good work and obey the prophet and the legal authorities. Although the Qur'an guarantees human rights for all - men, women, minorities and foreigners – in practice it generally denies them to women. The professor discussed the different attitudes and responses of Islam to force and violence and the ambiguous attitudes towards obedience, oppression and liberation. He stressed that Islam rejects racism.

Discussion on part I

The presentations were followed by intense discussion, in which several points were raised.

Religious and political leaders must support and work for democratic principles like the well-being of individuals and their freedom to choose whether or not to belong to a particular group.

Religions are inherently parochial: they tend to put people into boxes. It is quite possible to have a "relaxed" conversation on political, social, socio-economic and even religious issues without identifying one's religion. But once you declare your religious identification, others may become guarded in what they say and may not even want to be seen to be agreeing with Muslim, Hindu, Christian [Catholic/Protestant], Jewish views.

Politicians today are calling for unity among the diverse peoples of South Africa. It is of course important to recognize the diversity that exists and that it is a gift of the richness of God's creation. The question is how to achieve unity while maintaining that diversity. The participants argued that unity is primary, and diversity is

complementary to it. The different parts of the body complement each other to produce unity. Diversity is a recognition of pluralism. Put differently, without diversity there can be no pluralism, and pluralism is a political, social and religious fact of life in South Africa.

In a society like South Africa's where religious, tribal and racial differences are pronounced and have even been encouraged by the state, it is important to create the space within which unity and diversity can grow. Tribal instincts are stronger than individualism because they ensure the survival of the group; and to survive the group imposes laws on its members.

On the religious, racial and tribal level in South Africa one can be a black Zulu and at the same time a Methodist, an Anglican, or a Muslim. A white can be an Afrikaner and at the same time a Methodist, or an Anglican or a Catholic. At crucial and different moments we are forced to identify ourselves by our social, political, racial, tribal, religious, even denominational group as we interact with different people in life.

Religion emphasizes doctrine - hence division and exclusion. How can South Africa get out of this situation? Social action against apartheid has united a large number of religious groups. But with apartheid crumbling, the focus of religious social conscience is unclear and divisions may appear within the Christian community.

It is essential to bring out the best in diversity in such a way that it does not frighten people or lead to confrontation. The task of religion is to keep alive a vision of a just and humane society. One of the keys to making pluralism work successfully is to develop a "civil society", a society that is aware of and exercises its fundamental human rights, but, more importantly, one where those in power are accountable to and can be removed from office by those they govern, and where people are free to join as many clubs or civic organizations as they wish. This is possible if there are generally accepted democratic principles and values. Apartheid, on the contrary, seeks to deny or to eliminate civil society.

Theology must play a role in nation-building, and for nation-building to be successful the theology of "development" must be formed by perspectives from below. Religious leaders must be a voice of compassion that speaks for the poor, the marginalized and the large developing underclass in South Africa.

The economic model for a new South Africa must adequately address the needs of the poorest section of the community. Religious leaders must participate in the development of such a model without being co-opted by government or business.

As the country moves into a new era it is necessary to forge new bonds of identity. During the anti-apartheid struggle, oppression and suffering were the basis of the "people's common identity". In a new South Africa that bond may disappear and, as some are encouraging, ethnic divisions and strife may appear.

It is also prudent to remember that the so-called liberation theology has been essentially an anti-apartheid political theology that sought a "transfer" of power to the majority, leaving the problems of education, health, the economy and unemployment to be tackled later. This theology of resistance does not go beyond apartheid South Africa; it does not address the class and economic issues and the poverty which is the burden of the majority of black South Africans.

Part II

In the second part of the seminar two papers on religious liberty in a secular state were delivered.

1. A participant from the University of Natal raised what he felt was a central question for the people of faith in South Africa: the nature of the society they aspired to or wished to create and the role that religion should or can play in the creation of a just secular society.

Religion, he maintained, poses a danger to society if it believes that it possesses superior truth or is the custodian of The Truth. Those who practised imperialism, colonialism, sexism, racism – which led to hierarchy and domination – believed in their inherent superiority over those they oppressed, exploited and dominated. They were convinced that they were better than others, and therefore that they had a right to dominate.

To eradicate such ideas and to create and maintain a just secular society, a constitutional secular state must be established; the limited self-consciousness of the religions themselves must be changed and they must be enabled to go beyond dialogue with one another. There must also be change in individuals themselves, and a completely new system of religious education in South Africa.

One participant asked if there was in fact a vision of a post-apartheid South Africa. He maintained that without such a vision any discussion of religious liberty lacked foundation. What would be the new identity binding people together? A secular state must allow people the freedom to adhere to a particular religion or to advocate no belief at all.

Religion is about being human and building and living in a community permeated by the values of the kingdom of God – sacrificial love, justice and reconciliation. A just secular state must affirm the legitimacy of religious freedom; freedom of conscience and choice; freedom of speech and assembly; mutual respect and tolerance.

2. A representative of the Federal Council of African Indigenous Churches (FCAIC) in South Africa said that for decades his organization had been ignored and marginalized by both the state and the mainline churches. The indigenous churches had never experienced religious freedom in South Africa. Despite the fact that the country is religiously plural, the FCAIC had at times been referred to as made up of sects and considered inferior by the mainline churches.

Originally the indigenous church members of the FCAIC left the "mainline" churches because of racial discrimination and the "cultural" inferiority they attached to African traditions and customs. Because the FCAIC defended African culture and demanded an end to racial discrimination and the right to "determine" their lives, they were considered a threat to the state and the white churches.

Even today, the FCAIC representative maintained, their ministry is ignored. FCAIC ministers live among the people in the townships and the squatter camps. They are the first on the scene when people are killed in township violence; they conduct the burials, take care of the widows and orphans. But it is the big names from the "mainline churches" who come the "next" day to pray for the victims in front of the TV cameras and the press and enjoy all the publicity.

Conclusion

All religions contain messages of goodness, humanity and "positive" values. At the same time, they interact with many ideas and social forces, and leaders choose which to incorporate and emphasize in their social ethics and teaching. Everyone agreed with the observation made by the representative of the FCAIC that suppression, deprivation, segregation and stigma was proof that "while we are victims of oppression we are perperators of oppression elsewhere". Oppressive structures in church, synagogue, temple, mosque and society need to be removed. To improve the lot of women, for example, it was just not enough to use inclusive language -they need to be empowered.

South Africa is captive to its history. Can blacks trust whites? Can white and black South Africa change their perceptions of each other? And can they believe it, if and when any statement to that effect is made? No constitution can resolve these questions. The best guarantor of religious liberty in a state is a secular constitution; a just secular state is the most neutral instrument that can ensure the preservation of the innate human value and worth of the individual.

Some participants felt very strongly that a secular state should show no preference for, nor benefit from identifying itself with, a particular religion. But more importantly, no religion should benefit in any way from the state, which should never support any kind of belief or policies based on religion when determining public policy.

The seminar was of one mind on the role of religion and religious institutions in the dismantling of apartheid. Religious leaders have no alternative but to be involved in the everyday life of their congregations and therefore to help develop and to influence the adoption of policies that affect the lives of the people of South Africa. The task is difficult, especially after over three hundred years of white oppression. Religious leaders must play a role in the transformation of the social and psychological conditions and attitudes that produced a racially divided, oppressive and violent society. A just, humane, democratic South Africa will best be achieved

in a secular society and such a society will be impoverished if it does not incorporate experience from religion, art, literature and poetry.

Participants acknowledged that the seminar was only a small contribution to the ongoing debates on religion and politics in South Africa. They agreed that religions have a vital role to play in the political, social and economic transformation of the country, and in bringing about reconciliation between blacks and whites and between the different tribes. Religious leaders must have a vision of a humane and just South Africa in which human rights, and civil, political and economic rights are not only enshrined in the constitution but are observed and practised in everyday life.

James MUTAMBIRWA
Programme to Combat Racism
WCC / GENEVA

RELIGIONS AND A POST APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

N. Barney PITYANA
Programme to Combat Racism
World Council of Churches, Geneva

On behalf of the WCC, I would like to welcome you to this seminar, organized by the World Council of Churches' Programme to Combat Racism and UNESCO's Human Rights Unit.

This is a co-operative venture which reflects the common understanding of two organisations, one intergovernmental and the other international non-governmental. The perspective we share is of a world where religion and culture enrich human advancement, bring about fulfilment and contribute to the well being of humanity and the health of God's created order. And so I greet you in the name of the World Council of Churches. Unfortunately, the General Secretary of WCC, Dr Emilio Castro could not be with us today. I can assure you, however, that he sends greetings and hopes to meet us personally on Monday when our sessions move to the Ecumenical Centre.

This seminar came out of an approach by our partners in UNESCO in 1991. They recognised that religion was prominent in the struggle for liberation in South Africa. Perhaps much more than in most countries, religious leaders and people have consistently taken determined positions against apartheid and have been most visible and prominent in the struggle to eliminate it. One can count them from Ntsikana, to the Nazarites, to the Ethiopians who resisted white hegemony in the conduct of their religious life, to John Dube, the first President of the African Native Congress (then called the South African Native Congress), to Trevor Huddleston, through to the Desmond Tutus, Beyers Naudés and Frank Chikanes of our day and new phenomenon has emerged in recent years: we are seeing effective solidarity and partnership between different religions. Those scenes of religious leaders with arms locked together marching forward and facing the casspirs not only make good posters, but leave a penetrating and indelible impression on many people the world over. Part of our task in this seminar is to celebrate such a growth and partnership and to say that it is a successful solidarity action which many other countries in Africa could imitate to their advantage.

But we need to do more than that. We need to recognise that the history of South Africa has been bedevilled by religious controversy and conflict. It is a conflict of interpretation and understanding that cuts right across the confessional divide and divides reformed from reformed, Jew from Jew, Roman Catholic from Roman Catholic. It is difficult to perceive how the coherence of religion as a creative force in South Africa can be recovered. Some fundamental theological issues spring to mind about ethical imperatives, the revelation of God and how one understands God to be at work in the world. Other issues are brought out by the gospel-and-culture debate. This is particularly so in South Africa with its amalgam of cultures, dominated by a minority Anglo-Saxon culture which imposes its will upon every aspect of the socio-political reality. Attempts have been made to deal with these dilemmas and ambiguities in the South African context: the Message to the People of South Africa and SPROCAS to a certain extent sought to define a new truth and value but did not address the structural questions inherent in the systemic injustices in church and society; then came the Black theology movement which put racism at the heart of the South African problematic; the KAIROS moved the dialogue further by posing challenges to the church and defining the imperative of the prophetic and confessional gospel. This latter effort encouraged similar movements within the evangelical community and, I understand, within Islam. One only needs to listen to Farid Esack to understand how penetrating the analyses of KAIROS have become throughout the diverse religious consciousness in the country.

The World Council of Churches has accompanied this ecumenical pilgrimage in South Africa. There was a time when we were driven by theological revulsion against apartheid and we failed to look closely into the extent to which our traditional theological paradigms and ecclesiastical practices were responsible for it. KAIROS gave us a clue to an analytical approach by which we could dissect it and do some systematic surgery. At Lusaka, we brought the liberation movements and the churches into a dynamic partnership of solidarity. That partnership was subsequently tried and fashioned in the crucible of struggle.

As the World Council of Churches we are now being confronted with a new dynamic: the legitimate claims of all faiths to participate in this struggle according to their own faith commitments. We know, as the Canberra assembly pointed out, that religion has become a divisive force in the world. Then, Canberra suggests that: We

seek to live in respect and understanding with people of other living faiths, and to this end we need to build mutual trust and a 'culture of dialogue'. Dialogue and understanding are a prelude to common action. We have seen the rudiments of this in South Africa. It is all the more so when a religion feels under threat in its practices and beliefs. Religious conflict arises from defensiveness and a distrust of the intentions of others. This dialogue also requires sensitivity on the part of those who represent majority religions although this "majoritiness" may be false. Because they profess the same faith, people do not necessarily agree on every aspect of life and faith. Religions need space and a protective cordon.

But we have invited you to challenge you, and for you to challenge each other, about the future of your country and especially the contribution of religion to that future. There are those who argue, with Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, that "Islam seeks to identify ultimate truth with actual political power". Indeed, at Canberra many delegates from Nigeria and other countries of West Africa identified Islam as the greatest threat to peace in the region. Listening to the radio yesterday I heard similar concerns voiced by Muslim leaders about the decade for evangelism. But the challenge which remains for all of us is that of justice -- not just as a matter of struggle but also for the ordering of life and human existence. All religions are confronted by this reality in the unfolding events in South Africa:

> We affirm that the church is called to communicate the gospel message intended for all humankind so that it may be heard, understood and accepted in all cultures. Such handing on of God's truth requires faithfulness to the apostolic faith of the church, creative application of the gospel to contemporary issues and situations, and self-criticism of efforts to communicate the gospel in fresh ways. We continue to search for a common understanding of how we live out these criteria in different contexts.

That is the voice of Christianity. But justice is indivisible and moral consistency requires that the standards of justice apply to all.

The challenge before the people of faith in South Africa, as you reflect on your social obligations and the kind of society you wish to become, will oblige you to mould together all the varied theological constructs which fashion judgments. We seek to challenge and equip the people of God in South Africa to face with confidence the future that is visible on the horizon. We hope that the sensitivity and understanding forged during the years of common struggle will enable you to construct a civil society which will be the bedrock of a stable, democratic and just future. True religion cannot be sustained by fear or force. And so the challenge of a tolerant secular society should hold no fears for the people of faith.

It is hard to say what we expect of this seminar. It is intended to be a forum for sharing ideas and perspectives. I would urge that we listen to one another carefully, especially to those who are wrestling with these matters from other parts of Africa and who have shown their commitment to South Africa by being here. We must be open to forming together a common wisdom to determine the best way in which what emerges from these few days can be used in the debates raging in South Africa. It may be your desire to draw up a declaration which can become a guideline or a common understanding about the future of South Africa. On the other hand, it might be your wish to do nothing of the sort. We have simply allowed space for "conclusions": you might like to fill that space with content.

Let me express my profound thanks to all of you for attending this gathering some at rather short notice. We value the partnership we have built with the people of South Africa over the years. We look forward to some stimulating discussions.

RELIGION AS CONTESTED GROUND

Subjugation and Resistance in South Africa 1652-1948

Charles Villa-Vicencio
Professor of Religion and Society
University of Cape Town

Religion has always been contested ground in South Africa -- functioning both as an instrument of subjugation and a means of resistance. The colonizers rejected the religion of the Indigenous people as paganism, and promoted Christian missions as a vehicle of conquest and religious exclusivism as a means of hegemonic control. The colonized, in turn, drew on their Indigenous religious traditions, as well as the dimensions latently present in the religion of conquest, as a way of resisting domination, affirming self-dignity and pursuing political liberation.

South Africa is a country of religious pluralism. The 1980 census showed that of a total population of approximately 30 million, 77.percent of the population claimed affiliation with some form of Christianity: 20 percent of the total population (over 30 percent of the black population) belonged to the African independent (or indigenous) churches, organized into over 4,000 denominations; the Dutch Reformed Churches (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk [NGK], the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk [NHK] and the Gereformeerde Kerk accounted for 14 percent, the other mainline Protestant churches (Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, United Congregationalist, Lutheran and Baptist) for 23 percent, the Roman Catholic Church for 9.5 percent, and the Pentecostal churches for 1.5 percent of the total population. Smaller, Christian groups such as the Salvation Army, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc. were also present. Religions other than Christianity accounted for 4.5 percent of the total population (528,807 Hindus, 353,993 Muslims, 121,008 Jews, 7,164 Confucians and 2,815 Buddhists). Those who practised some form of African religion were include among the 6 million people whose religious affiliations were classified as "other beliefs" or "none" !

The different strands of religious pluralism in South Africa are identified in what follows.[1] Taking account of both the alienating and life-giving resources within these traditions, attention is given to the period of conquest extending from the first encounter between Blacks and Whites in South Africa in the tenth century to the imposition of statuatory apartheid in 1948.

From Religious Exclusivism to Religious Conflict

Terrified by the pale apparitions from the sea, the Khoikhoi herders who witnessed the landing of the Portuguese navigator Bartolomeu Dias and his mariners at Mossel Bay in 1488 hastily drove their cattle inland. As part of the larger Khoisan group, they looked to Tsui Goab, their god, and Heitsi-Eibib, an ancestor hero, for protection. The Portuguese planted a series of crosses along the southern African coastline, anticipating the role of Christianity in the conquest that was to come, and erected the first Christian church on South African soil in 1501.

The English and the Dutch were soon the major commercial fleets which plied the Cape sea route to India, regularly dropping anchor in Table Bay. Their trade with the Khoikhoi (iron barrel-hoops and nails for cattle and sheep), which began cautiously and with mutual suspicion, soon degenerated into plunder.[2] These early encounters gave way to colonization, and a refreshment station was set up by the Dutch East India Company in 1652. Jan van Riebeeck, the first head of the settlement, prayed "that the Reformed Christian doctrine will spread amongst these wild and brutal people".[3] The Dutch Reformed Church was established as the only legally recognized form of religion, although Muslims and Roman Catholics were present as servants and company employees from the time the colony was founded. In addition there were, of course, the original inhabitants of the land who practised one or another form of traditional African religion. It was, however, the presence of the Muslim slaves, prisoners and political exiles brought to the colony which constituted the first threat to Reformed Christian exclusivism.

Islam

In a fierce battle to colonize the Indonesian islands, the Dutch East India Company captured a leading nobleman, Shaykh Yusaf. After a period of imprisonment in Batavia and Ceylon, he was deported to the Cape in 1694 where he and 48 followers were housed on the farm Zandvleit, owned by a Dutch Reformed Church minister. The settlement soon contributed to the spread of Islam in the area, and also became a haven for runaway slaves who were brought to the Cape largely from places like present-day Java, Bali, Timor and the Malayan peninsula.[4] When a law was passed in 1770, preventing the Christian slaves from being bought and sold, slave owners actively opposed Christian mission work among their slaves, and within a few years the benches reserved for slaves in the Groote Kerk in Cape Town were almost empty. By the time the law was repealed under British rule in 1812, the Muslim religion was well established in the slave community.[5] Among the Muslim leaders who contributed most to this growth of Islam was Imam Abdullah Kadi Abdu Salaam, known as Tuan Guru. Imprisoned on Robben Island in 1780 for his opposition to Dutch presence on the Indonesian island of Tidore, he was eventually released, and at the age of 80 he established the first mosque and Islamic school in Cape Town.[6] By the time he died at 95 years of age in 1807, he had implanted in the Muslim community a sense of spiritual identity and political promise. Giving expression to the dual role of religion as a vehicle of submission and liberating hope, he is reported as telling his followers: "Be of good heart, my children, and serve your masters; for one day your liberty will be restored to you and your descendents will live within a circle of karamats safe from fire, famine and plague, earthquake and tidal wave."[7] By the time slavery was abolished in 1838 it is estimated that two-thirds of Cape Town's coloured population was Muslim.[8]

A few years later, however, the British exploited tensions in the Muslim community by turning to its Turkish ally who financed the coming of Abubakr Effendi to the Cape in 1863. "The tragedy of this whole matter", writes Achmat Davids, "was that neither the British government nor De Roubaix (a member of the Cape parliament who was 'sympathetic to the Cape Muslims') consulted with the local people or ascertained particulars about their sect. Abubakr Effendi, as it turned out, was a Hanafee and his introduction as spiritual guide in a predominantly Shafee community led to problems."[9] The colonial officials were ready to exploit these divisions. The complexity of this and later developments in the Muslim community is considerable:[10] suffice it to say that a significant Muslim presence had been established in the Cape that would in time extend throughout the country. This presence, as will be shown later, would contribute both to the struggle for political liberation as well as to the preservation of the status quo, through political evasion and the advocacy of submission to the existing authority.

Christian pluralism

At more or less the time Islam was gaining official recognition in the Cape, the exclusivism of the Dutch Reformed Church also gave way to the recognition of other Christian religions. A Roman Catholic bishop, shipwrecked in Table Bay in 1660, had, for example, been prohibited from celebrating mass. Roman Catholics in the colony lived under similar restrictions. Then, with the 1806 British occupation of the Cape, an act of religious toleration was passed.

However the Roman Catholic community (now bolstered by the presence of Roman Catholics among the Irish troops) had, to wait until 1822 for permission to build their first church. The Moravians experienced similar difficulties when George Schmidt established his mission to the Khoikhoi at Genadendal in 1738. His evangelical peity clashed with the Calvinist orthodoxy of the Dutch church and his work was seen as a threat to the social life of the settler community. Forced to return to Europe in 1744, it was not until 1792 that the Moravians were allowed to reopen Genadendal.[11] The first mosque, established by Tuan Guru, was opened in 1798. In terms of the Dutch surrender which initiated the British occupation of the Cape, the NGK maintained its status and privileges, while the Church of England, to which the governor belonged, enjoyed little influence and no parishes. In the meantime representatives of other Christian groups had arrived in the Cape as missionaries, colonial officials and members of the militia. The first Anglican bishop of Cape Town, Robert Gray, arrived in 1848, and while some resistance was shown to the establishment of Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational and other churches these too, in time, firmly established themselves in the colony.[12]

These developments set the stage for missionary expansionism. If the divide between Muslims and Christians, and later between Hindus and Christians, was essentially along racial lines, Christian missionary activity established a racial divide within the English-speaking churches. The Dutch Reformed Churches had, on the other hand, found an alternative way of dealing with the racial problem. In 1829 the NGK synod insisted that

holy communion be administered to all baptized members "without distinction of colour". But growing racism soon, gained the upper hand and in 1857 the synod revoked its earlier decision, arguing that, due to the weakness of some, blacks and whites should worship separately. This resulted in a separate Sendingkerk (Mission Church) being established for coloured people in 1881, and the first synod of a separate church for blacks (the NGK in Africa) followed in 1910. (A further separate church for Indians [the Indian Reformed Church] was established as late as 1968.) When the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk (NHK) was established as the Volkskerk of the Boer Republic in the Transvaal in 1853, a clause in its constitution prohibited the membership of Blacks. And when the more theologically conservative Gereformeerde Kerk was formed in 1859, in practice it implemented separate churches in a similar manner.[13] We will come back to the implications of the different mission policies in the Dutch Reformed Church and the non-racial churches.

Hinduism

A further dimension of religious pluralism came with the establishment of the Hindu religion in South Africa, as a result of the arrival of the mostly low-caste Hindu indentured labourers to work on the sugar-cane plantations in Natal, and higher-caste free British subjects in quest of economic opportunites. The first Hindu temple was built in Durban in 1869.[14] It is estimated that two-thirds of the indentured labourers were Tamil or Telegu-speaking Hindus from southern India, while traders, merchants and entrepreneurs were often from other regions. By the time Mohandas Gandhi arrived to practise law in South Africa in 1893 the Hindu community was a well established, diverse social and religious reality. Soon emerging as a political leader, Gandhi mobilized a cross-section of the Indian community through his Satyagraha movement, while seeking to unite people of all religions. Succeeding in uniting at least some Muslim and Hindu Indians in a common cause, he saw no obvious link between the struggle for Indian rights and African political struggles. "There is no common ground between them and us in the daily affairs of life," he stated.[15] This aside, by the time he returned to India in 1914 he had helped to establish the Natal Indian Congress in 1894 and the Transvaal British Indian Association in 1903, and prepared the way for the South African Indian Congress to be formed in 1923. Established to "oppose the growing segregationist tendencies in local and national legislation", it entered into an agreement with the African National Congress in 1947, under the leadership of Drs G.M. Naicker and Y.M. Dadoo.[16] Twenty years later (in 1968) conservative Indians introduced an alternative thrust into Indian politics by agreeing to serve on the South African Indian Council, as part of the apartheid structure of government. Still later, many within the Council would enter the tri-cameral parliament as a further development in collaboration with apartheid structures. Hindus, like Muslims, had become part of the forces of both repression and liberation in South Africa.

Jews

The first Jewish synagogue in Cape Town, was not consecrated, until 1841; the Jewish population remained small until immigration in the latter part of the century saw it increase rapidly to approximately 40,000.[17] They came from various parts of Europe, the largest group from Lithuania where anti-Semitism had reached new heights. Settling into their new home, some put their political energy into Zionism, supporting the establishment of an independent Jewish state; others became involved in the fast-growing labour movement; still others fought their way into the monied classes. The outcome was a division in the Jewish community, fuelled by class, ideology and factors of national origin. Some made their fortune in the Oudtshoorn ostrich feather boom, some flocked to the Kimberley diamond fields, but it was Johannesburg that attracted most Jews, Randlords, Barney Barnato and Sammy Marks among them.

Jews of all classes, however, experienced the harsh realities of anti-Semitism. While the South African Republic under Paul Kruger denied the Jews civil rights, some nevertheless, supported Paul Kruger directly or indirectly, in resisting the designs of the British to obtain control of the goldfields. Barnato, for example, stayed aloof from the franchise question, preferring his British citizenship, while Sammy Marks's fluent knowledge of Afrikaans and the Old Testament earned him Kruger's affection.

In later years anti-Semitism became a more entrenched part of Afrikaner nationalism, and this instinctively put Jews against the Afrikaner nationalist forces that came to power in 1948. Then, as an isolated South Africa found increasing common cause with Israel in subsequent years, so an increasing number of Jews tended to support the status quo in South Africa.

With upward social mobility in the Jewish community, the result has been significantly less involvement of Jewish people on the side of workers and labour, and more support internally for capital and externally for Zionism. With the memory of former persecution and the struggle to survive, few Jews have found common cause with those who suffer in South Africa today. Where Jewish groups such as Jews for Justice have identified with them, however, this memory coupled with the sacred Jewish tradition to care for the poor and marginalized has emerged as a powerful ethical incentive

Buddhism and Confucianism

Buddhists and Confucians (two other groups referred to in the 1980 census) are small in number and without the cohesive national and/or regional structures necessary to become a significant force in South African social and political life. The essential religious beliefs of Buddhists and Confucians do not, in turn, lend themselves to overt political and social activism in the same way as history-affirming religions or the Hindu community, which benefits from slightly larger numbers, internal cohesion and a sense of historical presence in the unfolding of South African politics.

African religion

We turn lastly to a brief word on African religion. Lastly because, as the major religious influence to challenge Christian domination, it influenced both early and later resistance to White conquest -- and it is here that attention must be focused in considering the impact of religio-cultural forms of resistance. Trapped within Western presuppositions about religion, however, the early missionaries were convinced that the indigenous people were without a religion! Working among the Xhosa, T.J. van der Kemp, who did more to identify himself with African people than most other missionaries, gave adequate expression to the general missionary mind on such matters: "I never could perceive that they had any religion, nor any idea of the existence of God."[18]

Suffice it to that say the extent of Black resistance and continuing struggles between mission Christianity and indigenous forms of African belief are enough to show the resilience of African religious belief. Indeed, the persistence of traditional African religions in contemporary society, the prominence of the African independant churches and the ongoing quest for African forms of Christianity within the churches makes total nonsense of the perceptions of early missionaries regarding the "non-existence" of religion among Africans. African religion is grounded in everyday existence in a manner which Christianity (what William Temple once called "the most material of all religions") has never fully understood.[19] As such it has formed an integral part of both Black resistance and accommodation from the time of the first encounter with colonialism and Christianity.

Political success or a bloody but barren victory

The story of British colonialism in South Africa is well known. The involvement of missionaries in the process has also been told elsewhere.[20] It is enough to note that missionaries played an ambiguous role in African society throughout the colonial period. Actively promoting colonial advances into African society, in some instances they welcomed military aggression against the African people because the defeat of African chiefs, the loss of land, the confiscation of cattle and the collapse of African culture created a milieu within which their attempt to lure Africans into their missions was made that much easier. Few missionaries failed to share in some way in impositing Christian exclusivism which, grounded in a "modern" European world-view, came into conflict with a more plural, adaptive and "primitive" African religious world-view. Bolstered by the might of imperialism, the outcome was inevitable. The legitimacy of African ritual and myth which provided social cohesion and self-dignity was systematically undermined. By the time the soldiers, colonial administrators, adventurers and missionaries had swept north across the Orange River, up the west coast and later into the Orange Free State and Transvaal, across the Limpopo and the eastern frontier of the Cape and into Natal and Zululand, Christianity emerged as the dominant if not the generally accepted religion of the sub-continent. Where it had not yet triumphed, there was a missionary waiting to offer the resources that a weakened traditional African society could no longer provide.

Yet when victory finally came to the colonial settlers, it merely gave rise to a form of resistance that has endures up to the present. The question posed by Bishop John Colenso after the defeat of the Zulu at Ulundi

in 1879 could well be asked in relation to the subjugation of Africans generally: "Was it a political success," he asked, "or any more than a bloody but barren victory?"[21]

We now turn to the encounter between colonizers fired by a Christian civilization, and the Xhosa of the Eastern Cape, as but one example of military as well as cultural and religious subjugation in Africa. Obviously there are other cases, notably in the Boer republics, which deserve separate consideration. To illustrate this encounter, reference is made to several separate but related religio-cultural encounters between colonialists and colonized.

Nxele and Ntsikana

Initially rejected by the majority of African chiefs, missionary endeavour only met with success when the socio-economic, political and cultural structures of Xhosa society began to crumble in the wake of the frontier wars. To become a Christian was to become Westernized, to live in square houses, wear Western clothes and support the colonial economy. It was attractive to some as a signal to resist.[22]

The rejection of early missionary endeavours is most clearly seen in the response to the Christian message of two Xhosa Inyangas (diviners), Nxele and Ntsikana. Both responses were born in the heat of Xhosa reaction to colonization, providing important precursors of two alternative types of religious resistance which emerged at regular intervals in the history of the black resistance struggle in South Africa.

The setting is the rivalry for power between the two Xhosa chiefs, Ndlambe and Ngqika. Ndlambe had been appointed regent to the boy-king Ngqika (Gaika) until he was old enough to rule the Rharhabe, a dominant Xhosa community on the eastern frontier of the colony. When Ndlambe refused to surrender power, Ngqika turned against Ndlambe and an internal power struggle followed -- effectively dividing the Rharhabe into two separate groups. Things came to a head in 1811, when Ndlambe and his followers were driven out of the Zuurveld by the settlers who were demanding more grazing land. They now found themselves competing with Ngqika's people for land.

Nxele, a millenarian prophet and diviner in Ndlambe's household, had visions that favoured Ndlambe's ultimate military success both against Ngaika and the settlers. Having turned against his missionary mentors, he taught his followers to sing, as they went to war, of the day when Whites would be driven into the sea:

> To chase the White men from the earth,
> And drive them to the sea.
> The sea that cast them up at first,
> For Ama Xhosa's curse and bane,
> Howls for the progeny she nursed
> To swallow them again.[23]

Having been defeated by Ndlambe in several encounters, the British eventually came to Ngqika's assistance. Ndlambe attacked the settler town of Graham's Town in 1819, having been promised by Nxele that the settlers' bullets would turn to water. Ndlambe's 6,000 warriors were defeated and the Xhosa forced to acknowledge Ngqika as paramount chief. Having surrendered himself to the British, Ndlambe was sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island and later drowned trying to escape.[24]

What makes Nxele important for our purposes is his affirmation of an Indigenous African millenarian-type religious response to White domination which would emerge again and again in Black resistance. Equally important in this regard, however, is Ntsikana's religious response.[25] Less radical in his rejection of the missionaries' gospel, Ntsikana's message was as roundly condemned by the missionaries as that of Nxele.

Ntsikana's religious views were probably shaped as much by the fact that he had been rejected by the more powerful Ndlambe, as they were by his sharing in Ngqika's forced accommodationist response to colonialism. He constantly warned against the dangers of Western ideas and sought to revive traditional Xhosa values, but in giving Xhosa values to Christian symbols in his hymns and ritualistic practices he enabled the Xhosa to identify with the emergent Christian and colonial milieu. This, plus his counsel to Ngqika not to go to war against the settler community, has given rise to the inevitable question as to whether his brand of religion did not, like the religion of the missionaries, merely soften the blow of imperial subjugation. Yet in time it was this

synthesis that gave rise to forms of resistance among the members of Indigenous churches which were more radical and less compromising than Ntsikana's had ever been.

> Nxele was a war doctor and his cosmology was one of battle between good and evil. Ntsikana was a man of peace and submission, and his cosmology was one of peace and submission.[26]

Nuances aside, the observation reaches to the heart of the Xhosa dilemma: war or accommodation? Xhosa history suggests that these were not mutually exclusive options and, as seen in the response of Ntsikana, accommodationism is rarely totally devoid of resistance. Subsequent religious developments indicate furthermore that the line between peaceful religious protest, effective political action and violent resistance is often a shifting one. The responses of Nxele and Ntsikana were not as fundamentally different as is often indicated.

A parenthetical comment is in order: The British had ostensibly fought the war in support of Ngqika, but as soon as it ended he was forced to surrender a further 3,000 square miles of territory as a buffer zone within which the Mfengu (Fingo), fleeing the effects of the Mfecane, were settled on the advice of the Methodist missionary John Ayliff. From the British side it paid off, since the Mfengu fought loyally on behalf of the colony in subsequent wars.

Ngqika's comment, in turn, tells his side of the story: "Though protected, I am oppressed by my protectors."[27]

Nongquase

A tragic but not unrelated religious response marked a turning point in the frontier conflict. The war of the axe, the seventh in a relentless series of frontier wars, ended in 1847 with the Xhosa being obliged to acknowledge the sovereignty of the crown. The eighth frontier war, "the longest and most costly in blood and treasure that the Cape Colony had ever engaged in", followed in less than two years and Xhosa independence was doomed.[28] Their political structures were fragmented, their culture destroyed by missionary and other colonial initiatives, and their land and cattle depleted. It seemed that only a miracle could save them, when the young woman prophet Nongqause told of a vision: the people should kill the cattle and refuse to cultivate the lands, and in response the ancestors would replenish the people's riches and drive the Whites from the region. Almost half a million cattle were killed and thousands of Xhosa died. Devastated and reduced to starvation, 30 000 Xhosa surrendered themselves to the colonists, offering their labour in return for sustenance.

A simple case of desperation and religious fervour resulting in an act of national suicide, or an act of national sacrifice in reaction to the oppression and alienation of a proud people devastated by colonial exploitation and expropriation? Whichever it was, the incident contributed significantly to providing a solution to the colonists' need for wage labour and to Sir George Grey's "civilization policy" designed to make the Xhosa economically and politically dependent on the colony. Some even suggest that Grey had a hand in Nongquase's counsel to her people!

African nationalism and the Ethiopian movement

Religious response to subjugation continued well after any realistic chance of Xhosa independence had passed. It showed itself in attitudes such as that of the Black Presbyterian church leader, Tiyo Soga. Seen by some as an accommodationist for working within the institutional church, others judge him to have offered an important challenge to White missionary domination. Regarded as an early African "nationalist" his refrain, "be proud of what you are!" was heard throughout the Eastern Cape.[29] Religious resistance also came in the form of a more aggressive response to the missionaries. For instance Rev. Nehemiah Tile broke away from the Methodist church in 1884, in reaction to accusations that he was "taking part in political matters (and) stirring up a feeling of hostility against the magistrates ...."[30] Pioneer of the African independent church movement (or Ethiopianism, as it was then called), he founded the first mass-based African movement of a truly national kind.[31] The Revs Moses Mangena Mokone and J.M. Dwane also broke with the Methodist church, and Dwane later established the Order of Ethiopia in the Anglican church. In 1896 a manifesto released by the Ethiopian leadership declared their intent:

To unite together Christians of the African race and of various denominations in the name of Jesus Christ to solemnly work towards and pray for the day when the African people shall become an African Christian nation....

To place on record... the great wrongs inflicted upon the African by the people of Europe and America and to urge upon Christians who wish to be clear of African blood on the day of God's judgment, to make restitution...

Finally to pursue steadily and unswervingly the policy of Africa for the Africans and look for and hasten by prayer and united effort the forming of the African Christian Nation by God's power and in his own time and way.[32]

Wellington Buthelezi

The charismatic but eccentric leadership of Wellington Buthelezi in the 1920s emerges as a further dimension of religious resistance. The Black community was by this time clearly divided between an elite, made up of mission-educated teachers and ministers, usually referred to by the authorities as "progressives", and those who they judged to be "backward". (D.D.T. Jabavu, a leading member of the African elite, described the latter as people "tied by the manacles of outdated custom"[33]). The Wellington movement, popular in the later constituency, was ready to take up the issues that affected traditional Africans most. But it also received support from a wider range of people, including mission-educated Blacks who had rejected the ideals of colonialism in favour of a more popular political constituency. Loosely affiliated to the Amafelandawonye or Amafela (the die-hards), a popular alliance of women, peasants and Indigenous church groups opposed to the "progressives", Buthelezi was seeking a new African Christianity. Deeply involved in community resistance, he counselled his people not to pay taxes, and promised to provide his followers with "all that the White man can give".[34] An extreme Africanist, he insisted:

> If at my death I go to heaven and find a White man there, I shall take my hat and go out at once and even if I go to hell and there come across a White man that hell won't contain me.[35]

The Amafela had become an important ingredient in Hershel (Eastern Cape) politics by the late 1920s and the ANC, although not sharing their ideological views, sent James Thaele to build links with the movement. "We are a progressive race ...," Thaele insisted, and demanded that Whites be taught that "they are not living up to their morals". This was clearly a different message to that of the Amafla speakers. The divide that was earlier established between Nxele and Ntsikana had again emerged. The focus, of course, was slightly different, the question being whether or not Whites could become part of the projected new society.

The Bulhoek massacre

A final example of religious resistance concerns the activities of the prophet Enoch Mgijima and his followers, the "Israelites", who refused to leave the village of Ntabelanga near Bulhoek in response to a government decree. This resulted in the Bulhoek massacre on 24 May, 1921. Whites regarded the settlement as harbouring vagrants and stock thieves who refused to work or pay taxes. The Israelites saw it as an escape from the harsh impositions of White rule. Mgijima told of a vision in which it was made known to him that the end of the world was approaching. He insisted that his followers remain in Ntabelanga in preparation for that event. The land, he said, had been given to them by God and no government law could deprive them of it.[36]

The Israelites went about their religious practices, but eventually police entered the village and confrontation followed: the police opened fire on 500 Israelites. Initially refusing to defend themselves, the Israelites eventually defeated the settlement with sticks and assegais; 183 Israelites were killed, approximately 100 wounded and 150 arrested. One policeman suffered a stab wound. More than forty years later Nelson Mandela would look back on that event and say:

> Almost every African household in South Africa knows about the massacre of our people at Bulhoek in the Queenstown district where detachments of the army and police, armed with artillery, machine guns and rifles opened fire on unarmed Africans.[37]

As in the case of Nxele and Ntsikana, the objectives and responses of those who opted for violent confrontation and those who resorted to a non violent response were not vastly different. And both were crushed in a similar manner.

Christianity was used in the colonial process as an ideology of subjugation. Religion was at the same time used as an ideology of oppression in the Boer republics -- a topic that has not been considered here. Yet, whether in British colonialism or Boer domination, no exploited people known to historians, suggests E.P. Thompson (writing in a different context), has ever been deprived of land and resources without finding some way of fighting back.[38] These acts of peasant and proletarian resistance in South Africa frequently had limited objectives. Collectively, however, they resulted in a permanent sense of unrest and latent revolution which neither state nor church could permanently contain. In the process the oppressed masses drew on Indigenous religious resources, and discovered liberatory resources in the religion of their conquerors, which resulted in a different kind of encounter between religions in South Africa. Sometimes a new synthesis of religious beliefs emerged, on other occasions it relocated former contests and conflicts between religions within the Christian religion itself – resulting in two different kinds of Christianity: a dominant institutionalized Christianity and a popular Christianity of resistance and liberatory quest.

So as the nineteenth century drew to a close the religious exclusivism of earlier generations gave way to a contest not only between religions but also within religions. Divided by class and race, with sexual divisions beginning to be a factor, different ideological claims were being made on the same religious symbols and ideas. As the struggle for control of the different religions intensified, some broke away to establish separate religious groupings, others instigated internal divisions in their respective institutions. The African independent churches and the Abubakr Effendi faction in Islam serve as just two examples of these struggles. Many remained within the dominant groupings as "a church within a church" or "a mosque, temple or synagogue within a mosque, temple or synagogue". All this took place in an era fast coming to a close. It involved a transition marked by the Bambatha rebellion in 1906 when the 96 year-old chief Sigananda gave protection to Bambatha in the Nkandla forest near Greytown in Natal. Both were killed and Bambatha's head displayed throughout the countryside as a gruesome warning to other would-be rebels. It was the last time Africans resorted to armed rebellion for more than fifty years. The next time armed struggle emerged was in the 1960s with the emergence of Umkhonto we Sizwe and Poqo, the armed wings of the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress respectively.

Religion in and beyond religious institutions

After the end of the Anglo-Boer war in 1902 the British were, in the words of Thomas Pakenham, ready to engage in the subjugation of the Black people "with an efficiency that the Boers had never been able to muster".[39] The crushing of the Bambatha rebellion was but one example of this. Lord Alfred Milner's administration introduced legislation controlling the affairs of Blacks to the extent that when the first Union parliament met under General Louis Botha in 1910 the stage was set for an alliance between Afrikaner and English-speaking Whites against the Black majority. The 1913 land act consolidated earlier legislation depriving Africans of their land, other discriminatory laws followed and Black South Africans were forced to deal with their oppression in a new manner.

The array of political organizations that emerged following these events bears witness to the ready response of the oppressed. These included: the African Political (People's) Organization (1902), the South African National Native Congress, later to become the African National Congress (1912), the Bantu Women's League (1913), the Industrial and Commercial Worker's Union (1919), the communist party (1921), the South African Indian Congress (1921), the Cape Muslim Association (1923), etc. Christians, Jews, Hindus and Muslims played a formative role in the founding and later development of these organizations. Abdullah Abdurahman, Yusaf Dadoo, Moulana Ismail Cachalia, Mahatma Mohandas Gandhi, Nana Sita, Rev. John Dube, Rev. James Calata, Albert Luthuli, Charlotte Mxenge, Robert Sobukwe and others brought a religious perspective to these organizations that continues to influence South African politics. A consequence has been an emancipating religious culture alongside the secular culture of liberation politics in South Africa, sustained by the majority of Black people who are both oppressed and religious.

This has resulted in political meetings being opened in prayer, a national anthem (Nkosi Sikelel'i Afrika) which is a cry to God for deliverance, and a story of resistance permeated by a sustaining religiosity to which atheists, agnostics and believers together appeal.[40] Albert Lutuli, a committed Christian, would declare: "I am in congress precisely because I am a Christian. My Christian belief about human society must find expression

here and now, and congress is the spearhead of real struggle."[41] J.B. Marks, a prominent member of the communist party of South Africa, in turn spoke of the ANC as the genuine "Noah's ark" and, anticipating his arrest, he announced: "This is the hour now. I am being crucified and I feel the weight of the cross."[42] And Moses Kotane, Marxist theorist and general secretary of the party for many years, outraged by the violent repression of non-violent resistance, insisted: "If they represent God then they represent a false God. And if God is like that, then God is no good for Africa."[43]

Churches, mosques and temples figure boldly in the history of the struggle for liberation in South African. It would, however, be quite wrong to overestimate the support of the religious community. The ambiguous role of religion in this regard has already been cited. Important to note is the response of the General Missionary Council which met in 1904 and subsequent years, during which time the organizations to which reference has been made were emerging, and the White parliament was systematically legislating Blacks into poverty and oppression. Two major concerns of the 1904 conference were "heathenism" and "Romanism". No serious attention was given to the advent of the industrial age or the discriminatory trend of political developments. The 1906 conference spoke of the need to "watch over the interests of native races and where necessary to influence legislation on their behalf", while no significant action in this regard followed. Not until 1928 (four years after the election of the pact government, consisting of the national and labour parties) did the theme of the conference address the plight of Blacks – and then moderately so.[44] By the 1930s the religious implications of Afrikaner nationalism were being explored. A theological basis for apartheid was emerging, and the official missionary policy of the NGK in 1935 provided the foundation stone for religious apartheid.[45]

When the Christian Council of South Africa was formed in 1937 (to become the South African Council of Churches in 1968) the rift between the English-speaking churches and the Dutch Reformed Churches had begun to widen, and in 1941 the only Dutch Reformed Churches to have joined the Council, the White NGK and the Sendingkerk in the Transvaal, resigned. In 1947 the book *Regverdige Rasseapartheid* (*Just Racial Segregation*) appeared. Dr Willem Nicol, the moderator of the Transvaal synod of the NGK, wrote a chapter on the theological importance of apartheid, Prof. E.P Groenewald provided a biblical legitimation of apartheid, and Prof. Geoff Cronje explained the sociological importance of apartheid.[46] The way had been opened up for later theological developments concerning apartheid and a synthesis of Kerk en Staat was in place to ensure the Afrikaner nationalist victory at the polls in 1948.

The English-speaking churches distanced themselves from this kind of overt theological support for apartheid, while in practice affirming segregation within their congregations as completely as the Dutch Reformed Churches. Not a single Christian church expressed itself in support of universal franchise in 1948. The stated position of the Anglican church in this regard is a fair reflection of the stance of the other English-speaking churches:

> Giving the vote to all non-Europeans would not only be a danger to the Europeans, but a very grave danger to the non-Europeans themselves. In South Africa, the population is not only overwhelmingly Black but, except in a few rare instances, overwhelmingly ignorant. We welcome qualified Africans as responsible citizens, but the time is not ripe for universal enfranchisement.[47]

Other religious groups responded in like manner. Individual Muslims engaged in political confrontation with the government through various political organizations. Specific Muslim organizations, in turn, offered cautious resistance to the state, while others co-operated with the state. A spirit of accommodation had already been established by widespread participation of Muslims in the Cape Malay choir board, formed in 1937 by the Afrikaner nationalist, I.D. du Plessis. This had contributed "heavily to the redefinition of `Malay' as an ethnic designation in terms of the larger racialist scheme of apartheid".[48] However there were, also other tendencies in the Muslim community. The Muslim Judicial Council was formed in 1945, not only to promote Muslim unity but also as a voice of protest against political oppression.[49] Yet, recognizing that they were not living in an Islamic state, Muslims in South Africa were told in many mosques that provided they were allowed to perform the basic of their faith, they had no theological grounds to resist the state.

By 1948 the dominant expression of Indian resistance was through the Natal Indian Congress, the Transvaal Indian Congress and the South African Indian Congress. Attempts to organize passive resistance campaigns in the tradition of Gandhi's Satyagraha in the 1940s had failed and overt Hindu participation in the political struggle had declined. Shocked by the realities of the holocaust and the anti-Semitism of the national party, at the same time Jews supported the diplomatic relations established by the national party government with the newly formed State of Israel -- which many Afrikaner nationalists proclaimed as a model for separate, ethnic homelands in South Africa. The stage was set for a warming of relations between Jews and Afrikaners.

To summarize: The early twentieth century saw the participation of religiously motivated people in resistance politics, injecting a popular religious culture into the struggle for political liberation. The Afrikaner churches were at the same time reflecting and contributing to the apartheid philosophy that would fire the hearts of Afrikaners (and eventually many of the English) across the land. The English-speaking churches, distanced themselves from the drive of both Afrikaner and African nationalisms. As suggested elsewhere, the defining character of these churches continues to be moderate and restrained, trapped in protest without resistance.[50] Conscious of their minority status, Muslim, Hindu and Jewish religious institutions similarly showed a hesitant, cautious response to the events of 1948.

To use the categories of the Kairos document, published fifty years after the close of the period described here, the religious ingredients in the South African struggle can be resumed in three categories: state theology which legitimates and supports the status quo: church theology, referring to the moderate critique of the English-speaking churches: and prophetic theology, which emerges in solidarity with the oppressed in quest of the kind of liberation of which the scriptures of the great religions of South Africa speak.[51] Whatever the social function/dysfunction of the different institutional forms of religion in the pre-1948 period, they contributed to the emergence of a popular, liberatory, religious ingredient in culture that cannot be ignored. South Africa is an overtly religious country. Political groupings that fail to address this "soul" of the nation do so to their own detriment.

After 1948

It is not the task of this paper to address events in the post-1948 period. Four brief observations in relation to the above analysis must therefore suffice.

1. As the political conflict intensified after the imposition of statutory apartheid, the response of religious groups to the "left" and the "right" intensified. Extra- and para-religious groupings emerged, seeking to promote the liberating dimensions of the particular religion concerned. There was, for example, the emergence of Black theology in the 1960s, the Christian Institute, and more recently the Institute of Contextual Theology in the Christian camp. The Call of Islam and Jews for Justice are, in turn, examples of similar developments in other religions. A number of right wing religious groups have, on the other hand, emerged in all of them.

2. Political groups and activists, in the wake of the banning and restricting of political organizations, took refuge in the various religious institutions during this period – especially in the 1980s. In the process they have often awakened the residual liberating message of religion that had long been neglected.

3. The apartheid state has over the years provided the different religions with a common enemy, which has facilitated inter-religious dialogue and co-operation. The World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) in South Africa is a direct consequence of this process.

4. The events of 2 February, 1990 have brought a sense of confusion to the agendas of religious institutions. Prior to that date the perceived task of progressive religious groupings, and to a significant extent of the major religious institutions, was clear: to oppose apartheid. With the political organizations now free to lead the political struggle, the task of religious organizations is no longer as evident as it once was.

Learning from the past

What then, it could be asked, does all this mean for the future role of religions in South Africa? This is a question that needs to be asked, bearing in mind that old habits die hard. Indeed, the burden of past generations weighs on the present with formidable pressure. This is probably more true of religious organizations (which always take past traditions seriously) than secular ones. The problem is addressed, in closing, by way of several propositions:

1. The burden of past habits is likely to continue for a long time to come. In fact the danger exists that while religion has historically reflected the dominant values of each new age, there are reactionary forces within religious groups that could constitute a reactionary and counter-revolutionary force in a new South Africa.

2. The memory of past sufferings and hopes for liberation within the religious traditions needs to be awakened and drawn on as a basis for cultural and spiritual renewal in a land urgently in need of new life. No nation has ever undergone lasting renewal without an appeal to its innermost (and often forgotten) values. The religions of South Africa can enable the nation to rediscover these values – often buried under generations of both religious and ideological "muck".

3. As South Africans drink from their own particular religious wells, they need to discover the extent to which the streams that feed these wells have a common source in a universal God. The religious pluralism of the nation is to be explored as a source of mutual fulfilment and completion. The quest for a religious charter, and the process leading to its acceptance under the guidance of the WCRP, is an important step in this regard.

4. The freedom of religion is an imperative for a new South Africa. For this to happen the long history of religious exclusivism and contest must give way to mutual respect and appreciation for one another. This requires the development of specific strategies, including a comparative approach to religious education in schools and in society in general.

5. Religion is likely to be an area of ongoing struggle for decades to come. The internal divisions within the different religious groups will make any attempt to realize the above goals a difficult and time-consuming task.

Finally, religion is intertwined with the history of subjugation and resistance in South Africa. It is likely to play an equally ambiguous task in the post-apartheid era. If people committed to the enduring struggle for social justice neglect the terrain of religion, reactionary forces will have that much more access to an enduring ingredient of South African life. To close on an un-utopian note: religion, like the poor, will always be with us.

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The Dutch Reformed Church and Afrikaner Nationalism and Apartheid

Bernard Lategan
Dean of Arts
University of Stellenbosch

1. Introduction

The aim of this seminar is to analyze the role religion and religious institutions have played in the past and are playing at the moment in the dismantling of apartheid, and to gauge their potential contribution to this process in the future. The assumption that religion can indeed play such a role is itself in need of further analysis and there are indeed differing opinions on this matter. It might be argued that religion has been at least as instrumental in the establishment and development of apartheid as in its demise. But that will require a debate on its own. The focus of this paper will therefore be on the positive evidence that can be offered to illustrate and understand the role of religion in the dismantling of apartheid.

Once this has been accepted as our main goal, my own dilemma becomes clear. While other religious institutions and movements may have a proud record of resistance against apartheid, the religious tradition I come from and the church I was requested to speak about both played a decisive role in the establishment and the theological justification of apartheid. In this sense, this tradition can only serve as a counter-example for our main topic. However, recent developments in the Dutch Reformed Church (DCR) point in a different direction, which might be the start of a new process that will indeed be able to contribute to the undoing of apartheid.

It would seem that with regard to the DRC, the main theme of the seminar needs to be pursued on at least two levels. The first would be to look for indications within the DRC of resistance and of potential for turning the apartheid ideology and its practice around. This can best be done in the form of a brief report on the present thrust in the DRC to dismantle apartheid and the forces that oppose this. But we also need to look at the problem on a more fundamental level. If we are serious about dismantling apartheid, the revoking of laws and the abolishment of apartheid structures and institutions will not be sufficient. It will have to be replaced by a social order that is more just and equitable and which provides better answers to the social and political questions which apartheid tried to deal with in such a disastrous way. Apartheid has been a remarkably successful piece of social engineering. We therefore also have to look at the issues which apartheid tried to solve. The second part of this paper will attempt to do this. Given the time available, I shall briefly look at only four of these issues, namely the phenomenon of diversity, the need for a more adequate anthropology, the question of land and nationality, and the economic values underlying and shaping the social order.

Against this background, the rather complex theme suggested to me by the organizers of this seminar begins to make sense. The "DRC and Afrikaner Nationalism and Apartheid" refers to three elements that each presupposes a world of its own and a vast area of research. At the same time, there is a close link between the three, indicative of the relationship which formed the basis of the apartheid state.

The reference to "the" DRC in the title requires further comment and at the same time provides me with the opportunity to clarify my own position with relation to this tradition. The time is past that we can think of the DRC as a monolithic whole. For reasons that will become clearer as we go along, different and often conflicting voices inside the DRC can be heard. It would therefore be a mistake to look at the DRC only in its institutional form and to take notice only of official pronouncements and documents. A growing number of members have accepted not only the ideal of a non-racial, democratic and just social order, but are actively working for the return of the DRC to the ecumenical world without any conditions and in the full sense of the word. This group includes many young people. It is no longer so small as to be negligible. At the time when Beyers Naudé made his courageous stand against apartheid, he for all practical purposes stood alone and he was granted no Lebensraum inside the DRC. The only way to continue his mission was to leave this church. That situation has now changed. It is important to realize that the agenda of this reform group is not to change the DRC and its leadership "from within", but to choose deliberately for an ecumenical context and to participate in the preparation and establishment of a democratic and inclusive society.

A second group, which probably represents the majority of members, realizes that change is inevitable and therefore accepts the DRC leadership's revised position of acknowledging apartheid as a sin and their tentative

moves towards unity with the rest of the family. At the same time, they hope that these changes will affect them only in a peripheral sense and that the structure and composition of congregations and of the DRC will remain more or less the same.

A third group is actively resisting reform initiatives of the leadership and is becoming more restless and militant, as we shall see. It must be remembered that the split between the conservative party and the nationalist party was not parallelled by a split in the DRC. The majority of CP members still forms part of the DRC and their leader, Dr Andries Treurnicht, is a member in good standing. He recently challenged the DRC leadership to censure him in terms of the DRC's decision to declare apartheid a sin.

It is important to keep this differentiation always in mind when talking of the DRC today. Synodical decisions and official statements do not necessarily reflect this diversity and cannot serve as the only sources when trying to evaluate the present state of the DRC.

As far as my own positionis concerned, what follows is a personal assessment, not a presentation of the official position of the DRC. I do not represent the DRC in any capacity and I do not claim to speak for or on behalf of anybody. However, as an ordinary member, I write from the perspective of the first group and will attempt to interpret recent events and developments in the DRC from this perspective.

2. From Belhar to Cottesloe II: recent developments in the DRC

It is neither be possible nor feasible to give a detailed report of recent developments in the DRC. It is also not the place to offer a fundamental critique of apartheid theology as such. With the focus on the potential of religion in the dismantling of apartheid, it would be more to the point to discuss briefly the significance of recent developments in the DRC. The Belhar confession of 1986 provides us with a convenient starting point.

Although many contributing factors played a role, the status confession is declared by the DRMC in 1986 no doubt was of decisive importance. Differences in the DRC family regarding apartheid have already strained relations for a long time. But for the first time these differences were suddenly elevated to the level of a confessional crisis. This development posed a double threat to the DRC. On one hand, the confessional unity of the family came under serious pressure, making a formal split a real possibility. On the other hand, the DRC could no longer avoid taking a theological stand on the issue of apartheid. The publication of the now famous Belhar confession for consideration by the congregations of the DRMC underlined the seriousness of the Mission Church. This was further compounded by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches' declaration of apartheid as a heresy.

The reaction of the DRC was characteristically hesitant. Some tried to sidestep the issue by resorting to technical manoeuvres - for example, the argument that the confessional basis of the DRC family cannot be expanded unilaterally and that it really was the DRMC who was putting itself outside the family by adopting a fourth confession. Others knew that facing up to Belhar was inevitable. A number of prominent theologians and members from across the country urged the leadership to accept Belhar (which at that stage was still a proposed text due to be ratified by the synod of 1990) and to achieve structural unity with the other members of the DRC family as soon as possible.

Unity was closely linked to the issue of apartheid, because the lack of an unequivocal rejection of apartheid (the clear implication of Belhar) ruled out any possibility of the DRC moving into structural unity with the rest of the family. At that stage the DRMC and the DRCA had already declared their intention to unite. Unfortunately, the issue was pushed through with undue haste, disregarding real problems of church law and other formal requirements. It is always easy to be wise after the event, but it now appears that had the proper procedures been followed to meet all the formal requirements, the two churches would have been closer to actual unity at this stage. The handling of the unification process also created many tensions inside the two participating churches and opened the door for certain members of the DRC to develop an alternative strategy.

At the general synod of the DRC in 1990, a resolution was adopted that made it possible for congregations from the rest of the family to join the DRC. This caused widespread suspicion in the family. It appeared to be based on the idea of congregations rejoining the existing structure of the "mother" church, thus enabling the DRC to keep control. It seemed to offer an alternative model in direct opposition to the concept of church unity as proposed by the Uniting Reformed Church (URC), where a completely new structure is envisaged with equal participation by the various partners.

Although the unity issue provided a breathing space for the DRC, the theological critique of apartheid could no longer be avoided. At the general synod of 1990 in Cape Town, the revision of Church and Society finally led to the acknowledgment of apartheid as a sin, but again not in such unequivocal terms as to exclude any possible weaker or ambiguous interpretation.

For many in the DRC, the final acknowledgment of apartheid as a sin was the end of a long and unhappy history of the church's involvement in legitimating an immoral political policy. Directly following the 1990 general synod, there was the tendency among some DRC leaders to steer clear of all political involvement and to refrain from prescribing political "models" to government. This "once bitten, twice shy" attitude coincided with another realization, brought about by De Klerk's dramatic changes. The inclusion of other players in the political process and the acceptance that the national party will no longer have the monopoly of political power led to the parallel realization that the DRC will no longer be the dominant church actor and to a more realistic assessment of the DRC's position among all the other churches. Hence the desire on the side of DRC leadership to leave the messy arena of politics behind them for good and to turn all attention to purely church matters.

However, this was not to be. Perhaps against its will, perhaps because it still identified strongly with some of the objectives of the De Klerk government (e.g. the breaking of sanctions), it was soon to be drawn back into the political process in the country.

In this context, the Rustenburg conference of churches proved to be of crucial importance. This meeting took place from 5 to 9 November 1990 at the Hunter's Rest Hotel near Rustenburg. Much has been said and written about the meaning of the conference. Here I shall look only at the effect it had on the DRC's position with regard to apartheid and the subsequent dynamics which were set in motion by the event.

It must be remembered that the tentative rejection of apartheid by the general synod just a month previously gave no indication of repentance nor of restitution. The dramatic statement of repentance by Willie Jonker, professor of systematic theology at Stellenbosch, on his own behalf and on behalf of the DRC was a quantum leap in terms of the DRC's internal dynamics. In a recent article, Jonker claimed that the act of repentance was long in coming and that he was merely articulating the culmination of this process. Whether he is right in this assessment is a debatable point. At the time of Rustenburg, it certainly did not seem as if the whole of the DRC was united in its support of Jonker's confession. In fact, the effect of the statement could have been quite different if Desmond Tutu in his "Rustenburg minute" had not immediately responded positively to the confession. It must also be remembered that for some time it was unclear whether Jonker was speaking merely in his personal capacity or whether he had the support of the rest of his delegation. It was only the next morning that Jonker's colleagues declared their solidarity with his confession. Those who are familiar with the first Cottesloe declaration will appreciate how critical these few hours were. At Cottesloe the DRC delegation expressed themselves in favour of the final declaration, only to be repudiated by the church leadership back home. This fiasco was one of the direct causes of the DRC's severing of all ties with the WCC.

At Rustenburg the situation was different in the sense that some of the top leadership formed part of the DRC delegation and was forced to take a position. Had Jonker been repudiated, events would have taken a completely different course. However, the idea that it was necessary for the DRC to confess its role in the establishment of apartheid and to ask for forgiveness was certainly not supported by the DRC as a whole, as became clear from the angry reactions against Rustenburg, including a personal intervention from the former state president. But the DRC delegation stuck to its position and there is no doubt that Rustenburg represents a major breakthrough in terms of the DRC's own development. It must be emphasized that this shift is relative and certainly did not satisfy all. For instance, the other members of the DRC family remained very sceptical, as we shall see later. Nonetheless, Rustenburg remains a turning point in both the internal and external relations of the DRC. One is tempted to go deeper into the sociology of Rustenburg, but we shall leave it there for the time being. That the DRC again wavered in its position at the end is characteristic.

One of the important consequences of Rustenburg was that a new network of personal relationships and mutual understanding came into being, even if that was of a fragile nature. Soon this network was drawn into a further development when church leaders, concerned about the continuing violence in the country, linked up` with business people and representatives of political parties to set up a national peace accord. That such strange bedfellows could meet and that such an undertaking could take place is remarkable in itself. What is even more remarkable are the specific codes of conduct for political parties, the police and security forces and the instruments to monitor the implementation of the agreement. Whether the accord will be honoured by all parties is still to be seen, and both sides have already complained about the breaking of agreements. The

network of trust has recently made another important contribution when it became involved in the preparations for a multi-party conference, scheduled to begin at the end of the month. At this stage, two church leaders have been nominated to convene the meeting.

Representatives of the DRC have been involved in the process all along. Last month the Cape synod of the DRC took a further step by associating itself with the Belhar confession. This removed an important stumbling block in the relations with the DRMC and the DRCA. It also signalled the start of a determined effort by the right wing in the DRC to reverse the whole process, claiming that a confessional difference has now been established and talking about a split in the DRC.

The visit by Dr Emilio Castro and other representatives of the WCC in October 1991 was an important signal from the ecumenical movement, indicating a willingness to renew ties that were put under severe strain because of what had happened at the first Cottesloe meeting. The fact that representatives of the DRC were invited to attend a "second Cottesloe" consultation in Cape Town is significant, and it can only be hoped that relations will improve even further.

In summary, it is clear that the DRC does not present a united front. The right wing are determined to stick to the old apartheid line, although their control of synods is varied. The middle group seems to follow the De Klerk line, but their hearts are apparently not in the dismantling of apartheid in practice, despite theoretical synodical decisions. The hesitant approach to unity with the other members of the family is very illuminating in this respect. It can be expected that the tension with the right wing will increase in the near future. At the same time, there is a dedicated group, not well represented in leadership positions but determined to take the dismantling of apartheid to its logical conclusion.

How can the process of dismantling be supported in this context? Two aspects could be important. The one is to draw the DRC increasingly into the ecumenical process - this will have a dynamic of its own and no doubt the contact with other churches could only assist the process of opening up. The other is to lend more direct support to the group committed to change, even though they may not be formally representative of the leadership cadre.

3. Underlying issues: a remaining challenge

In the preceding section, we tried to assess the forces within the DRC working for and resisting the dismantling of apartheid. But dismantling implies much more than the revoking of laws and the dissolving of structures. We find ourselves in a phase of reconstruction. The question is not the replacement of this social order, but the replacement with what. The struggle for liberation was so intense that the whole emphasis was on liberation from, with little attention given to the issue of liberation for. It is the latter that now needs urgent attention. If there is broad agreement (as seems to be the case) that the post-apartheid South Africa should be a non-racial, democratic, just and free society, the political and constitutional measures to achieve this will have very little chance of success if they are not supported by an appropriate value system that is understood and implemented on all levels of society.

To do this, we have to go to a deeper level and look once again at the underlying issues of South African society. In many ways, apartheid asked the right questions, but gave the wrong answers. We shall have to find better answers. To illustrate what is meant by this, four remaining problem areas will be briefly discussed.

3.1. Managing diversity

One of the pillars on which apartheid theology rests is the diversity of humankind. Because people are different, they must be kept apart. This is the basic philosophy behind all apartheid legislation. In reaction to this, the tendency is to ignore the phenomenon of diversity and to posit a unity that does not really exist. At this stage of the debate, some are still not willing to allow the concept of diversity to be introduced into the discussion, for fear that it will again be the starting point of another version of division in theology.

And yet, we cannot ignore the phenomenon of diversity. In the African context, it is becoming one of the dominant themes. To quote from the recent publication of the AACC *The Right Time for Change.*

[God] is the source of all diversity, granted as multiple riches which can be experienced in complementarity and harmony. The world that God has given us as a place to live in and to be fruitful is full of so many diverse things that have been created to make it beautiful, manifesting the Creator's abundance and fullness. Scientists and researchers of all disciplines will never cease marvelling at the complexity of each component of this diversity. For in his creating action, God did not manufacture things in the same way as an assembly line factory might do. All elements of his creation have their specific characters, so much so that in a forest, not a single leaf nor a single tree branch is perfectly identical to another one.

And again:

All aspects of diversity, and among them our tribal and ethnic diversities as well, are free gifts from God. They have been granted to us as complementary elements of a harmonious life. The development and the growth of harmonious life in all fields of endeavour is part of the church's mission, and should also be the constant concern of states.

Instead of treating diversity and ethnicity as taboo words, we should face them squarely and place them in a different interpretative framework. Because people are different, they need each other. There are powerful biblical metaphors available to underline and develop the complementary force of diversity, but time does not allow us to discuss this in more detail. The challenge is to use these differences in a creative way.

One basic fault is to conceptualize unity and diversity as two entities that keep each other in equilibrium. Unity should not be stressed at the cost of diversity, diversity should not be overinterpreted lest unity is threatened. This is not how New Testament texts deal with this concept. An analysis of passages like 1Corinthians 12 makes it clear that unity and diversity do not belong to the same level. Unity is the primary concept, a given that does not need to be achieved or established. It provides the framework within which diversity can flourish as an expression of the richness and fullness of life and of the community of believers.

The search for a more powerful doctrine of unity is also a concern of the WCC. It is important not to look for unity on the doctrinal level or in structural form in the first place. Rather, it concerns a unity in witness and action, a convincing solidarity with the suffering and poor. In so far as the community of believers demonstrates this solidarity, it has a message for society in the broader sense. In order to achieve this transition, a proper anthropology or understanding of humankind is needed, which leads us to the next theme.

3.2. Redefining theological anthropology

A further hallmark of apartheid theology is a deficient view of human beings. Quite apart from its support for the division of people in racial categories, it operates basically with a pessimistic understanding of humankind. All thinking about humankind - so the argument goes - must take its point of departure from the fall, which stamps all humans as sinful creatures, by nature prone to all that is wrong and evil. Although humankind was originally created in the image of God, this was almost immediately cancelled out by original sin. Not too much must be expected from people and any optimistic or utopian view of humankind should be resisted on biblical grounds.

It must be conceded that this "low" anthropology is not without biblical footholds. In the tradition of both Testaments, at least two lines of anthropological thinking can be traced - a "high" and a "low" anthropology.

The "high" tradition is exemplified by the *imago Dei* motif of the creation stories. This line reaches a high point in the exalted anthropology of Psalm 8. In the New Testament it is continued in the exaltation predicates of the Son of Man. This line is countered by a "low" anthropology, which finds its expression in Psalm 22 and Romans 3. The first line articulates the almost limitless potential of human beings, the second takes its point of departure in the stark reality of human failure. Both lines accept the basic equality of people - the one in the universal destiny of all humans, the other in the universal need for salvation. This equality is understood in a formal sense, referring to the status of people and not to equality in real life situations.

It is clear that the theological support system that undergirds the apartheid mindset is based on a "low" anthropology. The sinfulness of people becomes an important building block, which should discourage people to think too highly of themselves. The emphasis on grace alone is interpreted to mean that people should accept the position they are in and not try to change the (social) system by their own efforts. Added to this is the pietistic notion that the focus of the believer should be on the next world, while the present should

be endured as best as possible. A combination of all these factors means that a low anthropology not only seriously inhibits change, but that it precludes the development of a positive self-image and self-understanding among believers.

It should therefore not come as a surprise that a strong resistance to the concept of human rights exists in these circles. The human-rights movement is often rejected as a misguided humanistic enterprise, based on a false hubris which does not take the sinful nature of humanity seriously.

In this way, deficient theological anthropology opens the door for the emergence of an anti-human frame of mind, with serious consequences for the positive self-understanding of people and with the concrete result that the belief in and possibilities for positive social change are severely restricted.

This deficiency cannot be countered by a shallow, optimistic anthropology which grudgingly accepts that people are sinners, but still thinks that basically they can take care of their own salvation. It can also not be countered by a superior and misleading attitude that discrimination is a problem that has already been disposed of and no longer needs to concern us.

A very instructive passage for our purpose is the Christological reinterpretation of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2:5-18. What makes the reinterpretation so interesting is that the psalm represents the classical expression of what we have called a "high" anthropology. The passage begins with an extensive quotation from Psalm 82:6-8a. The poet praises God's greatness and his kindness to humanity, as revealed in nature.

But this "high" anthropology is not the last word on the nature and status of people. From Hebrews 2:8b a Christological reinterpretation of the passage takes place. The "little less than the angels" becomes "a short while lower than the angels" and thus serves as an indication of Jesus' humiliation. But this humiliation is not without purpose - it is the only way to the intended glory which rightly belongs to Jesus and through him to human beings. It is through the suffering of death (2:9) that he is crowned with honour and glory. But in going the way of suffering, he opens the way for human beings to transcend their own failures and to fulfill their high calling. The rest of the passage confirms the anthropological implications of Jesus' via crucis. Humiliation is not the permanent status of either Jesus or humans, but the functional way through which the fulfilment of the promises of Psalm 8 to humankind is reached.

The intention of Jesus' suffering is to restore relationships in the family of God. It is fitting that he should lead many children to glory (2:10). He is not ashamed to associate with them and to call them his brothers (2:11). In fact, his solidarity enables him to understand their weaknesses, to break their fear of death, and in doing so, restore them to full humanity (2:14-18). What we see here emerging is neither a pessimistic nor an optimistic anthropology. A more apt description would be a "realistic" anthropology. That is, an anthropology that accepts the seriousness of sin and its devastating effects – effects that not only cause suffering, but also make service, selfless giving, humiliation and even death the way in which a new humanity is born. But – and that is the difference – because it is a realistic anthropology in the sense described above, it refuses to accept the destructive effects of sin as a permanent state – neither of the world, nor of human beings. It can only be of a functional nature, aimed at human fulfillment and the realization of God-given potential as the real destiny of humans. Perhaps Romans 8:3139 is the best expression of this realistic anthropology.

Seen from a New Testament perspective, the struggle for human-rights is nothing but a struggle to realize this potential. Whatever other motives there may be in the human-rights business, the driving force behind the theological concern for these rights is not the overestimation of humans themselves nor the arrogant self-assertion of people against God. Human rights are not rights people claim from God as if He is their opponent and as if He has an obligation to them. Human rights are rights given by the grace of God to people as his creatures, as his children, in order to fulfill their calling as his image-bearers and to realize their God-given potential. It is for this reason that they should be carefully safeguarded and it is for this reason that the church has a special responsibility to be the advocate for and protector of human rights.

Once human rights are understood as an instrument to fulfill the high calling of human beings, the pressing question becomes how this is to be achieved in concrete situations and, more specifically, in a post-apartheid society. This brings us back to the second issue raised in the previous section, namely the question of how the reconstruction of South African society should be viewed from a theological perspective. Once again, this is an almost overwhelming issue and once again we shall only offer some thoughts on a reconstructive anthropology from a New Testament perspective.

In many ways and in many forms the writings of the New Testament deal with the theme of reconstruction – the reconstruction of individuals, of humankind, of the kingdom of heaven, of the cosmos, of creation. This is done with the help of a variety of concepts and images: rebirth, salvation, conversion, liberation, restitution, rebuilding, resocialization, growth, sanctification, holiness.

For our theme it is of utmost importance to realize that it is not the reality of failure in the past that determines the future, but the possibility of a new beginning. Instead of abandoning his creation, God returns to it as a servant, as a human being. In the non-abandonment of creation lies the radical reconstructive message of the New Testament and in the incarnation the radical humanization of this reconstruction.

What would the characteristics of a reconstructive anthropology be, that is, an anthropology that would support a phase of transformation? At least three aspects are of importance:

a) A dynamic anthropology: Because of its eschatological orientation towards the future, a reconstructive anthropology is dynamic by nature and implies an ongoing process.

The complement to a dynamic anthropology is a hermeneutic of discovery, as developed by Ricoeur in his interpretation of Freud.

The dynamics of anthropological unfolding and societal reconstruction in the Pauline letters is driven by two forces. Firstly, the resurrection of Christ is understood as the conquering of death in principle and the promise of the first-fruits of the full harvest. Secondly, the ideal is to make Christ visible in the lives of the believers (Gal. 4:19) and for them to strive to be renewed in the image of the Creator (Col. 3:10).

The process of reconstruction is not without tension and pain. In the letters the metaphor of birth pains which precedes the joy of new life is evoked. This can be almost cosmic in its implications, as in Romans 8 but it pertains also to the individual (Gal. 4:19).

Reconstruction also required an innovative approach, courage to think the unthinkable, willingness to reconsider accepted positions. In his reinterpretation of the gospel in a new context and under different cultural and social presuppositions, Paul was forced to reconsider - and amend - the understanding of the gospel he had up to that point. That salvation did not depend on fulfilling the law nor required a Jewish way of life, did not occur to him before he was confronted with believers from a gentile background, where none of these "essential elements" existed. Interpretation in a new context not only helped to correct misunderstandings, but also to discover hitherto undiscovered aspects of the gospel.

b) A transforming anthropology: A reconstructive anthropology is at the same time transforming in its effect. A remarkable feature of many New Testament writings is the anthropological categories with which this transformation is both conceptualized and effected.

The transformation is effected when the anthropological consequences of this new understanding of reality are spelled out. Galatians 3:28 and Colossians 3:11 are classical expressions of the radical nature of these consequences. Cultural, class and sex differences are placed in a completely new light – an understanding that affects the very fabric of society. Although these changes may take years and even centuries (as in the case of slavery) to work their way through society and although some – like the position of women – are still in their initial stages, an irreversible process has been set in motion.

These changes are not vague or speculative, but very concrete in their anthropological outcome - a constant renewal in the image of God that affects all human relationships (Col. 3:11) and implies specific human qualities: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, love, peace. To this peace the believers were called as a single body (Col. 3:15).

c) A responsible anthropology: New Testament writers make it very clear that salvation means liberation and that the mode of existence in the community of faith is that of freedom. Nowhere is it stated so clearly as in Galatians 5:1: Christ set us free to be free - so exercise this freedom! The freedom of the existence in faith is not a static or formal concept. It can only be maintained if believers dare to break out of bondage and act as free people. If running is the key to maintaining running fitness, freedom can only be kept alive and well in a context where freedom is respected and practised.

Once again it is not only a freedom from slavery to powers that oppose God, but especially a freedom for the fulfilment of his claims upon one's life. Paul has often been criticized for restricting his ethical instructions to young converts, especially those coming from a pagan background who knew very little of the Jewish traditions, to the bare essentials. But there seems to be good reasons for this "ethical deficiency". On the one hand, Paul does not want to replace one set of rules with another, thereby creating a new form of slavery and perpetuating the misunderstanding that salvation can be earned by observing a set of laws (Gal. 5:1). On the other hand, he wants to encourage believers to take responsibility for their own ethical decisions. Instead of following a prescribed set of instructions, they should think for themselves and draw out the consequences for a specific situation. Paul once again demonstrates how he opts for a realistic instead of a pessimistic anthropology. He is well aware that freedom can be abused (5:13). Yet he has full confidence in the ability of the Galatians to distinguish between right and wrong behaviour and to make the right ethical decisions (5:16-25).

3.3. Nationalism vs nation-building and the land issue

Apartheid anthropology is not only pessimistic, it is also collectivistic. The latter has serious consequences for the process of reconciliation and nation-building, and for the issue of land ownership.
Collectivism means that people are understood first and foremost in terms of groups and that the group determines for all practical purposes the existence of the individual. Time does not allow us to trace the development of the group concept from extended families to the metaphysical idea of a "volk" (people), with its own soul and independent existence. Suffice it to say that this form of collectivism, despite its idea of communality, does not foster human interaction and the building of a community, because of its exclusivist and formalist approach.

If nation-building in an inclusivist sense is to replace apartheid, it must first restore a real sense of community. Here the biblical concept of the community of faith has an important part to play, that can be strengthened by the African understanding of UBUNTU. The process of nation-building also requires reconstruction and reconciliation and presupposes the integration of groups into one social system. In this context, the sharing of life stories and the reinterpretation of history, revising the memory of the past, are powerful psychological and sociological tools for resocialization and reconstruction of society.

In the apartheid line of thinking, land and territory have always been closely associated with the group or "volk", leading on the one hand to the creation of doomed-to-fail Bantustans and on the other hand still feeding the dream of white homeland in many variations. But apart from these theoretical concepts, the unequal distribution of land has serious political and economic consequences. This underlines the theological challenge to develop a theology of land ownership that can only be undertaken as a joint venture by white and black compatriots - a theology that can inspire and discipline all to live together justly as neighbours[2].

3.4 The search for a sustainable and participatory economy

Because of its visible political and social manifestations, it is often not understood that apartheid is first and foremost an economic system. The marginalized position of White Afrikaners in the 1930s, their struggle for economic survival were the strongest motives behind the campaign for White privileges and at the expense of Black compatriots who were systematically excluded from jobs and opportunities. The growth of Afrikaner prosperity attests to the success of this policy.

In the dismantling of apartheid, access to resources and opportunities and the restructuring of the economy pose perhaps the most daunting task. It is not only a matter of redesigning the economy for the future, but also of addressing the difficult problem of restitution and redistribution.

Because an economic system is based on specific value judgments, it is imperative that these value choices become a subject of debate. It is important that theologians and church people participate in the debate. This may be unfamiliar territory for theologians and they should therefore tread very carefully, but an interdisciplinary approach is essential. There are historical precedents for such ventures and it is for this reason that the Centre for Contextual Hermeneutics at the University of Stellenbosch has launched an economic project on an interdisciplinary basis, with the specific goal to research the parameters, possibilities and problems of a post-apartheid economy for South Africa.

4. Conclusion

I have tried to answer the question of the role of religion in dismantling apartheid in the case of the DRC on two levels. The first was to assess the potential coming from this tradition in the present phase of social transformation. The second was to reconsider the basic questions which the apartheid system tried to answer and to give some indication of what the nature and scope of the theological contribution in this respect could and will have to be. It is both a mammoth task and a very serious responsibility – but also an undertaking we cannot evade and an opportunity for which we will have to accept responsibility.

NOTES

1 All Africa Confernece of Chuchres, *The Right Time for Change* (place: AACC, 19..), pp.18 and 19.

2 Kritzinger, (place: published 1990), p.7.

MUSLIMS ENGAGING APARTHEID

The Emergence of an Islamic Theology of Liberation

Farid ESACK*

> Your history is one of obedience to the law and those in authority over you. (A. Abdurahman, *Cape Times*, 13 April 1937)

> O fools! You who are the tools of oppression. You have imprisoned the bodies of the *mujahidin*. But the struggle of the *mujahid* is the struggle of Faith, Conscience and Conviction. Never mind the walls of the jails of the oppressed have a special link with Allah. Thus the holy Prophet said: Beware of the cry of the oppressed; for between the oppressed and Allah there is no barrier. (Qiblah pamphlet '*Mujahidin* of Azania'

* Maulana Farid Esack, formerly National Co-Ordinator of the Call of Islam, is currently engaged in doctoral studies in Qur'anic Hermeneutics at the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations (CSIC), Birmingham, UK

INTRODUCTION

I have been asked to deal with the role of Islam in the dismantling of apartheid. However, two factors compel me to be more specific in this paper.

Firstly, the vastly separate histories of the Muslim community in Natal and Transvaal on the one hand, and in the Cape on the other, make for two very different subjects. While in the northern provinces there have been notable Muslim personalities in the northern provinces involved in the struggle against apartheid, the Muslims of the Cape have organized against it as a community on the basis of Islam. When dealing with the role of Islam in dismantling apartheid, it would thus seem more appropriate to focus on this area.

Secondly, Islam's role in a struggle is reflected through Muslim participation. However, such participation does not necessarily imply the presence of Islam in it nor the ideological commitment of Muslims to Islam. Reflection on how the scripture of Islam, the Qur'an, is utilized by Muslims engaged in this struggle enables us simultaneously to glean something about the role of Islam in informing Muslim-struggle discourse and how "the struggle" has informed Muslim-qur'anic discourse. This paper consists of four parts:

1) a broad historical overview of the community and its relationship with the ruling class as well as with the rest of the oppressed community;

2) a closer look at the community's role in the most recent phase of the struggle against apartheid;

3) the community's appropriation of its scripture, the Qur'an, as a methodological tool and inspirational source in the struggle against apartheid;

4) some general reflections on the role of Muslims and Islam as South Africa moves towards a post-apartheid era.

I. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

According to available documented evidence Islam entered South Africa from two directions and during different periods.[1] The first stream arrived either with, or shortly after, the first colonists at the Cape in 1652. They came from the Indonesian archipelago and comprised labourers, political exiles, political prisoners and slaves. A second stream arrived in 1860 from India to provide labour for the sugar industry in Natal. The descendants of this stream are today concentrated in the northern provinces of Transvaal and Natal.

Muslims of the Cape gradually formed a sub-group of what is commonly referred to as "the Coloured community".[2] Their survival as a distinct religious and cultural community – against tremendous odds – may be attributed to a sense of exclusivity, even superiority vis-a-vis non-Muslims. This sense of religio-cultural superiority, together with economic considerations, has often led to Muslim identification with the other "superior group" – the ruling class.

The struggle for acceptability by the ruling class and the imperatives of survival as a distinct religious community made them amenable to frequent military co-option by the military-political structures. But the ruling class has always feared the potential of Muslims for rebellion. These fears, the ruling class rejection of all blacks as equal partners in government, and the ever-present Islamic appeal to egalitarianism and fellowship ensured that Muslims were never fully absorbed into the socio-political structures of, initially, colonialism and, later, apartheid. The community's history and the perennial tension between absorption by and opposition to the ruling class seem to have passed through several distinct phases.

1. The first period: struggle for survival (1652-1779)

This period clearly indicates that non-absorption into the socio-political structures of the ruling class did not imply identification with the aspirations and struggles of the indigenous and dispossessed population. In formulating collective responses of rebellion to the conditions imposed upon them, and to other socio-political realities, Muslims, along with the rest of the slave population, were severely restricted by a number of factors. These included the lack of a commonly developed cultural identity, the diversity of their social origins, and their isolation and dispersion over a wide geographical area.[3]

The inability to form a collective response to challenge their enslavement does not mean that a response was not forthcoming in subtle forms or that the slaves became mirror cultural images of their masters, as some have suggested. Elphinck and Shell[4] have argued that the rigid and closed nature of Cape slave society and the absolute hegemony of the masters over their slaves caused slave culture to be gradually transformed to conform in most respects with that of their masters. Bradlow disputes this and argues that the spread of Islam and the emergence of a Muslim community are in fact the collective expressions of resistance to slavery. I agree with Bradlow, whose position recognizes the dynamism of the history of the eighteenth century and concurs with what Wordon describes as a "fundamental tendency for all slaves to resist their enslavement".[5] Studies on the emergence of the early Muslim community and the particular attraction of Islam for the slaves also support Bradlow's thesis.[6]

Muslims interacted with the rest of the slave population as comrades in a common yoke of marginalization who may be won over to Islam. Islam, it may confidently be said, became a refuge to the slave community which sought some kind of dignity, self-respect and sense of belonging in the midst of their slavery. However, there is nothing to suggest that the early Muslim perception of the Nguni and the remaining sedentary Khoi differed in any way from that of the ruling class: "uncivilized menaces".[7]

2. The second phase: collaboration, consolidation and litigation (1780-1869)

From the late eighteenth century Islam at the Cape became an "observable historical phenomenon".[8] Despite the perpetuation of a wide array of repressive policies relating to religion which continued well into the nineteenth century, this period signifies the beginning of Muslim awakening and the spread of religious knowledge – a period of consolidation of the Muslims as a permanent and dynamic community with public religious practices.

This phase witnessed the continuing struggle for acceptability by the ruling class and the internal community imperative of consolidation. It is thus characterized by military collaboration with the colonists and the search for religious structures centring around personalities. The time, energy and acrimony devoted to these struggles – themselves the outcome of a community being marginalized and turning in onto itself – further limited Muslim's ability to resolve the tensions between collaboration and confrontation, between absorption into the structures of the ruling class and identifying with the aspirations of the indigenous people.[9]

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, a clear shift is evident in the nature of colonial relationships with the colonized communities. This shift may be attributed to the rise of liberalism in Europe and to the dictates of the realpolitik of the Cape Colony.

By 1795, when the occupation of the Cape by the British seemed imminent, Muslim support for the defence of the colony was procured[10] in return for the "toleration of their religion and the right to build a mosque". The *Awwal Masjid* (First Mosque), built in 1798[11] with Tuan Guru as its first *imam*, became the first of numerous such foci of community religious life. The *Awwal Masjid* was also the venue for the first of several *slamseskole* (madrassahs) and by the end of the 1820s at least twelve such institutions were operating in Cape Town.

In 1804 an ordinance declaring "religious freedom" was published, thus enabling Muslims to practise their religion without concealing it from the authorities.[12]

The new "benign and pragmatic" light in which the Muslim community was now being viewed was directly related to the pending British invasion of the Cape, the objective of the new policy being to secure maximum moral and military support from the inhabitants of the Colony. Two Javanese (essentially Muslim) artilleries were formed under the command of Frans of Bengal, a *Mohamadaansche Veld Priester* (roving Muslim priest). Frans was subsequently granted land on the lower slopes of Table Mountain as a burial ground for the Muslims.

This co-option in return for greater religious favours was to be repeated. In 1847 Muslims, the vast majority of whom were conscripts, participated on the side of the Dutch in what the colonists named the frontier wars and the indigenous people called wars of liberation. The "thanks for services rendered" assumed the form of another mosque site upon which the *Jami'ah Masjid* - also known as the Queen Victoria Mosque - was erected in 1850.

How were the Muslims viewed by the colonists?

The early slavery situation gave rise to a type of race relations described as "paternalistic" and to an ideological current called "Cape liberalism". Muslims were treated as "favourite children"; in this regard their value as skilled craftspeople[13] and their "strict and scrupulous characters",[14] particularly the sobriety resulting from Islam's prohibition of alcohol,[15] made them reliable personal servants or slaves.

However, historical fears of the potential of Muslims for rebellion were always present among the colonists. Bradlow has indicated how the personal "assets" of Muslims as servants were "forever contrasted with what was perceived to be the darker side of their character".[16] While concern tended to be voiced about individual acts of violence, "there is a subtle sense in which members of the ruling class remained aware of the possibility of such protest assuming a collective form".[17]

Muslim participation in the institutions or ventures of the state was, however, not confined to military activities or police duties. The second half of the nineteenth century saw its propertied members participating in the constitutional activities of the state through the exercise of their voting rights and as willing participants in the judicial system of the state. The latter activity was the beginning of a litigation tendency - which persists today - whereby internal power struggles regularly resulted in supreme court action. (These struggles invariably centre around the legitimacy or otherwise of a particular claimant to the leadership of a mosque and its congregation.[18]

3. The third phase : beyond survival – between collaboration and resistance (1870-1947)

The turn of the nineteenth century witnessed growing Muslim participation in the state machinery, the emergence of a Coloured political identity with a rapidly-growing middle class, and an abiding belief in the legitimacy and effectiveness of the constitutional process.

With slavery formally abolished in 1807, the gradual rise of a Muslim middle class and community consolidation, the third period saw a growth of Muslim political assertion which spearheaded a wider political awakening among blacks in the Cape. The tensions between absorption and resistance continued to dominate community life from the latter part of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth, with some significant differences. Both of these tensions were more overtly manifested and the movement away from collaboration was steadily gaining ground. This reflected the community's growing confidence in its ability to challenge the state.

This "challenging of the state" by Muslims was dramatized by the community's response to two issues which it viewed as a direct infringement of its religious rights: the hospitalization of Muslims during the smallpox epidemic in the nineteenth century, and the closure of the Tana Baru in 1886. These led to what is commonly referred to as the "cemetery uprisings of January 1886". This first urban uprising in the history of South Africa has been extensively dealt with by Davids, Bradlow and Bickford-Smith.[19]

The Muslim elite, like other black elites, firmly believed in the legitimacy of the constitutional process and in justice through participation in this process. "Even when justice seemed scarce, belief in the fundamental morality of political institutions continued..."[20]

Bradlow has argued that the absence of "an explicit political programme" on the part of the early Muslims did not imply that their activities were void of "fundamental political considerations".[21] This is clearly not the way the early Muslims viewed their struggles. The cemetery uprisings demonstrate the then prevalent Muslim differentiation between religion and politics. It was state intervention in the ritual aspects of their religious lives which provoked their ire. Muslims in the nineteenth century were clearly prepared to rise for their faith, a faith interpreted in a narrow manner and which accepted a dichotomy between God and Caesar.[22]

The political nature of their challenges - albeit unintended - nevertheless underscored their leadership role in resistance to the ruling class. This was further highlighted in August 1892 when a large meeting, essentially Muslim, was held under the leadership of Ozair Ally to denounce the passing of the franchise and ballot act (this act raised the franchise qualifications in order to exclude the large number of Africans in the then recently annexed Transkeian Territories). Ally, who spearheaded the campaign, was instrumental in the founding of

the Coloured People's Organization (CPO), the first national Coloured political organization. His supporters and those of the CPO were predominantly Muslim although - and this is evident from its title - they sought broad Coloured support.

The turn of the nineteenth century witnessed the fusion of Muslim and Coloured political identities under Muslim leadership. This - for Muslims - precluded the need for Muslims to organize separately. This partly accounts for the collapse of the first Muslim political organization, the South African Moslem Association (est. 1903). When, in 1910, some Muslims again sought to establish an organization catering exclusively for Muslim interests, leading clerics attacked the idea on the grounds that "the existence of a separate political organization of Malays tended to weaken the political organization of the Coloured peoples on the whole" (the APO, 17.07.1909 and SA News 24.02.1910). This was a clear reference to the African Political (later People's) Organisation (1902).

According to Lewis, the founding of the APO marked the start of successful black mobilization on a national scale.[23] Preceding the African National Congress (ANC) by a decade, it rapidly attracted more than 20,000 members in over a hundred branches country-wide. In 1905 Dr Abdullah Abdurahman, a leading Muslim, became the APO's president, a position he held until his death in 1940.[24]

Most of the energies of the APO were directed towards the integration of Coloured and Muslim elite in white society. Given the entrenched white domination and the relative absence of African population in the Cape, this was perhaps the only realistic option for them. Lewis has ably described how the moral-ideological path of solidarity with the rest of the black community and a broader black identity was, however, a permanent backdrop of the APO resolutions and programme.[25]

The APO experienced occasional splits when those who considered "the material advantages of a separate Coloured ethnicity" went their own way. These splits were invariably led by men who professed Christian motives and, inevitably, their departure was also into political oblivion.[26]

This is not to suggest that the picture of Muslims is one of a community engaged in a Manichean drama whereby relentless resistance to injustice confronted unmitigated white repression. Until the 1980s their story is also an interplay of collaboration and resistance, the former gradually giving way to the latter, not so much under the burden of the Qur'an's exhortation to justice but rather on account of changing socio-political conditions.

Under the unchallenged leadership of Abdurahman, the APO articulated Coloured elite concerns and aspirations and overcame Muslim-Christian tensions among this class. Since its inception, the APO had attracted Muslim support and "its popularity grew when one of their own people became its president".[27] Bickford-Smith describes Abdurahman's leadership as "symbolic of the fusion of interests between Muslim and Coloured elite".[28] For the poorer classes, the sheer battle for survival amidst the ever-increasing hardships of a deluge of discriminatory legislations necessitated the overcoming of religious differences.

By the late 1930s dissatisfaction with the "moderate reformist" APO policies and a new wave of discriminatory legislation led to the formation of viable alternatives. Unlike the APO, these alternatives were committed to "mobilizing the Coloureds to support the strategies of working class unity and direct action such as strikes, boycotts and demonstrations".[29] The young Coloured radicals comprised two groups, both of which were led by Muslims: Zaibunnisa Gool, Abdurahman's daughter, led a pragmatic faction that blended class struggle rhetoric with reformist-welfare activities. The more theoretically inclined and "ideologically stringent faction"[30] was led by Dr Goolam Gool, her brother-in-law, and his wife, Hawa Ahmad. Both these factions combined in 1935 to form the National Liberation League (NLL), with Dr Warad Abdurahman - another of Abdullah Abdurahman's daughters - being instrumental in setting up its women's bureau. The formation of the NLL heralds a new phase in black politics in South Africa, which saw the rejection of white guardianship over blacks, placed a great stress on non-racial working class unity and employed mass direct action to oppose racial discrimination.

The most lasting legacy of this group, and of its more abiding successor, the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM, now known as the New Unity Movement), was the formulation of the policy of non-collaboration with participants in apartheid structures. Until today, this policy was to shape resistance politics and even the contours of a nascent Islamic theology of liberation in the 1980s. It is encapsulated in the following quotation from an anti-CAD (Coloured Affairs Department) bulletin: "Don't have any social or personal intercourse with them. Don't greet them. Don't have any conversations with them. Don't visit them, and don't invite them to

your home. Don't meet them even if it's necessary to cross over to the other side of the street. Don't see them, even if you come face to face with them".[31]

The NEUM, however, did not appeal to Muslims in the smae way as the APO did. Although the Abdurahmans - especially Abdullah Abdurahman - and the Gools were prominent Muslim personalities, Islam did not play a significant role[32] in their political activity and neither did they appeal to the Muslim community to work for a just society on the basis of it being Muslim. With the clearer Marxist doctrinal accentuations of the NLL and, later, the NEUM, Muslims generally felt rather uncomfortable in these circles.

The clearer NEUM identification with Marxism was one of the reasons for the increasing Muslim distance from political developments in the late 1940s and 1950s. Muslims developed a deep resentment towards many young intellectuals who abandoned Islam for Marxism. This, in turn, partially contributed to the brief Muslim flirtation with the nationalist party regime which came to power in 1948.[33]

II. ENGAGING APARTHEID: AFTER 1948

A number of factors ensured that, for the majority of Muslims, ideas of collaboration were finally abandoned by the end of the 1950s.[34] The campaigns of these organizations - particularly the anti-CAD campaign, and, more importantly, the harshness of the group areas act promulgated in 1952 - were the most significant of these factors.

In 1951 when the nationalist government introduced the separate representation bill, a measure designed to disenfranchize the Coloureds, two prominent Muslim religious figures, Ganief Booley and Ganief Harris, contested its validity in the supreme court. Initially losing the case, they won it on appeal, forcing the government to amend the constitution.[35]

By 1958 the Coloured community experienced the savagery of forced removals. Consequently, Muslims were disconnected from their mosques, the centre of their community life. The anger engendered by these forced removals and the discomfort of Muslims in increasingly Marxist anti-apartheid organizations led to the formation of the Muslim Youth Movement (MYM) in Claremont and District Six, both areas under the axe of the group areas act.

Educated Muslim youth were now searching for Islam's response to the South Africa crucible. At the first of three huge public meetings, on 7 May 1961, the Call of Islam was launched and thousands of copies of a declaration against the injustices of apartheid were distributed. This display of opposition to apartheid caused a major stir in Cape Town and the issue was even raised in parliament.

This activity represented the first attempt to organize Muslims as a sector of South African society against social and political oppression, as distinct from what was construed as purely religious persecution. Prominent in these attempts was a cleric, Abdullah Haroon, who was later murdered in detention by the security police. However the Call of Islam - a campaign rather than an organization - did not survive for longer than a year although its key component, the Claremont MYM, continued to play an important role in the development of a socially and politically relevant Islam.

Haroon and his supporters later spearheaded the formation of the Cape Islamic Federation (CIF). When challenged by the CIF to adopt a firm stand against apartheid, the clerics, organized in the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC), denounced the challenge as "youthful impetuosity". The collaborationist position of the clerics is reflected in a *Muslim News* editorial:

> Has the government forbidden the worship of Allah? Has the government closed down or ordered the demolition of any mosque in a declared white area? If our (sic) government has ordered our Muslims to desert the faith of our forefathers then our *ulema* would have been the first to urge us to resist, even to death.[36]

A number of factors led to "bitterness and demoralization" and the eventual death of the CMYM and CIF. These factors include the strength of a reactionary clergy and the latter's successful campaign against the CMYM-CIF, and the wedge between Haroon - caught between his cleric colleagues and his youthful supporters - and the CMYM. Other than internal community factors, South Africa in the post-Sharpeville period underwent its most ferocious season of repression and persecution. This undoubtedly led to the weakening of all progressive forces in the country.

For the Muslim community the most horrendous manifestation of this season of repression and persecution was "the killing of the imam", Haroon's murder by the security police after four months in detention[37]. Thirty thousand people attended his funeral and *Muslim News*, the paper he edited, eulogized his fine character without saying a word about the manner of his death or the crime of detention without trial. The six years of political silence which followed his martyrdom is perhaps the most shameful period in the history of the Muslims in South Africa.

1. Farewell to collaboration: 1970–1990

The silence of the clergy on the martyrdom of Haroon led to a deep sense of betrayal and disillusionment on the part of young Muslims. Below the surface of Muslim inertia and post-1961 state of emergency fear, the Muslim youth were stirring. The Black Consciousness (BC) movement gradually began to fill some of the void caused by the banning of the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in 1960 and the virtual collapse of the NEUM and the Coloured Peoples' Congress. In the Cape, Muslim leadership continued to manifest itself in a number of political organizations that were formed in this period. The author led a national non-racial organization, National Youth Action (NYA) (est. 1969), Ashiek Manie led the South African Black Scholars Association (SABSA, est. 1972), while Anwar Albertus was a prominent student leader at the University of the Western Cape. Students on this campus and in SABSA were in the forefront of the BC movement which shattered the long period of political passivity following the break-up of the liberation movement internally.

There were also global factors which contributed to the reawakening taking place among young Muslims. The 1970s saw the re-emergence of Islam as a global political force, its most visible manifestation being the revolution in Iran.[38] Many young Muslims began to view Islam as an ideological option for a future South Africa. The Islamic fundamentalism engendered by the revolution also implied a religious exclusivism which denied the potential in non-Islam for virtue. Coming at a time of heightening political awareness and activity locally, it was inevitable that there would be tensions between those fundamentalists and other Muslims prepared to work with non-Muslims. The discourse among Muslims was now no longer one of collaboration or resistance but about the nature of that resistance and how best the ideological objectives of Islam could be furthered within such resistance.

The movement for a socially relevant Islam was personified by the Muslim Youth Movement (est. 1970) and the Muslim Students Association (MSA) (est. 1974). Both of these organizations regularly expressed their opposition to apartheid. From 1979 onwards, *Al Qalam*, the MYM mouthpiece, consistently opposed participation in apartheid structures, arguing that this "would amount to being party to oppression of the majority of blacks" (February 1984). Any alteration in these structures, it argued, are meant "solely for cosmetic purposes" (March 1985), political adjustments within the existing socio-political framework "in order to lengthen the existence of the South African way of life" (November 1980). The movement itself, as we shall see further, became more active in its opposition to apartheid in the early 1980s as it commenced "its courtship with reality".

Meanwhile, from the mid-1970s *Muslim News* underwent a complete metamorphosis and projected the image of a militant and dynamic Islam while vigorously promoting black consciousness.

It was, however, only in the latter part of the most recent period (1970–90) that the community threw in its lot with those opposed to apartheid and working for the creation of a non-racial and democratic South Africa. Those who had previously argued for collaboration with apartheid now shifted the discourse to co-operation with non-Muslims; this co-operation had by then become synonymous with resistance to apartheid. Because of the enormous theological difficulties in justifying apartheid, interfaith solidarity against it became the object of denunciation. This conservative discourse was nurtured by a sense of inferiority and apologia vis-a-vis the ruling class, and sought acceptance by it.

Parallel to this discourse ran another, different from the politically conservative one but with the same outcome: a rejection of interfaith solidarity against apartheid. As I have mentioned earlier, the re-emergence of Islam as a global poitical force and events in Iran influenced young Muslims significantly, particularly in their assertion of Islam as an ideological option for a future South Africa.

The radical fundamentalist discourse - of which the chief representative was the MYM - was based on the confidence of Islam to confront the world and on a rejection of all the values of non-Islam, including that of the ruling class. The rejection of racialism and exploitation was incidental to this discourse. Their essential

criticism of both the state and "the struggle" was that these represented values which did not emanate from the realm of Islam. All forms of opposition to apartheid not rooted in Islam were, according to them, to be equally eschewed and opposed.[39]

In 1983 came the "new deal", the introduction of a tricameral parliament for Coloureds, Whites and Indians.[40] This was also the time of the re-emergence of the ANC as an important element in the internal struggle against apartheid. A host of community, student and religious organizations adhering to the freedom charter - the ANC policy document - emerged and seized on various local issues to heighten opposition to apartheid.

One such organization was the Call of Islam (est. 1983, hereinafter referred to as the Call), an offshoot of the MYM. Founded by a small group of dissidents who refused to sever their links with the UDF, the Call soon became the most vociferous and organized Muslim groups resisting apartheid. Mass rallies, public meetings, the *Jumu'ah khutbah* (Friday sermon), door-to-door campaigns, funerals for victims of police brutality, boycotts, street uprisings and a regular flood of religio-political pamphlets characterized their action. A number of prominent religious leaders, most of whom belonged to the Call, campaigned around the country against the "new deal" and exhorted the Muslims to make common cause with the oppressed. Virtually all their programmes were organized in concert with or with the support of their allies in the UDF.[41]

Qiblah (est. 1980), inspired by events in Iran, emerged as a militant and fundamentalist force which simultaneously supported black consciousness and the notion of Islamic revolution. From its inception, Qiblah identified strongly with the struggle against apartheid, its founder/leader, Achmat Cassiem, having been an activist since his youth and served long periods under banning orders, detention and imprisonment. Various Qiblah pamphlets testify to their belief that "from the perspective of Islam there can never be peaceful co-existence between oppressor and oppressed, exploiter and exploited, the just and the unjust" *(Dimensions of the Kalima)*; that "the oppressed are under a moral obligation to wage a total war against oppressors and oppression and establish a just universal order" *(Martyrdom Is Victory)*.

The introduction of tricameralism and the ensuing nationwide revolt seemed to be the cue for Muslims to make their final break with apartheid and to identify with the oppressed. The UDF with its appeal to all people to unite against the tricameral system attracted Muslim leaders such as Hassan Solomon, the author, Abdul Hamid Gabir and Ebrahim Rasool. Some of them served on the executive of the UDF while Nazim Muhammad, president of the MJC, became a patron of the UDF.

To my mind, two factors were crucial in facilitating the participation of Muslims as Muslims and as a community in the struggle: the front nature of the UDF, and the freedom charter's embrace of the distinctiveness of various communities.

The Call regarded the first of these as the single most important justifying factor for belonging to an anti-apartheid front:

> Muslims may unite with others on an anti-apartheid or anti-capitalist platform in an unqualified manner, but may not do so on a platform that also has a very concrete vision of our country's future ("On Relationships...").

Qiblah, on the other hand, denounced what it regarded as a "struggle fought without ideological perspective" and insisted that "the ideological conflict must be sharpened if it is genuine and not merely a blanket label for sheer emotionalism and party prejudice".[42]

2. Towards an Islamic theology of struggle

To the extent that the UDF dominated the political scene in the extra-parliamentary sphere, the Call dominated the scene in Muslim resistance to apartheid. The UDF mobilized thousands of people through its campaigns and, since it acted as a political front, it created the conditions required for various sectors of the society to enter the struggle while allowing them to retain their own identities. Rasool explained the relationship between political organization and religious awareness in the following manner:

> The UDF taught us that it takes a lot of grassroot organization to create the conditions whereby Muslims will take their rightful place in the struggle. It does not simply take an appeal from the

> Qur'an to create revolutionaries among Muslims. That (their commitment) is the product of social conditions, theological reflection and organization.[43]

His statement is significant for it encapsulates the basis of the emerging South African Islamic theology and hermeneutic of liberation. The Qur'an, in order to be enacted and be socially meaningful, requires a moment within history. This moment was being forged within a context of oppression and struggle for liberation, a struggle shared by others outside the house of Islam.

Expressions of the commitment to work alongside non-Muslims were seen in Muslim leaders addressing - as Muslims - UDF rallies, joint mobilization against state structures, "street action" and formal decisions by the Call and Aljihad to affiliate to the UDF. At a more overtly religious level the presence at Call meetings of church leaders such as Allan Boesak and of Muslim clerics in churches and the large number of interfaith services accentuated the inter-religious witness against oppression. The formation of the South African chapter of an international interfaith organization, the World Conference for Religion and Peace (WCRP), in this period provided a forum to deepen this solidarity and to explore the theological diversity that accompanies it.

The Call played a most significant role in getting Muslims to accept the necessity of and theological legitimacy for interfaith solidarity. Having split from the MYM on the question of working with non-Muslims in general, and with the UDF specifically, it was inevitable that these issues would also dominate their agenda for a considerable while. The Call broke new ground in South Africa with its unambiguous embracie of Christians and Jews as "brothers and sisters" and "believers". Their first information brochure states:

> We have identified the characteristics of *Jahiliyyah* as capitalism, imperialism and Zionism and shall embrace as our allies those who oppose these forces... Non-Muslims have shed their blood to oppose the brutality of apartheid and to work for a just South Africa. We are then committed to work side by side with others for the destruction of apartheid society.[44]

While the Call may have been the main organizing body for many of these events, it was Qiblah which provided their revolutionary fervour. A Qiblah-inspired indomitable belief in the *qadr* (power) of Allah bewildered the armed forces and the police when they confronted the Muslims on the streets of Cape Town. Concepts such as *shahadah* (martyrdom) and *jihad* (sacred struggle), since the Iranian revolution associated with obscurantist fundamentalism, were popularized by Qiblah and warmly embraced by the masses in the streets, on campuses and in meeting halls.

The successful invoking of these concepts enabled the Muslims to become a force to be reckoned with and feared by the South African regime. The police and the armed forces correctly perceived that they were encountering a hitherto unknown element in the liberation struggle. This is not unlike the confusion that the USA faced in Iran with the uprising against the Shah or the experience of Israel in the south of Lebanon when they first encountered Hezbollah. It is no small wonder that the BBC reported that "the streets of Cape Town resemble those of Tehran" (19 october 1985).

As we indicated earlier, from 1979 onwards the MYM and its organ, *Al Qalam*, reflected opposition to both apartheid and the liberation movement. This opposition was based on two elements: ethico-religious indignation at racialism and sympathy for the oppressed on the one hand, and a passionate belief that only liberation along the path of Islam would be of any consequence, on the other. The following statements from *Al Qalam* editorials reflect these beliefs: "Ours is a heritage of leadership to liberate man from the bondage of man..." (August 1986); "We have the right to lead "(January 1986); "...the people of this country will have to be made aware that within...Islam lies a solution to their problems and to the problems of the rest of the world..." (January 1986).

In the Cape, the MYM was rather low-key during this period although its seminal role in the important notion of a politically relevant Islam is, in fact, the precursor of virtually all Islamically motivated political activity during the 1980s.[45]

Some of their leadership figures, such as Ibrahim Musa and Rashid Umar, played a significant part in articulating theological issues arising from Muslim involvement in the struggle. Beyond this articulation, which often took place in mosques where they officiated as imams, they were also instrumental in giving ideological guidance to Muslims on campuses and at high schools where the MYM's sister organization, the MSA, was in control of organized Muslim student activity.

While the three major Muslim activist organizations were, to varying degrees, essentially responsible for the mobilization of Muslims against apartheid during this period, there were others who - again to varying degrees - contributed to this. The successfully projected image of the influential MJC aligning itself with the Call and the UDF[46] was an important factor in legitimating the struggle to ordinary Muslims who would otherwise have remained indifferent to it.

In the African townships Al-Jihad, a little-known organization, played a significant role in mobilizing against apartheid. This is a small grouping of *Shiahs* - the only self-confessed *Shiah* grouping in South Africa - which did much to translate slogans of *jihad* into concrete programmes of struggle. Inspired by the Iranian example, this affiliate of the UDF remained committed to the South African experience and recognized that solutions for a post-apartheid South Africa can only come from South Africans themselves.

Needless to say, this period also saw the South African regime develop a particular hatred for Muslim activists. To the regime it became increasingly clear that the revolutionary content of Islam must (and does) threaten any status quo based on injustice and oppression. A Call activist manual expressed this belief in the following terms:

> If there is no repression on the part of the *zalimin* (oppressors) and no suffering and endurance on the part of the believers, then there is no Islam.[47]

In a rather unsubtle attempt to marginalize those Muslims active in "the struggle", President P.W. Botha had the following to say:

> As you are aware, we have a large Muslim community who, like all other religious organizations, enjoy complete freedom of religion... However, a small group has emerged within this community who are under the influence of Libya and Iran and with funding from those quarters have committed themselves, with the ANC and PAC, to terror and violence.

In the same statement he furthermore assured parliament that "I have already issued instructions in this regard and our security and intelligence services are taking the necessary counter measures"[48].

At the other end of the spectum, Muslim involvement was warmly welcomed and accepted. The publications of the ANC exhibited a high regard for leadership figures of the Call. The then chairperson of the PAC, Johnson Mlambo, also expressed his enthusiasm for Muslim involvement in the struggle when he addressed a World Council of Churches conference in Lusaka on 5 May 1987. Inside South Africa, support for Muslim involvement was warmly endorsed by Beyers Naudé, Desmond Tutu and Allan Boesak.

To conclude this last period, we may say that the 1980s saw both growth in the political maturity of South Africa's Muslim community and the emergence of Islam on the battlefield against oppression. This need not imply, however, that the Muslim community or that Islam itself was marginal to the struggle or absent in the preceding period. Three factors distinguish the contemporary period from earlier ones:

1) the community was able to evolve a fairly consistent strategy of resistance to apartheid and oppression;

2) its participation seemingly had a vigorously articulated Islamic theological basis for involvement;

3) involvement in the struggle was carried out in concert with the majority of the oppressed of South Africa.

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3. Some conclusions

By way of drawing this historical overview to a conclusion, I would like to highlight some issues which require further study or attention. Some of them also serve as an introduction to the third part of this paper: the use of scripture by Muslims during the 1980s.

a) Muslim political leadership

Muslim participation in the cemetery uprisings, their leading role in parliamentary politics at a time when it was credible, and Ozair Ally's leading role in the founding of the Coloured People's Organization reflect the beginnings of a pattern of Muslim leadership in Coloured and Indian opposition to the ruling class; while these leaders may not have succeeded in carrying the entire or, at times, even the majority of the community with them, their political leadership was never challenged by the community in any significant manner.

This phenomenon of Muslim political leadership in the Coloured and Indian community has hitherto not received attention in any of the studies dealing with South African Coloured or Indian history, nor in those dealing with Islam in South Africa.[49] While a detailed discussion on this subject is clearly outside the framework of this paper, we may note the following:

- Muslim leadership has never been denounced by Christians who oppose the government and apartheid. Christians who spoke of the insidious Muslim hold over anti-apartheid organizations were invariably supporters of apartheid.

- There is clear evidence of intrinsic links between conservative theology and pro-apartheid or status quo ideology. Muslim and Christian religious traditionalists have both tended to be politically conservative and supportive of the status quo. The inverse of this is equally valid: the advocates of religious pluralism were also active in the struggle against apartheid. Where anti-apartheid Muslim activists opposed interfaith solidarity, it was essentially under the influence of "external" or adopted ideology, i.e. imported from Iran. Such ideology could not survive for longer than a few years in an organization which also sought to be politically and socially relevant. We thus see that the MYM-MSA moved on to accept the importance of such solidarity.

b). Shaping of understanding and ideas

- Socio-political relations with the colonists or the indigenous people, evidently, were not shaped by divine revelation and Qur'anic exhortations to identify with the oppressed or to rise as Allah's witness-bearers for justice. Nor were self-images informed by texts about the intrinsic dignity of all of humankind. These exhortations, much in vogue in recent years, were clearly in need of a socio-political moment to become alive.

- Being the victims of colonialism - or simply being Muslims - did not mean that the early Muslims necessarily identified with the indigenous people. The Khoikhoin were largely subdued after their first wars of liberation and the San were being gradually decimated by the middle of the eighteenth century. As for the Nguni, the Muslims bearing the standard of the Union Jack and the Crescent were prepared - even if at times with considerable reluctance - to assist the colonists in the subjugation of these people in return for short-term and narrowly-defined religious gains.

- The early Muslims, their understanding of Islam and their struggles for survival were shaped by their space and time. In as much as they were the first Muslims in South Africa, they are also the first local witnesses to the myth of an essentially historical and monolithic Islam. Historically, the form in which Islam has manifested itself and has had its scripture interpreted has always varied greatly. The idea of a South African expression of the faith and, by extension, a South African qur'anic or Islamic hermeneutic is thus not only plausible but has, in fact, always been operative.

- No Muslim public figure has ever emerged in South Africa who has displayed consistent and ongoing support for any of the tenets of apartheid. Flirtations with apartheid were invariably brief and were regularly followed by gestures of repentance.

c). The absence of theological justification for apartheid

- We are not aware of any documented attempts to justify apartheid on Islamic theological grounds. Whatever feeble and largely undocumented attempts there may have been were confined to a rejection of the nature of struggle or were based on the argument of obedience to lawful authority. More recently, the need to *eschew fitnah* (disorder) - the standard ideological recourse of all *Sunni* conservatism[50] - has been another argument for the perpetuation of an unjust status quo.

- While the twentieth century witnessed a proliferation of pro-apartheid political parties claiming to be founded on Christian principles, with the exception of the short-lived South Africa Muslim Association (SAMA) founded in 1904, no such Muslim organization ever claimed to be founded on Islamic principle. (despite the subsequent predominance of Muslims in discredited Coloured and Indian tricameral political activity).

- While Muslim attitudes to racial discrimination and oppression were clearly not informed by Islam in a political vacuum, their religious convictions supplied a powerful motive - or means of legitimation - for their struggles against apartheid.

d) Interfaith connections

- There is evidently a connection between Muslim political leadership and their acceptance of interfaith co-operation. Correspondingly, the rise of overtly Christian and church-based anti-apartheid leadership in the 1980s contributed to the emergence of the acrimonious debate on interfaith solidarity against apartheid. "How can we stand under Christian priests" was a common refrain from Muslim religious elements opposed to interfaith solidarity against apartheid. The prominent role of Boesak and, later, Tutu in the political struggles of the Western Cape and their standing in the international Christian community served to accentuate "Christian leadership". As pro-apartheid Christians denounced the "insidious Muslim hold" over struggle politics in the early twentieth century, in the latter part of the century it was the turn of Muslim reactionaries to denounce the "Christian hold".

III. THE APPROPRIATION OF SCRIPTURE: THE EXODUS PARADIGM, APARTHEID AND LIBERATION[51]

A fairly common sight at Muslim political rallies during the 1980s were texts from the Qur'an which adorned banners and posters. These texts were also invoked in mosques and public halls and were cited in private arguments. This period also saw an outpouring of religio-political pamphlets rousing the masses to action against apartheid and encouraging solidarity with its victims. All these pamphlets included texts from the Qur'an. Prominent among them were the following opening verses of chapter 28, a chapter which deals extensively with the exodus paradigm:

> And we wish to be gracious to those who had been oppressed in the earth, to make them the inheritors, to establish them in the earth; and to show Fir'aun (Pharaoh), Haman and their supporters that (very event) which they dreaded.

Contemporary Islamists and religious leaders who have been involved in the South African liberation struggle have drawn widely from various paradigms of struggle in Islamic history and the Qur'an. This is evident from a perusal of the religio-political discourse in sermons and publications of this period.

The Makkan[52] crucible was invoked to inspire the persecuted and oppressed, the sojourn of early Muslims in Abyssinia to legitimate the seeking of support from just Christians, and the Madinah experience to exhort the persecuted and uprooted to *jihad* against oppression. (As already mentioned, in addition to these historico-religious paradigms of struggle, some other Islamic notions such as *jihad* (struggle) and *shahadah* (martyrdom) also played a significant role in the struggle.)

The history of Islam, however, does not commence in the seventh century, nor is it confined to Arabia and its environs. The Qur'an insists on the acceptance of all the prophets who preceded Muhammad as authentic messengers of Allah (cf. al-Qur'an 2:138, 2:280 and 3:84). It also recounts some of their anguish, struggles and victories in detail. The phenomenon of Islamists resorting to pre-Makkan religio-historical paradigms can thus be said to be as old as Islam itself.

Some of the themes in the exodus paradigm are of more immediate relevance to South African Muslims than those of the Makkan crucible or the Madinah experience of Muhammad and the early Muslims. This appeal to the exodus paradigm occurred despite the fact that emotionally Muslims connect more easily with the seventh-century historical experience and the Makkah and Madinan events which gave birth to Islam.

Surah Qasas (lit. chapter story), the qur'aric chapter which deals most extensively with the exodus theme, was sometimes mischievously referred to as *Surah* Cosas. This was a reference to the popular and then banned student organization, the Congress of South African Students. While the paradigm of the exodus cannot be

regarded as the fundamental schema of reinterpretative Islamic theological thought in South Africa - if, indeed, any paradigm could be regarded as such - it is a significant example of the kind of liberative theologizing which Islamist activists engaged in. It thus requires closer examination.

The sub-themes derived from the exodus paradigm may be divided into the following three categories:

1) a vision of the future based on the fulfilment of Allah's promise to the *mustad'afun* (marginalized and oppressed);

2) legitimation of political principles and strategies in the struggle for liberation; and

3) the sojourn in the wilderness and the challenges of a post-apartheid society.

The first two themes enjoyed different levels of popularity and acceptance among the various components of the Islamic forces opposed to apartheid. The unexplored nature of the third theme, the sojourn in the wilderness, is reflective of the heuristic methodology employed by those engaged in reinterpreting Islamic thought in the midst of struggle. The wilderness, seemingly, has to be experienced first before theological sense or connections can be made.

I shall look at the way the first two themes were employed or invoked during "the struggle" and, as a conclusion to this paper, I shall offer some reflections on the third theme and its relevance to South Africa as it stumbles out of Egypt.

1. A vision of the future

The most popular theme of the exodus paradigm was the inevitable death of tyranny and the vision of liberation. The first few verses from Surah Qasas, cited above, were among the most widely quoted in Islamist circles. Three central elements which inform nascent qur'anic hermeneutical notions of liberation can be found in this text:

a) Allah makes a deliberate choice for the oppressed and the marginalized;

b) liberation is always based on the premise of the elimination of oppression and sometimes the destruction of the oppressor;

c) the vision of liberation is held out to those who are oppressed and not necessarily to those who believe or lead righteous lives.

We will now look briefly at how each of the above notions was used during the 1980s.

a) Allah's "preferential option" for the oppressed: "The Struggle", a Call activist manual, explains Allah's preferential option in the following manner:

> The reality in which we live is characterized by oppression, poverty, exploitation of the earth and of people, a struggle between classes, and by the absence of any kind of commitment to Allah as the Sustainer. More than two-thirds of humanity suffer because they are at the powerless bottom of the system. We must find an understanding of Islam that relates to these realities.[53]

Here we observe the introduction of the fundamentals of a hermeneutic of liberation. Different understandings of Islam are acknowledged and a conscious choice is called for: to accept a particular understanding and to reject another. We have a choice: to opt for the prevailing value system and ignore Allah, the poor and the oppressed, or to make an option for them and search for ways and means to break through and go beyond the prevailing system... Allah himself makes this option.[54] The text then goes on to quote the aforementioned verses which promise "eminence and leadership" to those who are oppressed.

Most of the classical exegetes agree that the promise of eminence (*a-immah*) is *fi al-dunya wa al-din* ("in the world and in religion") (al-Razl, 23-24:22h and al-Zamakhshari, 3:392).[55] A number also think that the inheritance means *wulatan was mulkan* (government and kingdom) (al-Nasafl and Khazin, 1:548). A pietistic vision which confines the fulfilment of Allah's promise to an essentially eschatological future is, by implication, negated. This implication was often spelt out and was postulated as the liberating version of the Sunni doctrine

of the inexorable will (*qadr*) of Allah seeking expression. The orthodox version of that same doctrine which often facilitates a fatalistic acquiescence to oppression was thus inverted. The following quotation from a Call pamphlet reflects this inversion:

> There are some... who say that oppression is in our *taqdeer* (destiny)... if oppression is in our *taqdeer* then liberation is also in our *taqdeer*. If Fir'aun (Pharaoh) was in Musa's (Moses) *taqdeer* then Musa was also in Fir'aun's *taqdeer*. If P.W. (Botha) is in Nelson Mandela's *taqdeer* then Nelson Mandela is also in P.W.'s *taqdeer*. ("Reagan is a terrorist")

b) *Liberation is premised on an end to oppression:* This may sound trite. In the South African context, however, when government-initiated "reform policies" have often meant the continuation of structural injustice, this is rather significant.

The exodus paradigm calls for a radical destruction of the *ancien regime* and even legitimates the physical destruction of its representatives. These verses thus premised liberation on the destruction of the oppressors and underpinned the twin thrusts of the South African struggle: an end to apartheid and the creation of a free and just society.

To the many who yearned for freedom but who wanted to attain it without great cost, these verses served as a reminder that the tumultuous destruction of oppression is often a pre-condition for the restructuring of society.

c) *The vision of freedom is held out to those who are oppressed and not necessarily to those who "believe" or lead "righteous" lives:* "Surah Qasas", says the Call, "explains relationships with the oppressed who do not lead Islamic or righteous lives".[56] I elaborated on this need for freedom irrespective of faith in another Call publication:

> Oppression is an evil by itself and liberation a virtue by itself - irrespective of how the oppressed handle that liberation. Nabi Musa liberated his people from the oppression of Fir'aun... despite the fact that they were clearly not ready for their freedom.
>
> Liberation is not a reward for good behaviour, or an ice cream to be handed out to naughty children if and when the parent is assured that the kids are not going to dirty themselves with it.[57]

This identification of Allah with the oppressed - who may not necessarily be Muslim - contains the seed for a theology of religious pluralism which accepts the legitimacy of the (non-Islamic) faith of the oppressed. Such a theology would emerge from a theology of liberation. Hassan Solomon, then a leading figure in the Call, alluded to this:

> The unity of the oppressed is of paramount importance. All the messengers of Allah were a single brotherhood. Their message is essentially one and their teachings are one.[58]

2. *Principles and tactics in a struggle against oppression*

We earlier indicated how two components of Muslim resistance to apartheid are also, although not exclusively, located within the charterist PAC-BC positions. Qiblah identified with Africanist/BC positions while the Call was a prominent affiliate of the UDF, the internal torch bearer of the congress movement during the period when the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP) were banned. The Call drew exensively on the exodus paradigm for inspiration for its political principles and for theological legitimation of its political strategies. A brief description of the political perspectives to which the Call and Qiblah adhered would thus be useful here.

a) *National democracy (ND):* Ideologues of ND define the South African problem as Colonialism of a Special Type (CST). They see national liberation as the objective of the first stage of "the struggle". This stage, they argue, will be followed by a socialist revolution after a bourgeois democracy has been established. "The struggle for national liberation", says Dialego in an ANC journal, "is a democratic one which, under capitalist conditions, is carried out by a revolutionary bourgeoisie." He argues further that class consciousness – the basis for a socialist revolution – cannot mature until the workers have their own nation within which to settle accounts with their own bourgeoisie. In this first stage all other progressive

(i.e. anti-apartheid) forces, regardless of class or race, and especially the emerging black bourgeoisie, are regarded as allies in this struggle.

b) *Pan Africanism:*[59] The key advocate of pan-Africanism in South Africa has been the Pan Africanist Congress. The PAC was formed in 1959 when the Africanist element left the ANC, claiming that it was controlled by white leftists and Indians of the Congress Alliance. The Africanists also voiced strong objections to the freedom charter. Based on pan-Africanist ideology, the PAC identifies its ultimate goal as "the achievement of Africanist socialist democracy". Politically this is defined as "government of the Africans, by the Africans, for the Africans".

c) *Black Consciousness:* The central tenet of BC holds that blacks (by which is meant Africans, Indians and Coloureds) had to liberate themselves psychologically and shed the slave mentality induced by institutionalized racism and white liberalism. This liberation implied a rejection of all "white", i.e. Eurocentric, values and the inculcation of a positive "black" world-view. Only blacks, BC argues, can liberate blacks through the harnessing of the collective energies of all blacks in "solidarity-in-action".

3. Islamists and the liberation movements

The relative absence of pan-Africanism from the political scene in the 1980s and its ideological closeness to BC made it possible for an organization like Qiblah to identify and be identified with both tendencies. Many Muslim supporters of BC found a home in Qiblah although its leadership belonged to the PAC.

The widespread appeal of charterism and its numerous organizational victories during that period, furthermore, contributed to closer co-operation among all its political adversaries – a sort of solidarity of the marginalized. To the extent that the Call represented the Muslim sector in ND, they articulated theological positions which defended ND. Political praxis and theory thus contributed to the shaping of current theological discourse by Islamists involved in "the struggle". Surah Qasas and the exodus paradigm, as we shall see, are central to the formation or legitimation of this discourse.

We shall briefly look at how the following three political positions were legitimated on the basis of the exodus paradigm: (a) the principle of non-collaboration; (b) the legitimacy of negotiations; and (c) the principle of cross-class/colour struggle.

a) The principle of non-collaboration: the principle of non-collaboration, i.e. a refusal to participate in the political structures of the apartheid regime, is common to all these tendencies.

"From the perspective of Islam", says a Qiblah publication, "there can never be peaceful co-existence between oppressor and oppressed, exploiter and exploited, the just and the unjust, Musa and Fir'aun. Neither do Muslims compromise or negotiate with oppression, exploitation and injustice."[60]

It was, however, not only opponents of apartheid who drew on some aspects of the exodus paradigm for theological legitimation. The following question from *But Musa went to Fir'aun* suggests that supporters of collaboration with the apartheid regime also drew support from it:

> If it is the political set-up that is causing all this oppression,... then should we not become a part of the government to solve things? (In)... the Qur'an we find that Allah asked Nabi Musa to... talk to Fir'aun about freedom of the Israelites.[61]

In response to this question, I argued that, while it is true that "Nabi Musa went to demand freedom for his people",

> he did... not become a part of their system, (nor) stayed there (with Fir'aun) and drew a salary of a hundred thousand rands a year. (He did not) take up residence in one of Fir'aun's palaces, (nor did he have) his palace guarded by Fir'aun's police - who are the same people who kill the Bani Isra'il (the Israelites). He made his demands and left.[62]

Collaboration with apartheid on the grounds of Musa's interaction with Fir'aun was thus rejected. Surah Qasas does, however, contain a parallel for co-operation with oppression. This parallel is not personified in Musa but rather in Qïrun who may be described in struggle parlance as a "sell-out".

In the words of the Qur'an, Qïrun was one of the people of Musa, but he arrogantly exalted himself on the earth. His people told him: "Rejoice not in your wealth. Seek, instead, the life to come." Qïrun was a collaborator who, as a minister in Fir'aun's cabinet, participated in the oppression of his people and he ended up with nothing to save himself against Allah.[63]

b) *The legitimacy of negotiations:* One of the reasons put forward by the Call for aligning itself with ND is "the acceptance of an armed struggle while refusing to reject the option of negotiation as a principle".[64] When participatlon in the tricameral system was postulated as analogous to Musa going to negotiate with Fir'aun, the Call acknowledged the legitimacy of verbally engaging the oppressors. Permission for such engagement is, however, qualified.

After explaining that leadership in Islam occurs through one of two processes, divine or popular choice, the Call argued that the issue is not one of negotiations but of leadership and mandates. "Allah sent Musa; (but) who sent the house of delegates or the house of representatives? With what percentage poll were they elected?"[65]

> Speaking to the oppressors is not a crime but going to them behind the backs of your people and striking private deals with them is something else.

Today, too, the Call remains a firm supporter of the idea of ANC-government negotiations while Qiblah is still bitterly opposed to it.

c) *The principle of cross-class/colour struggle:* "There are no clear lines of distinction in our struggle on the basis of class or race," said Ibrahim Rasool, national secretary of the Call; "the enemy is not a solid bloc never changing shape or content."[66]. The "attractive notions that all whites are bad or all bourgeois elements are not to be trusted" are rejected by him as "un-Islamic". Ruling out a "permanent alliance" with Africanists, the Black Consciousness grouping and Trotskyites, a Call document states that "Islam does not judge people on the basis of their colour or class origin".[67] Here, too, the Call draws on the exodus paradigm extensively and refers to the following:

The Islam of Fir'aun's wife: Asiyah bint Mazahim, the wife of Fir'aun, is described in the Qur'an as a believer and in tradition she is reported to have been of an exalted spiritual station.[68]

The conversion to Islam of the sorcerers: The sorcerers were a key component of Fir'aun's strategy to undermine Musa's credibility as a prophet. They were evidently not beyond redemption. They had benefitted from their proximity to the court and yet – even at the peril of their lives – accepted the message of Islam and, by implication, that of liberation for *Bani Isra'il.*

The rearing of Musa as a son of the ruling class: Musa spent most of his life in the court of Fir'aun and "grew up in the bosom of his enemies".[69] Referring to the way Musa had been reared in the court of Fir'aun, A.H. Johns says that "life in the palace has its own style, and inevitably, it has an influence upon the individual who grows up in that environment, no matter how understanding, how sensitive".[70] Musa's class origins, seemingly, did not militate against his being chosen as the liberator of his people.

The idea of what Rasool refers to as "the inherent potential good of people", despite their class or racial origins, cohered neatly with the ideology of ND which upheld that "all forces regardless of race or colour are allies in the struggle against apartheid"[68].

IV. ENTERING THE WILDERNESS: POST-LIBERATION CHALLENGES

South Africa is irreversibly moving away from apartheid as the world had come to know and despise it. This is not to say that South Africa has changed. Indeed, virtually all the state structures of apartheid and the awesome security apparatus which upholds them are as intact as ever. The homeland system, the tricameral parliament, the countless separate ministries for education, social welfare and the accompanying disparities in their budgets are as much a part of South Africa as ever. The major difference between the past and the present is that South Africans are freer than ever to oppose and transform the unjust structures of the past and, with it, bring to fruition their vision of the future.

South Africans have indeed entered the wilderness – and what a wilderness! The seemingly directionless sojourn of the *Bani Isra'il* in the wilderness is an important aspect of the exodus paradigm. The scope for making connections with the qur'anic account of the wilderness seems to be limitless. However, I would like draw attention to (a) some of the religious challenges of the wilderness, (b) some of the political challenges of the wilderness, and (c) the ultimate fulfilment of Allah's promise of grace, eminence and inheritance for the oppressed.

1. Theological challenges of the wilderness

If the De Klerk regime has not succeeded in dismantling apartheid, then it has certainly succeeded in muddying the waters of those opposed to it. Having defined themselves in terms of apartheid, "struggle organizations" have experienced major crises of identity in the wake of the gradual abolition of major segregationist measures. After 2 February 1990, Fir'aun was no longer unblemished evil but, to quote Nelson Mandela with reference to De Klerk, someone "with integrity, with whom one could do business". The lines have been blurred; the Fir'au -Musa absolutist model is no longer feasible.

The Muslim organizations which played such an important role in mobilizing against apartheid are hitherto showing few signs of redefining their *raison d'être* or creatively dealing with post -2nd February challenges. A number of factors will inevitably retard the growth of progressive Islamic political thought and theology in South Africa.

- Choices still have to be made but the absence of purely moral imperatives has now reduced these choices to "politics" and, more specifically, party politics. Such choices are hardly the stuff of which progressive theology is made.

- With the violence largely confined to black townships, the areas where the vast majority of Muslims live are generally calm. Such areas are fertile terrain for political and religious conservatism.

- The progressive Islamic political thought and theology that has emerged in the last ten years has not really taken root.

- The period of Muslim community engagement against apartheid has been too short for any lasting impact on their theology or religious organizational structures.

With no contemporary model of liberation in minority situations, progressive Muslims were compelled to engage in ad-hoc theologizing. We have seen how this progressive theology was never really embraced by the clerics. Their purely utilitarian employment of "struggle texts" – usually supplied by the Call – excluded possibilities of an internal modernization or search for contextuality.

The ability of static theology to make superficial adjustments continues to astound one. The season of superficial confessions from the Rhema to the Dutch Reformed Church is not confined to Christianity. Accommodationist theology will very rapidly find a way of relating with any new centre of political power and, in this regard, the Muslims are no exception.

The problems of the progressive Muslim theologians and organizations are made no easier by the fact that the new establishment, the ANC, has shown little inclination to bestow "favourable status" on them – including the Call. It is not the Call or the MYM that will deliver the masses on polling day. The politically and theologically conservative MJC, or their reactionary counterparts in Natal and the Transvaal, may do so. Much as the ANC may value the sophisticated and liberated interpretations of Islam that the Call and the MYM may offer, it is also increasingly a political party rather than a liberation organization. Their political objectives on the one hand and the dexterity and power of the conservative clerics on the other make the latter far more likely allies for the ANC.

We thus find that not only is the country in the wilderness, but so is progressive Islam. In many ways the Western Cape remains fertile ground for its nurture. Despite the present wilderness there remain a number of indicators that a local theology of liberation and religious pluralism may still see its promised land. Some of these are the legacy of the MYM and CIF of the early 1960s, the assertiveness of women, the presence of strong and often progressive mosque committees, the liberative experience of the 1980s, the pleasant co-existence with non-Muslims, the growing intellectual interest in Islam at progressive universities and the generally enlightened atmosphere which characterizes this area.

2. Political challenges of the wilderness

The march from Egypt initially signalled the end of a story. The reality is something else. It was the beginning of new trials for the *Bani Isra'il* and their prophets, Musa and Harun. There is the challenge of nation-building amidst the squabbling of the various tribes and the temptation to worship false gods who promise an immediate paradise. (The newly liberated South Africa will inevitably be courted by the International Monetary Fund, the almighty dollar and the glitter of the market.) Soon there may even be muttering against the monotony of a diet comprised of "one food"[72] and pleadings for greater variety: herbs, cucumbers, garlic, lentils and onions.[73]

We have seen how the Muslim activist organizations which played such a prominent role in the struggle against apartheid seem to be in state of disarray and unable to redefine their *raison d'être* in terms of the changed political atmosphere. On the surface it appears as if many Muslims, along with the rest of the Indian and Coloured community and middle-class blacks, are already reverting to pre-1976 positions of quiet acquiescence. Privately, many indicate that they will support the nationalist party in future elections.

More significant politically is the feebleness of our commitment to democracy. Democracy is admittedly an intrinsic part of the liberation movement's vision for a new South Africa. There is, however, insufficient proof that its perception of democracy is unconnected to the one which now lies in ruins all over Eastern Europe. Past undemocratic organizational practices and a totalitarian ideological hinterland make one wary of the new prophets of democracy. A legitimate fear is that the *ancien regime* could die long before a new and more authentic understanding of democracy permeates present organizational structures.

In the wilderness event we witness how *Bani Isra'il* were renewed through the act of *taubah* (normally translated as "repentance") after their creation and worship of the golden calf. *Taubah* is a process of purification involving at least three stages:[74] (1) the acknowledgment of sin or an inadequacy, i.e. confrontation with a sinful past or indiscretions, (2) the seeking out of the victims who suffered as a result of one's sins/inadequacy and reconciling with them (usually on their terms), and (3) a commitment to refrain from repeating those sins.

Until that confrontation with the past happens - from the state and the liberation movement - renewal remains a mere hope and the threat of freedom degenerating into another form of captivity continues to loom over our wilderness.

Allah's promise: a non-racial, non-sexist democracy?

I have hitherto implicitly referred to a post-apartheid South Africa as the "Promised Land". The ideal for those committed to freedom is usually stated to be a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa. This conflation of "Promised Land" in Islam with a secular – albeit very humane – vision of the ideal society is pregnant with serious theological questions. These questions deal with the imperatives and definition of an Islamic state, the ultimate nature of non-Islam and whether non-Muslims can give expression to the ideals, even if not the form, of Islam.

They also deal with the problem of Allah's promise to "establish the oppressed on the earth" versus another seemingly more exclusivist promise, i.e. to make "those who believe and do good among you his vicegerens on earth". These are questions which are currently being worked at and South African Islamists, I believe, have demonstrated the courage and integrity to do so within a struggle against Fir'aun and in commitment to the dictates of Allah.

CONCLUSION

The one issue that does not require debate is that out of Egypt the people of South Africa must come. The oppressed people of South Africa, I believe, have spoken and have chosen their leaders. I have no doubt about the immense popularity of the ANC among the people of South Africa. Without being disrespectful to other groups, one must acknowledge that no other group has sacrificed more in the struggle against Fir'aun than the ANC. It understandably continues to embody the hopes of the people.

The burden of freedom is about to be imposed on the people of South Africa. It says something about the imperatives of freedom, which makes the quest for it an intrinsic part of the human condition. The credibility of all religious texts – including the Qur'an – in the eyes of its people will continue to hinge on how creatively the connections will be made between it and their deepest aspirations for freedom, non-racialism and non-sexism in an undivided country.

NOTES

[1] The idea that Islam first arrived in South Africa via Asia through the Cape of Good Hope is the most prevalent and widely documented. It is, however, not without its detractors. J. Barrows offers an alternative suggestion of Arab migration "by skirting the Red Sea, and turning to the Southward along the sea coast" in his *Account of Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa in the Years 1797 and 1798* (London, 1801). Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi also claims that Arab navigators preceded the Portuguese along southern Africa's coasts and introduced Islam (cf. B. Hendrickx, "The Lemba and Islam: A Contribution to the Study of Ancient Origin of the Lemba People", in *Journal for Islamic Studies*, vol. 10, 1990, pp. 32-44; S.A Rochlin, "Origins of Islam in the Eastern Cape", in *Africana Notes and News*, 12:1, March 1956–December 1957, pp.21-25; J Barrows, op. cit., pp.211ff.; and Nadwi in *Islamic Culture*, October 1954, p.524).

[2] Lewis has outlined some of the difficulties and offensive undertones connected with the term "Coloured". His option of accepting that while the term is a "white imposed categorization" it is, nevertheless, "one that has for a variety of reasons been adopted by the sections of the population so described", enables one to circumvent some of the problems connected to its use (p.10).

[3] cf. Ross, p.117 and Worden, chap. 5.

[4] Elphinck and Shell, p. 161.

[5] Worden, p. 316.

[6] Shell, 1974 and Lubbe, 1986.

[7] Cf. Abrahams.

[8] de Blij, p. 246.

[9] Davids, 1980.

[10] Muslim participation in the "defence of the Colony" were not exactly a manifestations of "bravery and fidelity" to the governing institutions of 1795 as suggested by Mayson (quoted in Shell, p 4). Nor were they "eager to serve" as claimed by some. Shell has shown that only a handful were volunteers while the rest were all conscripts, (n.d., p. 10). Furthermore, the Dutch made the Muslims believe that the English were "the most cruel and oppressive of all the European races" and that if the British occupied the Cape, "the Malays would be overwhelmed in miserable slavery" (Percival, pp. 288 ff.).

[11] This is the date determined by Davids (1969, p. 86). Frank Bradlow is, however, of the opinion that the *Awwal Masjid* was built after August 1804 when De Mist declared freedom of religion (Bradlow and Cairns, p. 23).

[12] While the public practice of Islam was now tolerated, there remained a plethora of repressive legal measures which militated against the development of the Muslim community.

[13] Percival, p. 268.

[14] Spaarman, p. 370.

[15] Elks, pp. 14-15.

[16] Bradlow, pp. 7-8.

[17] Bradlow, p. 86 ff.

[18] Cf Davids, 1980 and Esack, 1990.

[19] Davids, Bradlow and Bickford-Smith.

[20] Lewis, p. 24.

[21] Bradlow, p. 35.

[22] The following statement from the testimony of Imam Muding before the Beige and Colesbrook Commission in 1825 is not an atypical reflection of this attitude:

> The "the slaves" bodies are in slavery but we teach them to believe that their souls are free and that they must look up to God to make them free when they die... Their duty in the world consists in their paying respect to authority, performing the work of their employers.

(Evidence on Marriages, Education, Treatment of Slaves etc. by (a) Muding - Javanese priest, and (b) Achmat van Bengalen, Papers Relative to the Conditions and Treatment of Native inhabitants to the Cape of Good Hope, the Beige and Colesbrook Commission -1825.)

[23] Lewis, p. 1.

[24] Dr Abdullah Abdurahman(1872-1940) is one of the most remarkable figures in the history of resistance to oppression in South Africa. From the time he first emerged on the public scene in 1889 as the election agent of his brother-in-law, Ahmad Effendi, until his death in 1940 he was in the forefront of what came to be cryptically referred as "the struggle".

[25] I am indebted to Lewis for a substantial amount of the facts pertaining to Abdurahman, the APO and general Coloured community politics of this period.

[26] Examples of this opposition are James Curry's campaign in 1912 against the APO which led to the formation of the South African Coloured People's Union, the formation of the African National Bond 1925, the rise of the Joint-Councils Movement in the 1920s, and the founding of the short-lived *Clarion* newspaper in 1919. Unconnected to the APO but equally reflective of this trend was the founding of the Federal Coloured People's Party in 1964. All of these decried "radical politics", were supportive of cultivating a separate ethnic identity for Coloured people and, in part, motivated their existence on the need to break free from "the insidious Muslim hold" over Coloured politics. These entities were often led by prominent Christian religious figures - including Archbishop Lavis - who claimed to be motivated by Christian principles, and they not infrequently excluded Muslims from their membership.

[27] Davids, 1986, p. 196.

[28] p. 41.

[29] Lewis, p. 181.

[30] Lewis, p. 46.

[31] *Standard,* 4 May 1943.

[32] Abdullah Abdurahman was known to be a committed Muslim. His daughter, Zaibunnisa Abdurahman, although widely respected among Muslims, is not perceived to have had a commitment to any form of Islam other than in the cultural sense. Oral history has it that she was once seen to drink water at a public meeting during the month of Ramadan. Whether it was in fact the case and, if so, whether it was momentary forgetfulness is, perhaps, besides the point. Oral history does reflect community perception of her attitude to commitment to Islam.

[33] Cf. Davids, 1985, pp. 4-5.

[34] In 1953 a number of relatively unknown - in some cases completely unknown - Muslims organizations issued a statement in support of a key piece of apartheid legislation; the separate representation of voters act validation and amended bill of 1953. Other than the Cape Malay choir board, none of these organizations were of any significance. In 1983, during the tricameral elections, there was a similar statement on radio and TV of support for the government from an unheard-of Malay association of South Africa.

[35] By 1956 the government still could not muster the two-thirds majority to amend the constitution. It proceeded to revise the constitution of the appeal court, enlarging it and packing it with pro-nationalist party judges. It then enlarged the upper house, the senate, with enough nationalists to secure a two-thirds majority of a joint sitting. After having passed the bill the appeal court, not unexpectedly, upheld the decision.

[36] 31 July 1964.

[37] Cf. Desai and Marney.

[38] Cf Esack, 1988.

[39] Cf. Tayob, 1990.

[40] The president's council, a group of people nominated by the state president, proposed a new constitution whereby two new parliaments - for Coloured and Indians respectively - were to be created in addition to the existing one for whites. These chambers govern their "own affairs" and the white chamber have the added "burden" of "general affairs" as well as of "black affairs". Any conflict between the three chambers or a decision as to which affair was "general" and which was "own" is determined by the president's council where the ratio of white, Coloured and Indian is 4:2:1. This system was instituted in 1984-85 despite the very successful and widespread boycott of the elections by the Coloured and Indian communities.

[41] A number of prominent UDF activists played a key role in the Call's initial organizing activities when it operated as an ad-hoc group organizing under the name of Muslims Against Oppression. These activists included Kevin Patel and Nasih Jaffer. After its very successful rally in the primrose park mosque on 17 June 1983, despite an attempt by Qiblah to disrupt it, it was formally decided to launch the organization. The name Call of Islam was randomly chosen from the heading of one of its earliest and mostly widely disseminated pamphlets.

[42] Riter, 12 August 83.

[43] Rasool, 1988, p. 34.

[44] Call of Islam Information Brochure, p. 4.

[45] The MYM had arguably given birth to both the Call and to Qiblah in the sense that, in general, the leadership of these organizations had passed through the MYM. In the case of the Call, the individuals who departed from the MYM did so undramatically and formed the Call after a six-month period of examining their role as Islamists in South Africa. It is thus not common knowledge that the Call is, in fact, an off-shoot of the MYM.

[46] The MJC had never really identified with the UDF or the Call. A number of factors were responsible for the often shrewdly calculated projection of this image: (1) senior Call figures were also prominent in the leadership of the MJC and often - without any mandates - acted in the UDF on its behalf. (2) The then chairperson of the MJC, Abdul Hamid Babier, was deeply committed to the UDF and to the Call and his very visible presence on UDF platforms was widely construed to be an MJC presence. Inside the MJC though, he was widely criticized for acting without a mandate. (3) Its president, Nazim Mohammed, allowed himself to be elected as a patron of the UDF without consultation the MJC. (He, however, did not attend any meetings of the UDF and quietly allowed his patronage to lapse.) (4) The MJC leadership, under the influence of Gabier and Hassan Solomon, decided to affiliate the MJC to the UDF without consulting is membership. The first time that many of its rank and file members learnt that it was in fact an affiliate of UDF was when the organization faced criticism by the MYM and Qiblah for this move. It then withdrew, requesting the UDF to refrain from announcing this step (personal recollections).

[47] Esack, 1983.

[48] Despite President Botha's accusations in parliament that Muslim political activity is funded by petro-dollars, Muslim countries have not contributed significantly to the resistance movement. There are well founded suggestions that Iran has at different times provided various factions of Qiblah with financial support.

[49] Muslim historico-critical scholarship in South Africa is itself only in its infant stages and there has been a reluctance to focus on a subject that can easily be construed as vain and self-righteous point-scoring.

[50] Cf. Tayob, 1989.

[51] The exodus paradigm in the light of reinterpretative qur'anic thought in South Africa is the subject of an article by myself in a forthcoming edition of *Islamochristiana* (1992). Most of the material for the third part of the present paper comes from that article.

[52] I favour the use of the direct transliteration from Arabic when employing personal nouns, even as adjectives, rather than their Anglicized versions. I would thus use Makkan or Madinatan rather than Meccan or Medinan (i.e. pertaining to Mecca or Medina).

[53] Esack, 1987, p. 32.

[54] *Ibid.*

[55] Al-Razi is more explicit and says that *Bani Isra-il* was destined to inherit his (Fir'aun's) kingdom, his land and all his possessions. Baidawi, however, suggests that this eminence is "*fi amr al-din*" (in the affairs of religion) while Ibn Abbas leaves it as "*qadatan fi al-khair*" (leadership in virtue).

[56] "On Relationships..."

[57] Esack, 1989, p. 62.

[58] Unpublished speech, personal records.

[59] All the quotations under this heading and the following, i.e. "Black Consciousness", come from R. Davies, D. O'Meara and S. Dhlamini.

[60] "Dimensions of the *Kalimah*", p. 43.

[61] Esack, 1989, p. 20.

[62] *Ibid.*

[63] *Ibid.*

[64] "On Relationships..."

[65] Esack, 1989, p. 20.

[66] Unpublished sermon, personal records.

[67] "On Relationships..."

[68] Qur'an 8:7.

[69] Qur'an 20:37.

[70] Johns, p. 149.

[71] Unpublished sermon.

[72] Qur'an 24:55.

[73] Qur'an 24:55.

[74] Shafi, p. 200.

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ISLAM AND THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

Andoulaye Elimane Kane
Professor of Philosophy
University of Dakar

This presentation is intended as a response to the question that concerns us here, but at the level of *general principles* - assuming freedom to be the goal of any undertaking aimed at eliminating oppression in all its forms.

The study of Islam's position on this problem has led contemporary Islamic specialists to distinguish two levels of analysis: on the one hand, the reference texts, that is, the Koran and the Hadith (the Tradition or Acts of the Prophet Mohammed), and on the other, the practice of Muslim believers and of the Islamic states. This distinction helps us to see that Islam has developed a body of precepts concerning such apparently diverse subjects as, for instance, *human rights, violence and racism* which can also be applied to the problems of freedom and used with reference to the struggle against apartheid.

In fact, the practice of Muslims and of the Islamic states is as varied as the texts mentioned above are different. In the opinion of specialists, they have not been subjected to systematic theological study with a view to establishing a coherent doctrine on the issue.

Basing myself on the fragmentary studies that exist, the history of religious movements and my observation of daily life in an Islamic country like Senegal, in this paper I shall try to outline these two levels of analysis (precepts and practice) and reflect on the gap that can be observed between them.

I. The precepts on freedom in the book and in the tradition

The two exclusive sources on which we can draw in order to discover and evaluate the principles underlying Islam's position in regard to freedom are the Koran and the Hadith. As indicated above, the passages referring to it are scattered through many verses and are often open to many possible interpretations.
Anyone wishing to sketch the broad outlines of Islamic thinking on freedom is bound to take account of three (cardinal facts) which are drawn from the two sources and which are essential elements of Muslim ethics.

1. Rejection of extremes

Ali Merad of the University of Paris has opportunely reminded us that the "ideal" Islamic position expressed in the Koran in regard to socio-economic options and political systems is the rejection of extremes, as can be testified by this verse quoted from the Koran: "We have made of you a community eschewing extremes" (III,143).

This principle of rejecting extremes, which has many applications to practical daily life, is continued and translated into two recommendations which have the force of commandments: the practice of fraternal consultation (shura) and the duty to work for good in conducting the affairs of the city.

2. Cultivation of patience and obedience

The Islamic conception of the purpose of human life on earth is marked by fatalism, pessimism and passivity in the face of events and the course of existence. As life on earth is merely a transition, it follows that the virtues of patience and obedience are exalted and considered as essential factors regulating social relations. Trusting in God, obeying him, obeying the Prophet and the leaders of the community are among the duties and obligations of the believer for the preservation of order.

This cultural heritage is based on various Koranic sources (XLII,27; XLII:43; IV:59, 11, 191, 218 etc.), all of which are exhortations to patience and forgiveness and, unless a positive interpretation is given, can be taken

as the basis for a morality and for policies based on submission, passiveness, abdication of responsibility. This cultural heritage – which gives priority to the quest for happiness in the world beyond and views piety as a spiritual exercise detached from the contingencies of life – may on the face of it seem to leave little room for a response to the question of freedom and the struggle for it. Nevertheless, that response exists.

3. Some Islamic precepts on freedom and personal rights

There seems to be no doubt that the circumstances surrounding the emergence of Islam, and the content of the two sources, the Koran and the Sunna, attest to this religion's constant concern to guarantee and codify the conditions for human beings to exercise their inalienable rights.

The problem of the freedom of women may be an interesting test case in this respect. Practice in many Islamic societies does not seem to corroborate the view that the Koran and the Sunna contain the principles of human rights, and that the law (sharia) guarantees the rights of each and every one, and of women in particular. The condition of women is clearly inferior to that of men, and there is no lack of evidence of this state of affairs in social contexts where, in addition, the rate of illiteracy among women is particularly high and they are consequently not aware of their rights. Nonetheless, Islamic law protects women and stipulates rights which are specifically theirs. For example, it recognizes a woman's right to an independent inheritance with a view to giving her relative economic independence, which is the essential corollary to personal dignity.

In the same line of thought, not only the Koran but also the Acts of the Prophet, and consequently Islamic law, contain clear provisions and precepts guaranteeing the rights and obligations of non-Muslims, minorities and foreigners in an Islamic society.

In general, the principles underlying the Islamic conception of the rights of the person are those of justice and tolerance. Consequently, in this respect Islamic thought is constantly in tension between the individual and society and is faced with the problem of how to find the necessary balance between the requirement of freedom and security for the individual on the one hand, and on the other, the need for society to punish crime and criminals to ensure the constant maintenance of order (which is also a right).

Since it is impossible here to make a systematic analysis of this vast problem, we may simply note a few prescriptions and prohibitions which point to the existence of an Islamic perspective on human rights.

a) Some prescriptions

Islam considers education and the search for knowledge throughout the world as the duty of all Muslims. This is why it honours scholars and asks governments to create the conditions for scholarship. This is a directive of considerable importance because education is an indispensable tool for the awakening of conscience and knowledge of the rights and duties of the individual.

The principles of penal legislation and procedures are likewise marked by the same concern to preserve the rights of the accused and the prisoner as well as the interests of society. In particular they seek to define clearly the notion of responsibility, its scope, its field of application and duration, for the protection of the individual.

One last prescription: Islam recognizes the freedom of opinion and expression, which is guaranteed by the recommendation or commandment on the duty of consultation on affairs relating to the life of the city.

b) Some prohibitions

The crimes punishable by the death penalty are limited and clearly defined. This provision therefore prohibits abuses which might derive from too wide or too narrow an interpretation and hence also prohibits the appeal to raison d'état.

The use of torture, extortion of confessions, the kidnapping of persons, the subjection to oath in crimes punishable by corporal punishment (stoning, cutting off a hand, etc.) are forbidden.

Obviously, these few examples are not sufficient to say that there exists a systematic line of thinking or a clearly defined and universally accepted doctrine on human rights. But their presence and the frequency with

which they recur in the Koran and the Sunna entitle us to believe that human rights and freedoms are of divine origin and are therefore inalienable and sacred.

II. Islamic ideal diversities in practice in the fight for freedom

I have stressed from the start that mere observation of the situation in the Islamic countries, confirmed by the views of Islamic specialists, shows that there is a wide gap between the Islamic ideal as expressed in the Koran and the Sunna on the one hand, and the practice of governments, individuals and groups confessing Islam, on the other.

Furthermore, it is difficult to say whether the precepts and commandments of the sources have formulated explicit solutions to the problems and situations generated by our contemporary world. Liberation struggles, the problem of violence, racism, and the political, economic and ethnic conflicts in our world today require those who claim to adhere to Islamic thought to base their arguments on the Two Sources, of course, but also to subject them to an interpretation which will necessarily reflect fundamental individual or collective options appropriate to the circumstances of the present time.

From this point of view, I should like in conclusion to refer to the opinions of Islamic specialists who have reflected on the question to show that in relation, for instance, to the themes of violence and racism, which are at the centre of contemporary thinking on human freedoms and rights and human liberation, supporters of opposing doctrines can appeal to Islam to justify their action.

1. The supporters of reactionary conservatism

Clearly, if we refer to certain aspects of the precepts which constitute Muslim ethics, as described above (especially the cultivation of patience and tolerance), we can find plenty to justify a morality based on acceptance of the status quo, oppression and conservatism in general. The disparaging of wealth, regarded as a source of corruption (Koran XLII, 27), the extolling of obedience, the opposite of which, disobedience towards the leaders of the community, is explicitly permitted only if there is violation of the Muslims' right to the free practice of their religion -- all these can be used to justify the establishment of an unjust order, or totalitarian and oppressive institutions through a narrowly conformist interpretation of the reference texts and a negative understanding of non-violence.

2. The supporters of Islam as a challenging, creative force

In the course of the history of its expansion, Islam, as a revealed religion with a universal vocation, has been confronted with the problem of the use of force and violence in the name of freedom, in the sense of liberation, or for the sake of the Revelation. The two situations are not the same. In the latter, which can be summarized by the term *jihad*, it has almost always been a matter of resorting to force and violence in the fight against paganism, and this has often happened in debatable circumstances, precisely with regard to human rights.

But one must consider the deep significance of paganism in the eyes of Islam: it is synonymous with total obscurantism. Consequently, it is an obstacle to the coming of Reason and universal values.

In a short study on Islam and the racial concept, Salabeddin Kechrid recalls this incident which happened during the lifetime of the Prophet Mohammed: "One of the most eminent companions of the Prophet, named Abu Dhar, in a moment of anger called Bilai (another eminent companion of the Prophet) (son of a negress). Mohammed, revolted at this outburst of racism, told ABU DHAR that he still had the residue of idolatry in his heart."

Anger, like racism, obscures reason and is related to idolatry. At the same time this episode seems to indicate that Islam condemns racism, as does another testimony, again quoted by Kechrid. To save his reign and the unity of Islam, Sultan Abdul Hamid forbids his subjects to call themselves Turks, Arabs, Kurds or Berbers. From then on they adopted the creed: "I am a Muslim and I give thanks to God."

The other situation in which Islam has turned to force and violence in the name of freedom in the sense of liberation is illustrated by the many religious movements throughout the world fighting against political oppression or colonization.

Very often, an intransigent personality has emerged, moved by the desire to restore the original Islam, and has created a parallel movement hostile to the established order, which is considered unjust. To take only the case of Senegal, which has been Islamized since the tenth century, we find at least four movements started by reformers and at the same time directed against the colonial order: El Hadj Oumar Tal (1797-1864), Maba Diakou (1809-1867), Mamadou Lamine Drame (1840-1887) and Ahmadou Bamba Mbacke (1853-1927). All of them took up arms or offered obstinate resistance to the colonial order in the name of justice and the values of an authentic Islam.

It seems to me that this reformist upsurge, which constantly appeals to early Islam, has to be seen as one of the ferments of challenge working for a creative Islam. This can be noted in the positions that are emerging in the Islamic countries, often among the younger generations. They are demanding a return to the deep significance of the Prophet's message during the Meccan period. This is seen as a revolutionary message in that it called for the destruction of the order established there which was poles apart from the Islamic values of justice, peace and universality. The Prophet is thus celebrated as a liberator and the advocate of the much-needed change in the living conditions of the peoples. With this we are also at the opposite extreme to the system of interpretation which emphasizes the status quo, conformity, negative non-violence and reactionary conservatism.

In conclusion, the position of Islam on the problem of freedom and the struggle for freedom depends on two factors: first, the system used to interpret the disparate elements contained in the two sources and, second, the assessment made of the problems posed by modern societies, such as racism, violence and objective demands for human rights – problems which are as old as the world and at the same time new in their present form and intensity.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND RESISTANCE TO APARTHEID

Sister Margaret Kelly
Southern African Catholic Bishop's Conference

To interpret and assess the Catholic church's resistance to apartheid from 1948 until 1991 is almost impossible. How can one walk in the footsteps of those who lived at the beginnings of the apartheid era so as not to judge them by the insights gained after forty years of struggle. Some writers describe the leadership of the church during those years as prudent, moderate, realistic and cautious. Others speak of the Catholic leaders as prophetic, uncompromising, giving clear and consistent opposition to apartheid and unconditional support to eradicating all forms of injustice. Wherever the truth may lie between these two extreme judgments, the title of this paper requires one to trace the resistance of the Catholic church in a positive way that helps plot a course for the future. The evils of apartheid will be with us long after the system has been dismantled. What we need to learn from the past are those strategies and practices which were successful so that they can be developed in the future struggle to eradicate racism totally from the minds and hearts of our people.

It needs to be recalled that the Catholic church arrived late on the scene of South African history. The staunch Calvinists who arrived with Jan van Riebeeck-Hulle refused to allow Catholic priests even to visit the Cape while their ships were in dock. The leaders of the Batavian Republic were the first to allow Catholics freedom of religion and the official history of the Catholic church in South Africa can be said to have begun with the arrival of Bishop Patrick Raymond Griffith O.P. in 1838. Guided by the missiological principle that the church's first obligation was to the members of the household of the faith, he set about visiting all the individuals and small groups of Catholics scattered throughout the Cape colony. These few hundred white settlers formed the basis of the infant church. The first decades were devoted to seeking them out, uniting them and bringing them back to the open practice of their faith which was now legally possible. It was only in the last quarter of the nineteenth century that the Catholic church moved inland. At the same time as the colonizers were discovering the wealth of diamonds and gold, the church began to discover its own future treasure -- the indigenous people. And so, to the settler white church was added a missionary black church which rapidly grew until it eventually made up 80 percent of the church membership. The main aim of the church was survival; in a hostile Protestant atmosphere it did not attempt even to criticize citizens, much less challenge the government.

It was coming from this background that the Catholic church viewed with dismay the coming to power of the national party in 1948. Internally the church had its own problems: its membership was predominantly black, its leadership was almost totally white, its ranks included all races, languages and classes welded together in an uneasy unity born not only of faith but also of its minority status, the Latin rite and a general council-of-Trent mentality. The nationalist government targeted three main enemies: die swart gevaar, die Roomse gevaar and die rooi gevaar (the Black threat, the Roman threat and the Red threat). In 1948 the Catholic church was guilty on two counts and over the years was accused of all three so the stage was set for some interesting developments in the years ahead.

Church Statements

Perhaps it is easiest to trace the development of the Catholic church's resistance to apartheid in its official statements. It was Bishop Henneman of Cape Town who in 1939 already fired a warning shot about apartheid. He said

> In accordance with the spirit of solicitude which the Catholic church has always shown for the moral and material welfare of people, I feel it incumbent upon me to condemn any attempt at segregation on the grounds of colour and race.... any attempt therefore to introduce legislation based purely on race or colour must be opposed and condemned as unjust.

Although the nationalists came to power in 1948, it was only in 1952 that the first joint statement was issued by the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference. This was for the very good reason that the conference had been established only one year earlier, in 1951. During the next ten years the bishops issued five pastoral letters in response to the increasing entrenchment of apartheid. The first letter does not even mention the word "apartheid" although it condemns racial discrimination. It reflects the paternalistic spirit of the day and

talks about whites being responsible trustees of blacks who should be gradually incorporated into all levels of society. It includes such unhappy phrases as "non-Europeans", "underdeveloped" and "civilization". It calls for prudent and careful planning, justice and charity. A small beginning, but in those days it was enough to have the bishops labelled as kafferboeties. By 1957 the bishops had begun to call apartheid "intrinsically evil" and by 1960 there was a new urgency in their letter.

Instead of gradual change the bishops state that the racial problems of South Africa "must be solved soon". They also began to attack the false theological base on which the ideology of apartheid was based. In 1957 they condemned the white man's making of himself

> the agent of God's will and the interpreter of his providence in assigning the range and determining the bounds of non-white development... . They said "One trembles at the blasphemy of thus attributing to God the offences against charity and justice that are apartheid's necessary accompaniment.

No one could accuse the bishops in the 1950s of being revolutionary. There was no direct support for the defiance campaign; instead, they stressed the need for "the maintenance of order" and "the use of peaceful means". While they did not condone violence they demanded that the "root cause in the way of injustice and oppressive measures be removed". Again in 1960 they sought to teach sound theology:

> All human beings are one. It is the practice to speak of different races, but there is truly only one race, the human race. We are all children of Adam, and we all share the same human nature. We are all made in the image and likeness of God, possessing each of us an immortal soul, with its faculties of mind, and will, and sense, and we all have an eternal destiny. God planned that we should all be united to him and to one another, in this world, as well as in the next. This unity over-rides all differences and makes us one family, all ultimately related to one another..

In the 1962 pastoral letter announcing the forthcoming Vatican Council the bishops used the occasion to say:

> We must use every lawful means suggested by our Christian conscience in order to counteract and overcome the injustices pressing down on the underprivileged groups through th toleration of a starvation-level of wages, of job-reservation, of the evils which flow from compulsory migratory labour, particularly when the people who belong to these groups are denied the elementary right to organize in defence of their legitimate interests.

The old caution is there but the condemnations are becoming more specific.

In 1964 another step forward was taken when the bishops specifically associated the Catholic church with the outcry of "those other churches and Christian bodies in the Republic" which protested against the Black laws amendment bill, which further limited the movement of blacks from bantustans to white areas. They said the bill was a "negation of social morality and Christian thinking, striking, as it does, at the basic Christian institution, the family, through its inflexible restriction of the individual".

By the 1966 pastoral letter we begin to see the influence of Pope John XXIII's social teaching in "*Pacem in Terris*" and *mater et magistra* as well as the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. There is a new unconditional support for the human rights of all people irrespective of "civilization" or "culture".

> All persons are not alike from the point of view of varying physical power and the diversity ofintellectual and moral sources. But with respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, or based on sex, race, colour, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent. For in truth it must be still regretted that fundamental personal rights are not yet being universally honoured.

But it was in the 1972 "Call to Conscience" that the influence of the Vatican council can be more fully seen. It must be noted that it was at this council that for the first time people could see in the bishops present that the majority of Catholics lived in third-world countries rather than in Western Europe. The synod of bishops in 1971 issued a document called "Justice in the World" in which the voice of the third-world bishops was heard clearly by the whole church for the first time. They stressed that the promotion of justice is an essential element of evangelization. The influence of these events can be seen in the style of the new document. A "Call to Conscience" made positive recommendations about trade unions, minimum wages, welfare, redistribution of wealth and the church's responsibility to the poor. It also spoke out for the detained, banned and restricted, saying:

> All that we know of many of them is their struggle and protest on behalf of the voiceless who suffer under discriminatory legislation and way of life, and this deserves our sympathy and praise.

In the SACBC too the increasing number of black bishops ensured that the voice of the oppressed was more directly heard and black bishops could comment on the newly developing black consciousness. In 1974 Bishop P. Buthelezi defended it, saying:

> The Black Consciousness Movement has decided that black humanity is a gift like any other humanity, that the black man's history has given him experience that others have not, and that he now has something to give.... This can be a truly Christian purpose.

The watershed in the bishop's thinking, however, only came in 1977 and can be seen in the "Declaration of Commitment on Social Justice and Race Relations". The Soweto uprising of 1976 had led the bishops to say: "Realizing that South Africa has entered a critical phase in the rejection by the majority of its people of a social and political system of oppression, we add our corporate voice... to the cry for a radical revision of the system." This realisation led the bishops to commit themselves as follows:

> We affirm that in this we are on the side of the oppressed and, as we have committed ourselves to working within our church for the clearer expression of solidarity with the poor and deprived, so we commit ourselves equally to working for peace through justice in fraternal collaboration with all other churches, agencies and persons dedicated to this cause.

The working out of this commitment can be seen in the actions of the bishops during the 1980's to eliminate racism within the church, in the more direct involvement of Catholics in the struggle, and in the clear, prophetic tone in statements and pastoral letters of the bishops in the years that followed. Many of these were now issued jointly with the SACC, e.g.:

1) the Proposed New Constitution for South Africa (1983);
2) relocation: The Church's Report on Forced Removals (1984);
3) White Elections, Black Aspirations (1987).

Even those letters that the bishops issued on their own now had a bold, confident note in exposing injustice, e.g. the Report on Namibia (1982); in challenging the government, e.g. SACBC's Urgent Message to the State President (1986); and in supporting non-violent action to end apartheid, e.g. the pastoral letter on "Economic Pressure for Justice" (1986).

The pastoral nature of statements was not forgotten. The bishops, in addressing statements to the members of their church, tried to help ordinary people understand what was happening in the country and how to cope with it in the context of their faith, e.g. "On Christian Hope in the Current Crisis" and their "Open Letter to Detainees". In the former the bishops said clearly:

> Let there be no mistake – we are not neutral in the current conflict in South Africa. We support fully the demands of the majority of people for justice. It is our concern for the speedy attainment thereof that has led us to support the use even of economic pressure to achieve this. We remind them of Jesus' words "Blessed are those, who hunger and thirst for what is right; they shall be satisfied" (Matt. 5:5).

In their support of those striving for justice the bishops spoke out increasingly on such specific issues as conscientious objection, capital punishment, squatters, violence, exiles and elections.

Since the reform process began in February 1990 the bishops' statements reflect an ability to be realistic, e.g. in their 1990 statement on "Economic Pressure and Negotiations" they re -iterated their 1986 position:

> Our position remains today what it was in 1986: though deeply concerned about the suffering of people we believe a continuation of economic pressure to be justified. Our dilemma is like that of people who work to free hostage but fear that the operation may result in casualities.

In August 1991 this position was modified. They declared:

> There must be a concerted effort to press forward vigorously, both in political negotiations and in building up the economy and social fabric indispensable for the new South Africa. While respecting the views of those who hold economic pressures to be still necessary to motivate faster change, we consider that these pressures have contributed to bringing about a situation in which they are no longer necessary. We hold that what is required now is a united political, social and economic effort in pursuit of the vision of the future.

The importance of holding out a positive vision of the future during an era of social upheaval cannot be underestimated. With the hope that such a vision gives, people can face challenge. The bishops expressed this challenge thus:

> We are called to a nobler destiny than that of our ethnic self preservation; we are called to manifest a genuine Christian spirit and to place the well-being of all the people of South Africa above our own, realizing that this is the greatest service we can render to South Africa, to humanity, to ourselves and to God.

Economic pressure and negotiations (1990)

In looking back over the years and the many statements issued, one might well applaud the increasingly brave stance, the clearer denunciation of evil and stronger prophetic calls for justice by the leadership of the Catholic church in South Africa. Even more one could applaud the increasingly democratic process by which such statements were arrived at. Influenced not only by principle but also by the fact that they were a mainly white leadership in a mainly black church, the bishops developed new ways of listening to the people. A major consultation with laity was held in Hammanskraal in 1980 which set the pattern for the future. Consultations, study days, draft documents for comments became the normal process of dialogue within the church before the bishops spoke on behalf of the church. Still, one must ask what words achieve. It seems to me that while one must acknowledge the limitation of words, one must also acknowledge their power. The words of the bishops, whether in statements or pastoral letters, were directed primarily to their own flock. In this way the bishops exercised their teaching ministry in expounding the scriptures in the South African context. Perhaps the major insight they shared was that peace can only come about through justice. In their public statements and in their internal pastoral plan the bishops helped Catholics adopt the ideal of seeking to be a "community serving humanity" on the southern tip of the African continent.

While other churches within South Africa took the bishops' statements seriously and sometimes made them their own, the government authorities took no notice whatsoever, at least in terms of implementing them. So the pastoral letters of a minority church reached only a minority in South Africa. In the international setting however their impact was important. In the Catholic church, bishops' conferences will take their cue from what the bishops of a local church have to say. While the more spontaneous radical, prophetic statements of other church leaders acted as a clarion call, the more nuanced and reasoned statements of the Catholic bishops, while less exciting, often provided bishops, conferences throughout the world with the sort of material they could incorporate into their own statements and with which they could challenge their church members and governments. So many bishops' conferences made the bishops' opposition to apartheid their own and followed the guidance of the SACBC on specific issues, for example sanctions. These bishops' conferences in turn issued their own statements which influenced public opinion in their own countries and influenced the thinking and decisions of their governments. While in third-world countries the result was often limited to expressions of solidarity (because of critical situations at home), in the powerful first-world countries the result was often direct political pressure on the Pretoria government.

Catholics and symbols

While Catholics share with Protestants a love of the Word (and words), they also have a profound love of symbols and even a desire to be a symbol or sacrament to the world. One of the symbols the SACBC embodied over the years was unity. The study, discussion and debate that preceded any statement ensured that all the bishops gave it their support in spite of the efforts of the media to distinguish between the "radical" and the "reasonable" among the bishops. This unity gradually took on the expression of solidarity with the oppressed. Especially during the 1980's, the years of extreme repression, the bishops during their plenary session went as a body to celebrate the eucharist with communities that had suffered severely, e.g. Sebokeng, Mamelodi, Soweto and Soshanguve (the latter to grieve with the people at the imprisonment of their parish priest, Fr S. Mkhatshwa). When they could not all travel, a delegation was sent to represent them. In this way they visited Namibia to investigate for themselves what was happening during the war. On their return home their report exposing the cruelty of the South African Defence Force landed them in a major court case (the matter was finally settled out of court). Later on they went back to monitor the elections and finally to celebrate independence. In this way also they visited the electric fence to expose its horrors and celebrated mass with Mozambican refugees in their camp.

At a more local level vigils, processions and other services helped people pray through their distress at the contradiction between their life experiences and their faith. Old liturgical symbols, e.g. the stations of the cross or candles or funerals, took on new meaning in the context of the struggle. These new symbols often conscientized the people who watched as well as those who took part. In a very beautiful way, too, the very church buildings took on a new meaning as places of refuge, of sanctuary and of truth for a suffering people.

For people forcibly removed from their homes and unwilling to move into the wilderness, churches provided temporary homes. More recently people have moved out from these church centres to reclaim their land (e.g. Braklaagte, Goedgevonden, Potsdam). In Namibia too, the Catholic churches and centres provided most of the primary centres for returning exiles. Perhaps the best example of this use of church buildings is Regina Mundi which became a national symbol of God's protection.

Perhaps with humility one can say that with all its imperfections the Catholic church over the years was able, by the grace of God, to be a sign to a divided and fragmented nation that it was possible for South Africans of every shape and shade to be united. Of course, the geographical separation of groups meant that in practice most of the time blacks and whites and coloureds worshipped separately and so the rich white settler church in the suburbs ran parallel to the poor black mission church in the townships. But each knew they were welcome in the other's church; blacks working in city centres went to the cathedral and even white soldiers on duty were welcomed in township churches. On solemn occasions all gathered around their bishop and knew that they together made up the local church. Capitalists and socialists, businessmen and workers, maids and madams all stayed faithful within the one church even though they caused agonies of conscience in one another. Blacks could rightly complain that they were not given enough recognition or leadership and some left the church in disgust (as did some conservative whites), but somehow the structure held together so we are spared internally at least the need to form constituent assemblies, new constitutions and a new non-racial government. A broken symbol, an imperfect symbol we may be but for many looking at the future and asking how can we be one nation, Catholics can be a symbol which says it must be possible because it is already being practised and, as G. K. Chesterton says, "a thing worth doing is worth doing badly".

Catholics and education

Some theologians say that in order to understand the Greek Orthodox, one must understand that their starting point is always St John's gospel which stresses the divinity of Jesus. In order to understand Protestants one must know that they begin with St Paul's epistles which stress faith and redemption. In the same way, in order to understand Catholics one must remember that their starting point is the synoptic gospels, especially St Luke's gospel which stresses the humanity of Jesus. Catholics will instinctively choose incarnation; they will be involved in schools and hospitals and development projects as their natural way of living their faith. It seems to me that it was this theological principle that was at work when the bishops decided to stick with the people when in 1953 the hated Bantu education act was introduced and the government removed all subsidies from mission schools in order to exercise a total form of social control. This caused a major crisis for all the churches. Many in a sterling rejection of apartheid refused to implement Bantu education and withdrew from schools completely.

By 1953 the Catholic church was deeply involved in black education. It ran 688 state-aided schools and 130 unaided schools with an enrolment of 111,361 students. This represented approximately 15 percent of the black schools of the time. The bishops opposed Bantu education on religious grounds as they regarded the school as a essential part of the church's evangelizing effort. In order to retain these schools they had to agree to go along with some aspects of the new system which appeared to compromise the church's stand against apartheid. Sr Brigid Flanagan summed up the situation thus:

> However successful the bishops may have been in retaining their schools they paid a price both in moral credibility and in worsened relations with the government.

The next twenty years saw a gradual deterioration in the schools. There was never enough money to pay teachers proper salaries, to see to the maintenance of buildings and so working conditions, and morale and the academic quality of the education given in many of the schools declined. Many dioceses were forced after years of struggle to hand over their schools to government or homeland authorities. Even the schools that remained did not witness against apartheid for the wealthier white schools went their separate way from the black mission schools. As the bishops admitted in 1957:

> The practice of segregation, though officially not recognized in our churches, characterized nevertheless many of our church societies, our schools, seminaries, convents, hospitals and the social life of the people... We are hypocrites if we condemn apartheid in South African society and condone it in our own institutions.

As the pattern became clearer with the closure of many black schools and the removal of white religious from state-aided "coloured" schools, the question became more and more a matter of conscience. Certainly people could point to several black schools that provided an excellent education and turned out leaders of quality. In

the matric examinations church schools showed that blacks were well able to achieve the same results as whites given a minimum of resources (+- 95 percent passes +- 60 percent matric exemption) and so provided a standard against which to measure the failure of Bantu education in general.

By 1973 there were only 367 Catholic black schools and 193 white schools.left. But for many the situation became untenable, especially as in 1974 the apartheid government began asking white church schools to accommodate the children of black diplomats but in 1975 refused to meet with a church delegation to admit local black children to these same schools.

In February 1976 the bishops stated:

> Realizing that the church must give witness to the gospel in its institutions, the conference favours a policy of integration in Catholic schools and encourages individual schools to promote the implementation of the policy according to circumstances.

By then two white Catholic schools had already admitted black pupils but most used 1976 as a period of preparation. Needless to say, the events in Soweto highlighted the educational crisis in the country much better than the bishops' statement. In January 1977 with the more general admission of black pupils the battle was on. The government threatened at various times to deregister schools, to take away the meagre subsidies that were granted in the late 1970s, to enforce a quota system, etc. In all these disputes the church continued to treat it as a religious issue and refused to comply. It was only in mid-1991 that this battle finally ended. Although in theory all Catholic schools became open schools, there was little or no movement to black schools and one can say that in practice there are now 380 black schools and 77 open schools with over 110,000 pupils. The range of "openness" varies from 2 to 98 percent black depending on the location of the school, etc. The percentage is no longer an issue. What is an issue is how to develop a curriculum which is truly South African. Attempts in this field that have been developed in the open schools point to a possible future model of education for a new South Africa.

It seems to me that for all its weaknesses, mistakes and mixed motives it was, from a theological point of view, the right thing to do to suffer through Bantu education with the black people.

After all that pattern of incarnation was firmly establish by Jesus himself as St Luke portrays most exquisitely. There were benefits in this for the oppressed people, as we have seen in the sphere of education, but in retrospect the greatest benefit was for the church itself. While it was busy evangelizing, it was itself being evangelized by the poor. The fact that the Catholic Church became gradually more prophetic in its resistance to apartheid is largely the result of the commitment of black Catholics to their church and to their country and the challenge they presented to both to establish justice.

The catholic church and workers

If there was time, one could tell the story of Catholic hospitals and clinics which ran parallel to that of the schools. In fact, one could tell the story of dozens of little institutions and associations which followed the same path. From the outside the Catholic church can look like a great monolithic structure, but inside it is more a community of communities. I should like to dwell briefly on one such community, the Young Christian Workers, and its particular resistance to apartheid.

The movement in the church to provide pastoral care for young, mainly black, workers began in the 1950s with the work of Eric Tyacke. The emphasis was on educating young workers about their rights and encouraging them to get involved in trade unions. In the 1960s the attacks on trade unions and the general repression in the country meant that YCW also went into decline. The early 1970s saw a relaunch of the movement. Internally it provided an opportunity for young black workers to reflect on the interaction between their lives as workers and their lives as Christian believers using the famous "see, judge, act" method. It also trained them to know their rights and duties as workers, to run meetings, to develop media, and generally to organize their movement and act as its leaders. Within the church they put the issues of workers on the church agenda. They distributed leaflets outside churches telling workers about their rights. They persuaded priests and bishops to let workers meet in church premises when all other venues were closed to them. They encouraged Catholics to provide welfare support for the families of strikers and explained the position and demands of those on strike. They demanded that the bishops add a class analysis to the normal racial analysis of South Africa and that they provide help and protection for workers. They popularized the celebration of the

Feast of Saint Joseph the Worker on 1 May so that, in the good old Catholic tradition, Mayday was baptized. Generally, they raised the consciousness of Catholics about economic justice.

Apart from fighting apartheid within the church there came out of this and other similar movements young people willing and able to address workers problems as a way of living their faith in action. These young people moved into the trade unions that were re-born again in the 1970s. They brought with them their organizational and leadership skills and a willingness to place them at the service of others. From this pool all the major trade unions have drawn shop-stewards, regional organizers and executive members as conscientious, honest leaders. The contribution of the trade unions in resisting apartheid and defending the rights of the working class is well known but within that general movement the contribution of Young Christian Workers needs to be acknowledged. They gave new meaning to the scriptural quote beloved of Catholics at the time of the Reformation: "Faith without good works is dead." They said: "Faith without action is dead."

Catholic justice and peace commissions

The Second Vatican Council not only brought about changes in the statements of the bishops; it also brought about new ways of acting. The bishop's conference set about restructuring itself and its works through commissions. One of these which grew out of the worker movements became known as the Commission for Church and Work. Another equally important one was the Commission for Justice and Peace. The request to establish such commissions came from the bishops of the third world who attested that the dire poverty of the people and the grave social injustices they suffered prevented any meaningful evangelization. The SACBC was one of the first bishop' conferences in the world to respond to the request. During the war in Zimbabwe the Justice and Peace Commission did sterling work in exposing the evils of the war and promoting the rights of the people.

Although influenced by Zimbabwe, in South Africa, because of the different situation, a different approach was adopted. Local commissions were set up around the country and these attacked local evils and challenged injustices. Representatives of these commissions acted as animators and consultants for the bishops and were instrumental in having the bishops visit scenes of injustice, e.g. Namibia, and in getting the bishops to speak out on matters of justice. These commissions were also the channels through which the statements and pastoral letters of the bishops were brought to the notice of the local Catholic groups. The social teachings of the church became known to ordinary Catholics through their efforts to popularize the social encyclicals as they came out from Rome and to show their relevance to the South African situation. In this way people were made aware of the need to change the structures of society as well as the hearts of individual racist sinners. Meetings, workshops and campaigns were organized to raise the consciousness of Catholics about events in the country, e.g. the 1983 constitution, the various elections, the negotiations process, etc. Members of these commissions worked closely with other churches and organizations to ensure the success of various campaigns, e.g the Standing for the Truth Campaign. On a more informal level they organized picnics and social events so that people from different racial groups could for a few hours enjoy one another's company. Such local commissions also provided an interface where Catholics could hear the opinions of those in the liberation struggle and yet chose actions to fight injustices that flowed from their faith. This option of solidarity with the poor (a word favoured by Pope John Paul II) often broke the paralysis that many Catholics experienced, faced, as they thought, with only two choices: doing nothing or taking up arms.

"If you want peace work for justice" became the unofficial slogan of those involved in the work for justice. In many ways Justice and Peace became the defender of this position over against such groups as the Catholic Defence League, and "Tradition, Family and Property" which tried to convince Catholics that the church had been taken over by communists. It is difficult to estimate the contribution of the Justice and Peace Commissions although one major contribution may be mentioned: the promotion of the idea that liberation is not the same as the kingdom of God and that there will always be a need for Christians to be active in the promotion of justice through both education and action.

Catholic communications

While acknowledging the role of the Justice and Peace Commission in educating people, one must also at least mention the work of the Commission for Social Communications. Perhaps no act showed how far the bishops had come in their resistance to apartheid than their setting up of the *New Nation* in the 1980s. They, with the

others involved in the project, ensured that now the oppressed people could voice their feelings, their ideas and their aspirations directly to the world. This was a particularly brave act of the bishops, not because giving protection to such a venture brought on them the wrath of the government but because ordinary people could not distinguish between a Catholic newspaper and a people's newspaper under the auspices of the Catholic church. They were not helped by a concerted attack by conservative groups who accused the bishops of financing a "communist ANC" paper. Equally distressing for ordinary Catholics was the appearance of articles in favour of Marxist leaders and also articles that dealt less than diplomatically with issues Catholics are sensitive about, for example birth control. Nevertheless, the bishops never wavered in their support of the paper especially while its editor Zwelakhe Sisulu was in prison. In answering one of the many attacks (1987) they said:

> We are proud of its achievements to date in bringing to light information which otherwise would not have been made known and in letting the voice of the oppressed be heard. We reaffirm our support for it in its efforts to inform the people of South Africa about lives, conditions and viewpoints not normally known, but which must be taken into account if we are to resolve conflict. We reject in the strongest terms the attacks on the paper, especially those made anonymously or by people who do not (or do not want to) understand that to expose the truth is one of our pastoral obligations for truth will set us free.

It was only when the protection of the bishops' conference was no longer needed that the *New Nation* and the Catholic church reassessed their respective roles.

The witness of catholics

From the days of the early church Catholics have tended to believe that the seed of faith has to be watered with the blood of martyrs before it can germinate and grow. This has once again been proved true in the South African context. The growing commitment to justice within the church and the proclamation of it to those outside has come about through those who suffered or died for the cause. Various secretaries general and Archbishop Hurley as president of the conference have had to appear in court, and finally Khanya House, the SACBC headquarters was burnt down. Many priests including Fr S. Mkhatshwa were imprisoned and tortured. Many deacons and church workers were detained from wise old blacks to young idealistic whites. Sr Bernard Ncube and others of her community were also detained over long periods of time. Many missionaries like Fr Kuno Pauly who worked in the field of justice and peace were deported or refused re-entry. Some Justice and Peace commissions were totally smashed through a combination of these attacks. Apart from the dozens who suffered these major punishments, there were hundreds if not thousands who were harassed in the many little ways that the security police had developed to a fine art so as to render people's lives intolerable and their work ineffective. This happened most especially in rural areas where people were particularly vulnerable, e.g the harassment of Bishop Adams of Oudtshoorn.

Fortunately for us the result was often the very opposite to what the state intended. The most ordinary Catholics who had very little idea about politics, social justice or the role of the church in society were scandalized when "father" was deported or "sister" was imprisoned. The faithful and the local people generally knew these to be good people and so they reasoned their tormentors must be bad. Simple people may not have understood the whole debate about the illegitimacy of the South African government to which the Catholic church contributed, but they did realize from its actions that it was a wicked government because it was against the church as well as against the people. One priest in prison did more to conscientize Catholics than a thousand sermons or statements. It is to all these modern martyrs to the cause of justice that the church and South Africa must pay tribute. They taught us that resistance to evil is only effective when people are willing to sacrifice their lives for what is true and just and right. The stories of these heroic people as well as those of their secular counterparts need to be told to the future generations of South Africans so that their vision and their ideals may not be lost.

The failures of the Catholic church in resisting apartheid

Perhaps I have been wrong to take such a positive approach. Maybe I should devote as many pages again to the ways in which the Catholic church neglected to resist apartheid . There were many times when it was deaf to the cries of the poor, times when it was blind to the limitations of its own practice, times when it was more concerned with itself as institution rather than as servant of God's people, times when it did not practice what it preached, times when it turned a blind eye to evil. The list could go on at length. This sense of guilt was expressed most clearly in the confession issued by the SACBC after its discussion of the Rustenburg Declaration:

> The declaration issued by the Rustenburg conference has led us with considerable pain to examine our own history. So in welcoming this declaration, we recognize that its message applies to our church as a corporate body. We must admit with sorrow that although as a church we have often spoken out against the sin of apartheid, we are not innocent of all complicity in supporting or going along with it. So we ask forgiveness from all those, both within the church and beyond, who have suffered from our actions, blindness and negligence in the past. We recommend to our members that they reflect upon the message of Rustenburg, pray over it and put it into effect. For our part, we reaffirm our commitment to remove all vestiges of apartheid in our institutions and procedures.[2] Rerum Novarum and its Implications for Negotiations in South Africa, January 1991.

The present situation

At the present time the Catholic church is trying, as are all others, to read the signs of the rapidly changing times and to respond to them. It seeks to reconcile the different racial and political groups yet stress the demands of justice. In a climate of distrust it seeks to serve as an honest broker yet retain its own identity and not became aligned with big business or the politically powerful over against the poor. It seeks to bring hope for a future united South Africa yet deal with the state of emergency that still prevails in some homelands and the violence that holds other areas in its grip. While it may be confusing that in some parts of the country church members are already experiencing something of the new South Africa at the same time as others are still suffering severe repression, it serves to remind us of an important fact.

We must not forget that our experience has not been confined to resisting racism. For the past fifteen years we have also been battling the ideology and practice of a national security state. We need to be on our guard that this is not carried over into the future and think that success only involves leaving racism behind. An issue requiring the attention of the churches is the importance of "civil society" as an alternative source of direction and power to both the state and the market. John Paul II has mentioned this in his most recent encyclical "*Centesimus Annus*". This would be found in the emergence or resurgence of various "intermediate bodies" between the individual or household and the state. Such bodies would help build a vibrant civil society which would also protect every facet of life from being subjected to the market. The complexity of the current situation warns us that what lies ahead may be a new alliance of the powerful against the powerless rather than justice for all.

The future contribution of the Catholic church

What from the past can help us as we face an uncertain future? By way of summary the Catholic experience of apartheid suggests that in the future attention needs to be given to the following points.

We must expose and denounce injustice everywhere in a way that is specific and related to our historical context. Wasn't it Luther who said the good Christian soldier needs to be where the battle between good and evil is being fought? We must announce the basic truth of all religions: that the human family is one and we are called to defend the dignity of each person as the basis for all social, political and economic justice. The transcendent destiny of each person must be recognized and the universal religious values of truth, justice and compassion must be allowed to influence human society. The social teachings of our churches need to be continually developed so that they are sophisticated enough to address the complexities of modern society yet simple enough for their scriptural base to shine through for people to see.

Finally, the church must itself strive "to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with God" (Micah 6:8) if it wishes to be a convincing witness to its own message. As St Francis said:"We must preach at all times, sometimes we may even have to resort to words." If the church stays close to the poor, if by its actions it seeks to defend and empower the marginalized and despised, it will itself remain pure of heart and will shine out in a future South Africa like a city on a hilltop or a light in the darkness.

Our experience on the National Coordinating Committee for Refugees (NCCR) in working together for exiles has shown that our prophetic and pastoral work can be done better when it is done together with other churches and with other religions. If we are each faithful to the grace and goodness of God that we

experience in our own tradition and if we continue to work and witness together, surely all the people of South Africa will want to say in future: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord... that He may teach us his ways ... and we may walk in his paths" (Isaï 2:3).

NOTES

1 *Catholics in Apartheid Society,* p, 88

2 (copy from p. 121)

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RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN A SECULAR STATE: SOME CHALLENGES FOR SOUTH AFRICA - I

Martin Prozesky
Faculty of Arts
University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg

South Africa is a land of shackled souls, our people the victims not just of political and economic apartheid but also of religious apartheid. By this I mean the inability to develop a truly universal acceptance of all people as our spiritual sisters and brothers, amounting to an elitist and exclusivist distortion of the spiritual dimension of our existence that makes us embrace the chains that shackle us. Political and economic transformation alone cannot therefore achieve genuine liberation. We also need religious transformation, because the poison of dominationist structures, which I as an egalitarian democrat judge to be the fundamental cause of our problems in South Africa, has invaded and corrupted religion as well as the secular sphere.

Whose religious liberty do we have in mind in this seminar? The liberty of institutions like the Christian churches, the Hindu Maha Sabha or the Orthodox Jewish synagogues, plus the liberty of the hierarchies that govern them, or the liberty of the ordinary individual? Since I do not belong to or represent any of those bodies, I shall approach the topic with the ordinary people of South Africa in mind.

What I advocate is comprehensive religious freedom for every single person. I do so because that is what egalitarian democrats should do in the first place, but also because South Africa will not have much real religious freedom if all we do is cater for institutions and their leaders. As I will shortly explain, the latter are to some considerable extent part of the problem of religious bondage in South Africa, unwittingly perpetuating the conditions in which ordinary people are prevented from recognizing their religious captivity for what it is.

To grasp this situation we must now establish what religious liberty means. To my mind it means the right of every woman, man and child on this planet to be as fully fulfilled a creator of religious meaning as everybody else, to be as much the owner of the means of spiritual production as all others. It means that faith is incomplete so long as it is forced to exist within dominationist religious structures, where it is always *somebody else* who defines religion for the ordinary person. By its very nature such a structure, which is the rule in virtually all our traditional religious bodies, deprives people of their status and value as equal partners in the religious adventures of the earth.

By contrast, religious liberty is the experience of a rich consciousness of the limitless horizon of the spirit issuing in the most fulfilling and freely chosen patterns of humane action. As such it is universal friendship and ultimate humanization, where faith and freedom become one. If we are to have this kind of religious liberty in South Africa we need four major changes.

First, we need a constitutionally secular, democratic state with freedom of belief and practice for all. There must be an end not just to the offensive privileging and elitism of one or two favoured Christian churches which we have had these past four or five decades; nor just to the state-favoured position of Christianity in general: Religions in general forms of belief, religious and secular, must have equal rights, and none of them must have any state support, whether in the form of public education to inculcate favoured religious values, or the abuse of public broadcasting to do the same, or in the legal definition of religion which I judge to be biased and unjust, or in any other way.

Second, there must be a transformation in our religions themselves, a process of self-criticism aimed at discovering and eliminating the distortions caused by dominationist structures which harm the ability of our religions to be the vehicles of ultimate humanization which they all aspire to be. This demon of domination manifests itself in four main ways: as *masculinist control* of religion; as the deifying of *tradition* into a position of unquestioned normativity; as a sense of the *superiority* of one's own religion over others; and as the *prevention of an informed religious consciousness* on the part of believers, resulting in self-perpetuating structures of sanctified spiritual ignorance and prejudice. If we are to have religious liberty in South Africa, then our religions must also free themselves of these dominationist structures, because they are incompatible with true well-being for all.

Third, there must be a deep change in the individuals themselves whereby they recognize themselves as centres of spiritual value and creativity on a par with all other individuals, as having the right to know the story of faith in all its main forms at least, in a context of fairness towards them all, and as having the right to decide for themselves where they will place their ultimate loyalty.

Fourth, there must be a much better awareness of the diversity of belief present in South Africa, an awareness that is both appreciative and constructively critical in the best sense. And the only way to achieve this is through sweeping changes to our harmful existing forms of religious education, especially at school level. In the secular state of the future, there must therefore be a policy of encouraging religious studies at school so that all our people can be sensitively and soundly informed about the beliefs, practices and values of all South Africans.

May I end by suggesting that an excellent test of the real moral worth of a religion in South Africa will be the extent to which it actively works at this time for the kind of comprehensive religious liberty I have outlined. A religion with valid grounds for believing in its own value will thrive in conditions of maximum information, diversity and freedom.

Forward, then, to a new age of democratic, egalitarian, inclusive and humane values for South Africa, of which our religions should be exemplary models, not reactionary distortions!

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN A SECULAR STATE : SOME CHALLENGES FOR SOUTH AFRICA - II

John S. Pobee
World Council of Churches
Switzerland

In this paper I will discuss religions in the Republic of South Africa, and with religious liberty, not just the liberty of Christians. We are concerned with religious plurality. Further, we are not concerned with apartheid South Africa; we are oriented more beyond the demise of apartheid to the construction of a new South Africa in which racism and apartheid, whether de jure or de facto, have no place, a multi -racial nation and country which lives peace with justice for all.

The subject assigned to me has the inherent assumption that religion has a place in national life. In the past religion of one kind or another has had a place in the ordering of national life. That religion pretended to offer a theological underpinning of apartheid can hardly be denied.[1] The place of the Dutch Reformed Church and the theological faculty of Stellenbosch in maintaining apartheid cannot be denied either. In that way, religion played a negative role in providing the theological undergirding of the ideology which led to the tremendous inhumanity and suffering in Southern Africa.

On the other hand, religion also played a positive role in the struggle against apartheid. Need we do a roll call of the many christians, Christian institutions, Muslim and Hindu persons and institutions[2] who stood up to be counted in the struggle against apartheid? On the Christian side we can mention Archbishop Joost de Blank, Trevor Huddleston, Chief Albert Luthuli, Bishop Alphaeus Zulu, Z.K. Matthews, Archbishop Dennis Hurley, F. Albert Nolan, C. F. Beyers Naudé, Alan Boesak and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Behind these were the many unnamed persons, the so-called "nothings" of the world, who not only upheld them with their prayers but also accompanied them, forming a cordon of defence around them. The leadership could do what they did partly because the opponent dared not face the reaction of the constituency those anti-apartheid leaders represented. It is not without significance that P.W. Botha used to speak of the legitimate leaders of the Africans, over against the Tutus. But in addition to individuals we must also mention local institutions such as the South African Council of Churches, the Christian Institute, the Institute of Contextual Studies, etc. as well as international organizations like the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the C.I.I.R. in London. Time will fail me if I were to continue to list all, especially those from other religions.

Let me, however, add another significant point: several, if not many, of the anti-apartheid leadership were raised in the stables of one religion or another, especially the Christian church. As such, Christian conscience and impact was on them.

Thus, that religion has had a role in the national life of apartheid South Africa is not in dispute. But that role has not been unambivalent: it has been positive as well as negative. So the question is not whether the religions in South Africa have a role or not, but on the basis of their avowed faith and performance thus far, what kind of role can they reasonably be expected to play and what principles should guide that role? Further, the hope may be expressed that all of these religions in South Africa and their adherents will collaborate for the common good of the nation and of the peoples of South Africa, irrespective of colour, race, tribe, gender, religion and creed. This is a hint at the need for an ecumenical perspective and hermeneutic on the subject in hand and on nation-building. But there is also a need to define sharply the common good. Let me further underline that the roles are either visible or invisible: some will have high profile roles, others will resist without ever being mentioned in dispatches. Both roles are necessary for the reconstruction period.

For this very reason, the issue is how we so form the body of the faithful as to be efficient in their witness to what their faith stands for and to take the consequences for nation-building and for the common good. How do we ensure that faith is not only intellectual adherence to certain propositions, but also commitment and fidelity to the life-style that the faith either directly states or implies? After all, some of the perpetrators of the evil were self-styled adherents of particular religions, even if they did not live by their tenets. So how do we so inculcate the faith in people that they feel able tc die in order to keep the law of God, to obey God

rather than Caesar? It is here that religious people, especially Christians, need to be exorcised of the ghosts of the Enlightenment which made religion an individual and private matter. Perhaps we need to move beyond orthodoxy (i.e. right belief, as it is often understood[3]) to orthopraxis (i.e. right practice that bears out the faith).

In view of what has been said concerning the role of religions at both local/national and international levels, we need to be clear about the different roles to be played by different institutions, clarifying what things need to be done and who does what and which things need to be done by each and every one in whatever corner or station in life they may find themselves. I am speaking of the need to inculcate responsibility and accountability in each and all.

Before I leave the assumption that religion has a place in natural life, let me state that there seems to be some questioning of it. I hear anxiety expressed that the African National Congress is communist or at least communist-inclined and, therefore, religion may suffer under it or be excluded from national life. I myself do not at present find adequate evidence that religion will be threatened by it. In any case, the events in Eastern and Central Europe suggest to me that the notion of the eventual destruction of religion that has been associated with the communist ideology does not hold.

Secular state: nation-state replaces holy church and holy empire

The comments at the end of the previous paragraph bring us to the realm of secular state, and here there are two factors to be taken into account. First, historical development. Before the eighteenth century, the mutual coherence of a people was located in their religion and the ruler. Thus we talk of the holy empire and the holy *roman* empire. The story of the Republic of South Africa with the dominance of the DRC and the linkage with the national party is very much in that tradition.

But at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Europe heard calls for the separation of religion and politics. A people's consciousness was identified as the ultimate source of authority and their organic unity. Thus the nation-state replaced the holy church and the holy empire. The secular state then becomes the nation-state which is over against, but not hostile to, the model of the holy church and holy empire. I can accept, in this sense, talk of the secular state, especially as in the Republic of South Africa there is evidence that some of the DRC family of churches gave theological undergirding to the heinous apartheid, and that to at the expense of others in the society. But within those parameters, it will be important for religious people to have a clear vision of what their contribution can and should be. It is here that the ecumenical perspective is essential. But to this I shall return later.

The second factor is religious pluralism. In the past, people have talked as if the Republic of South Africa is a Christian country and other religions were overlooked, if not ignored and discriminated against. What about religious pluralism? In the face of this pluralism, a secular state has been proposed, in which no religion will predominate nor religion be given primacy [4]. This is where religious liberty comes in. To that I will turn later.

However, there is an issue to be resolved. What precisely is the content of "secular"? For that word has a wide range of meanings.[5] At base, the secular is about the autonomy of humanity who, as they encounter science, social and political issues, etc. have no need for God or the God hypothesis. The Marxists represent one end of the spectrum covered by the word "secular". But there are others, like the German theologian and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer who managed to combine religious commitment and secularism. He spoke of the world-come-of-age that needs no God of the gaps and that must be approached from the angle of its strength.[6] I warm to Bonhoeffer's understanding of secular. But the Republic of South Africa needs to struggle to give content to the concept of the secular state. That is a vital and urgent task.

The task is urgent for yet another reason. Edmund Burke (1729-1797) wrote in his *Reflections of the_Revolution in France* that "man is by his constitution a religious animal". That is, by and large, true of *homo_africanus*, of whom it is said *homo africanus homo religiosus radicaliter,* i.e. the African is through and through religious, having a religious epistemology and ontology. This in no way means that Africans are sacralist; rather, they seem unable to make sense of reality without the religious hypothesis. That is further borne out by the fact that Africa has been hospitable and welcoming to "gods many and lords many". But what is the significance of claiming the legitimacy of religious pluralism?

Religious liberty

The short answer is religious liberty. By it, we understand freedom of conscience, freedom of belief as well as the freedom not to believe, freedom of choice. It manifests itself as responsible freedom of speech, tolerance of others, mutual respect even between opponents. Respect for the dignity of the person who affirms or does not affirm a faith is important. William Hazlitt (1778-1830) wrote in his "Political Essays" in *The Times Newspaper*: "The love of liberty is the love of others, the love of power is the love of ourselves." Religious liberty is made evident in the love of other human beings, even those who are outside our chosen "holy club". Certainly Christians must know this from their experience. For as the early Christian writer Lactantius (A.D. 240-320) said: "It is in religion alone that liberty dwells... No one can be made to adore what he does not wish" (*Epitome Divinarum Institutionum,* 541).

Religious liberty, and for that matter any liberty, cannot be abstract. Permit me once more to quote from Burke: "Abstract liberty, like other abstractions, is not to be found."[7] We should avoid any attempts to deal with the subject of religious liberty in abstract terms. Besides, religious liberty can never co-exist with corruption. Again, Burke in his *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol* wrote: "Among a people generally corrupt, liberty cannot long exist," Many people think primarily of sexual corruption, embezzlement of state funds. But a more dreadful corruption is that which comes from power politics. Lord Act reminded us that "power tends to corrupt: absolute power corrupts absolutely". That is a lesson we have learnt from many African countries and from the USSR. The USSR collapsed also because of corruption of the party in power. But corruption is not to preserve politicians: it is very much in the household of faith. Religious liberty cannot fester in a context of corruption.

If religious liberty worth the name cannot be an abstract idea, and if religious liberty cannot keep house with corruption, especially that stemming from power politics, then it cannot come as a prefabrication. It has to be struggled for.

Thomas Jefferson is right that "the tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure"[8]. Precisely because of our human inclination to sin, we need to be watchful of true liberty and be prepared to die, if the light of religious liberty is threatened. Never may we be content with our liberty when people of other faith traditions or no faith are walked over and denied their human dignity.

Particular aeas to pursue

Religious liberty is not an end in itself: it serves peace and unity, human dignity and community-building. It is this objective that delineates areas that religious liberty should help focus. We do well to remind ourselves that religion is never an end in itself, and that its angle of vision is that of values. It is concerned with what ought to be. I now wish to speak as a Christian so as to focus what Christians bring to the discussion of religious liberty in a secular state.

First, the matter of sin. This is not the place to do a treatise on sin. But the biblical faith has two important things to say on this subject. (1) It has a penetrating and perceptive analysis of the human condition - the human capacity and penchant for sin. Paul, the earliest Christian missionary, puts it crisply: "I do not understand what I do... I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do, the evil I do not want to do - this I keep on doing" (2) (Rom. 7:15, 18-19). The Bible also asserts that the capital human sin is idolatry, wanting to play God, usurping God's place as the ground of being or obsessive worship of possessions, power, pleasure and individualism. We need to explore where these relate to or challenge religious liberty in secular society.

Second, our common humanity. Religious liberty serves the dignity of human beings. To be religious is about attaining one's true humanity. But there is a crisis about what it is to be human. The biblical, scientific-technological and Marxist models of humanity have been left in tatters by contemporary challenges. We need, therefore, a clear vision of what it is to be human today, so that religious liberty may have a proper port of destination. Without this vision, we cannot search for our common humanity which is a part of religious liberty and secular society.

Third, Christians have rediscovered, after centuries going after ideologies of power, especially Christendom, God's preferential option for the poor. The poor are the marginalized, the disadvantaged, the so-called

"nothings" of the world. God confronts us in the hungry, the thirsty, the strangers, the naked, the sick, those in prison (Matt. 25:35-36,42-43). Religious liberty which fosters the well-being of the disadvantaged in the society must be sought even in a secular society. The church has much to repent of. For in its history it seems to have forgotten that its founder, Jesus Christ, was born in a manger and not in a palace and died on the cross which was a penalty reserved for hardened criminals, slaves, and so on. Do we forget that some religious institutions were hand-in-glove with the powerful, ruthless apartheid regime? Where did the hermeneutic of God's preferential option for the poor sit in their stance? Disestablishment of any religion is a prerequisite.

Fourth, as Christians seek to foster religious liberty in a secular society, they will be guided by what they call the values of the kingdom of God or perhaps by human values. These are sacrificial love, righteousness-justice, truth, freedom, reconciliation and peace. These are non-negotiable principles for Christians as they seek to live in the world. But I suspect we share these values with people of other faiths. The issue is to give renewed content to these values and that, in an ecumenical context.

It is a truism that the people of God in the Republic of South Africa could not speak with one voice to the heresy and sin of apartheid. The unity of the church is a prerequisite for the total credibility of the churches when they undertake the role of reconciling the diverse cultures, peoples, etc. in plural South Africa.

Ecumenism also has a missiological aspect, i.e. it is concerned as well with the mission of the people of God extensively (Matt. 28:18-20) and intensively (Luke 4:18-19). It is about both the expansion and one affirmation that humankind is created in the image and likeness of God. Mission, however else it may be defined, is also about building the community of communities in the household of God.

Ecumenism is also concerned with social-ethical matters: for God is met in social relationship (Matt. 25 18-20), especially in the encounter with the poor. Because "the earth is the Lord's" (Ps. 24:1), the whole of life must be brought into the purview of the one God who created it. Engagement in the social issues and services is a role to be fulfilled by the people of God. But the rationale for it should not be to convert people to a particular religion; rather, it should be because God, the Creator, invites us to be his partner, his hands and feet to shore up the dignity that belongs to those who are in God's image and likeness.

An ecumenical hermeneutic for defining the role of religion in South Africa is non-negotiable and its twin pillars are that the earth, created by God, belongs and is accountable to God, on the one hand, and that humanity, irrespective of race, colour or creed is entitled to a prerogative of dignity because they are each and several in the image of the Creator God. The issue now is to identify the institutions and structures by which that role of the church can be exercised. And in any event religious liberty must operate and be evident at every stage.

In closing, let me signal the crucial role of theological and religious education in this task. It should be education that takes seriously the context of South Africa and does not deal in untested theories. Two particular things I wish to draw attention to. First is the importance of dialogue as a method and a goal. Convictions must go with a willingness to venture into dialogue with reason. But the dialogue is not so much between institutions as between persons, human beings who happen to profess a different faith, traditions - human beings whose dignity must be respected and protected, human beings who must be given space in God's wide world.

Second, the dialogue should also pay attention to the dynamics of the context. In the Republic of South Africa it is often pointed out that 79.2 percent of the population is Christian. Other religions include Islam, Hinduism, Judaism and Bahaism and not least the African traditional religions. The percentages are a factor in determining the dynamics. Christians should not be led by their numbers to walk over others. It behooves them to go the extra mile to build bridges, instil confidence in the minority religions.

Finally, a religion serves *inter alia* as the spring of a people's life, and once ignored it renders irrelevant one's activity in the context. For that reason the search for a secular society cannot ignore the plurality of religions in the Republic of South Africa.

NOTES

1 See J. Hofmeyer and W.s. Forster eds, *New Faces of Africa* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1984).

2 See *Believers in the Future: Proceedings of the National Inter-Faith Conference on Religion-State Relations* (Cape Town: WCRP South African Chapter, 1991).

3 Orthodoxy properly is not only right belief but also the right worship of divinity, and worship in this context is more that the cultus but also embraces all acts of obedience to the will of God.

4 Ghana after independence in 1957 opted for a secular state as a way of coping with religious pluralism. But religion played a role. Nkrumah himself continued to use religion, particularly Christian motifs and symbols, for generating devotion to African nationalism. This presupposes that religion was the wavelength at which homo ghaniensis could be reached. See J.S. Pobee, *Kwame Nkrumah and the Church in Africa 1949-1966.* (Accra: Asempua Press, 1987).

5 Charles West, "Secularization" in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* eds. Nicholas Lossky et al. (Geneva: WCC, 1991) pp 2 914-918.

6 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (London: SCM, 1964).

7 E.Burke,*Speech on Conciliation with America,* .22 March 1775.

8 Letter to W.S. Smith, 13 November 1987.

THE ROLE OF THE AFRICAN INDIGENOUS CHURCHES (AIC) IN DISMANTLING APARTHEID

Archbishop Ndumiso NGADA
Theological Training Institute
South Africa

Historically, the origins of the African indigenous churches (AIC) were purely political. The founders of the AIC were resisting oppression from the missionary church and the apartheid state – and this began even before the establishment of political organizations in the country.

Some of the AIC paid the highest price for struggling against the South African apartheid regime. Among them is the church known as the Israelites led by Prophet Enock Mgijima, whose members were massacred by the regime on 24 May 1921 at Ntabelanga (Bulhoek). This tradition of resistance by the AIC has contributed to the changes we see in the South African society today. These churches have been part and parcel of the voices calling for sanctions and other measures to weaken the apartheid regime. They include the majority of Christians and are calling for an interim government and a constituent assembly.

Most of these churches are organized into associations and councils to safeguard the aspirations and interests of their members. The constant violence in the country is slowing the progress of transition towards a peaceful change. The leadership of the AIC is engaged at the grassroot level in effort to create peace, but the forces involved in the bloodshed are very powerful.

The AIC have been so scattered in the post that they could never have acted together in anything concerning the liberation of their people. But recently these churches have united and taken their rightful place in the constituences on democratic principles, and they are preparing themselves for the future South Africa. Most of their members and leadership are involved in local civic associations and belong to different political organizations.

The growth of the AIC in this country will determine the future church in South Africa. Therefore, whatever the future government, it will have to consider the rights of these churches and the role they have played in bringing about change and dismantling apartheid.

The AIC have clearly stated at their conferences and rallies that apartheid should not be reformed but dismantled. The missionary church has been fully part of the oppression of the black people in South Africa. For example, the missionaries were involved in making racial laws; racial segregation was started in the missionary churches; missionary churches opened schools on racial lines and those who did not belong to their churches were denied schooling; they also built hospitals which operated on the same lines. Missionary churches still own land and facilities and they discriminate against those who do not belong to their churches in the use of that land and facilities. The attitude of the missionary churches towards the AIC, to which the majority of Christians in the country belong, needs to change radically.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

PREAMBLE

In our discussions we have been reminded of the many prophetic voices that have emerged in the religious communities of South Africa. Individuals, groups and institutions in each of these communities have raised their voices against the apartheid system. Throughout the history of South Africa, religious leaders have voiced support for the poor, the oppressed and other marginalised people.

We have also again realized the extent to which our respective religious traditions have contributed to the suffering, oppression and death that has characterised recent history in South Africa. All religions in South Africa share the blame for the exploitative character of South African society. The exploitation as soon entrenched in our country's social and political institutions and some churches legitimised the system.

We now live in a transitional period in South Africa. We are walking towards a new era within which a non-racial, non-sexist democracy seems possible. We are obliged to:

(1) continue to raise a prophetic voice, saying 'NO' to all forms of injustice, suffering and exploitation whenever and at whatever level they may occur;

(2) learn to say a creative 'YES' to such possibilities of socio-economic and political reconstruction that make for a better, more just and more humane society. Recognising our obligation to do justice, love one another and care especially for the poor, we regard it to be our special obligation to ensure that national reconstruction be such that those in most need benefit most from the change process that is beginning to unfold.

THE WAY FORWARD

Against the preceding background and in order to specify, in more detail the role of religion in the transition to and preparation for a post-apartheid society in South Africa, the following concerns and tasks presented themselves as the most urgent. These can be divided into two categories :

Firstly, tasks religious communities should consider when looking at themselves.
Secondly, what they should do in the service of society.

We invite sponsors of this meeting and others to consider these areas of concern and the proposed tasks with a view to assisting the transition to a post-apartheid society in South Africa.

A. Looking at ourselves

1. To search together for and to formulate a new goal and a vision for religion and religious identities that will direct, inform and support the transition to a democratic, non-racial and just society;

2. To practise and promote democratic values and procedures in our on structures and organisations;

3. To acknowledge the ambiguities present in each of our religious traditions realising that religion is always open to use and abuse;

4. To make creative use of our diverse traditions to support the transition and to develop new metaphors and* myths that could facilitate the process;

5. To promote interfaith dialogue and understanding in the positive acceptance of religious pluralism in South Africa;
6. To support existing forums for interfaith dialogue and promote solidarity for justice and peace;

7. To acknowledge the problems underlying the plurality of meaning in the interpretation of religious texts and traditions and to develop an adequate contextual hermeneutics;

8. To facilitate the move from protest to engagement and to promote reconciliation and reconstruction with justice;

B. In serving society

9. To support and supplement the political and consitutional transition to democracy with a broader-based understanding of the values and workings of democracy;

10. To support the process of nation building;

11. To promote the process of healing through the sharing of stories and the re-interpretation of history;

12. To work, in interaction with experts, towards an equitable and sustainable economic system for South Africa, compatible with democratic values and to give special attention to development programmes for South Africa;

13. Although we recognise that religious bodies do not have the monopoly on morality, they nevertheless have the responsibility to address moral issues and to contribute to the debate from their own traditions;

14. To insist on religious freedom and the independence of religion in the future South Africa;

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* understood as stories or 'saga' which serve to explain social reality.

15. To promote inter-disciplinary dialogue between religious traditions and other disciplines without claiming a privileged position for one's own tradition;

16. To develop an adequate understanding of culture that will promote the positive appreciation of values;

17. To welcome the cultural and religious diversity of South Africa and to contribute to a context in which this diversity can function in a complementary, rather than in a divisive way;

18. To support a programme of "Education for Democracy" to be implemented at all levels of the learning process (university, school, home and community) with special emphasis on the illiterate and semi-illiterate;

19. To promote the growth of a strong civil society in South Africa;

20. To support measures that will promote as a constitutional right freedom of belief for all the people of South Africa without state advocacy for any specific religion or world-view.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Mr. Marus BRAUN
164 Krupp StraBe
433 MULHEIM

Mr. Maulana Farid ESACK
Woodbrook
1046 Bristol Road
Birmingham, B 29 6LJ
UK

Mrs. Sally FRANKENTAL
Director for Centre of Jewish Studies
University of Cape Town
RONDEBOSCH 7700
Cape Town
South Africa

Mr. Per FROSTIN
University of LUND
Faculty of Theology
LUND / Sweden

Mr. Abdoulaye Ilimane KANE
University of Dakar
Department of Philosophy
Senegal

Sister Margaret KELLY
Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference
P.O. Box 941
PRETORIA 0001
South Africa

Prof. Bernard LATEGAN
Dean of Arts
University of Stellenbosch
STELLENBOSCH 7600
South Africa

Dr. Gerrie. J. A. LUBBE
National President World Conference on Religion & Peace
8 Piet Meyer Street
Mindalore
1740 KRUGERSDORP / SA

Archbishop Ndumiso NGADA
Theological Training Institute
P.O. Bo 30938
BRAAMFONTEIN 2001 / S.A.

Prof. Martin PROZESKY
University of Natal
Faculty of Arts
P.O. Bo 375
PIETERMARITZBURG 3200
South Africa

Rev. Van Der SIJS
Papelaan 2 C
1382 RM WEESP
The Netherlands

Mr. Baldwin SJOLLEMA
Chemin du Lac 13
1299 COMMUGNY (Vaud)

Dr. Anil SOOKLAL
16, Hendale Place
Newlands
DURBAN 4051
South Africa

Prof. Charles VILLA-VICENCIO
Professor of Religion & Society
University of Cape Town
RONDEBOSH 7700
South Africa

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)

Mr. Bocar DIA
UNESCO
Division of Human Rights and Peace
Paris/France

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES STAFF

Mrs Mary BALIKUNGERI
Programme to Combat Racism

Dr. Tarek MITRI
Sub-unit on Dialogue

Mr. Ken MUBU
Communication Department

Dr. James MUTAMBIRWA
Programme to Combat Racism

Rev. N. Barney PITYANA
Programme to Combat Racism

Dr. John POBEE
Programme on Theological Education

Ms. Sabine UDODESKU
Programme to Combat Racism