Justice and Reconciliation

Contributions to a Workshop on
Justice, Peace and the
Integrity of
Creation

edited by
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Contents

Introduction – Justice and Reconciliation

A workshop of the United Evangelical Mission in Windhoek

Jochen Motte

Under the theme »Justice and Reconciliation«, 50 participants from member churches of the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) met from 22 – 28 January 2000 in Windhoek, Namibia. The Workshop was hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), which is one of the member churches of the new United Evangelical Mission.

The United Evangelical Mission was finally transformed from a German missionary society into an international ecumenical body in 1996. At present 32 Churches and one other institution are members of the UEM. Four churches are located in Tanzania, two in Rwanda, three in the Democratic Republic of Congo, one in Cameroon, one in Namibia, one in Botswana, eleven in Indonesia, one in Hong Kong, one in Sri Lanka, one in the Philippines and six in Germany. In 1993, in accordance with the mandate and tasks, as expressed in the constitution of the UEM, the member churches initiated the process of striving jointly for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC).

In 1995 the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka hosted the first international workshop of the United Evangelical Mission on human rights. Most of the participants attending the workshop had been working for many years within their respective churches in the field of JPIC. In Sri Lanka these »JPIC contact persons« expressed the need for the churches to co-operate more closely on JPIC related issues, to train people in the field of human rights and peace keeping and to continue their common sharing on strategies which will aid the churches in their response to the global and local challenges caused by injustice, poverty and human rights violations.

To this end, further training on human rights fact finding work for participants from African and Asian UEM member churches was conducted by the United Church of Christ in the Philippines in 1997. In addition to this, the Presbyterian and Anglican Churches (EPR and EER) hosted a seminar on peace keeping in Kigali in 1997.

Since 1995 the United Evangelical Mission has been assisting its member churches in fostering JPIC programmes and projects. Various training and education programmes on JPIC, human rights and peace keeping on a local level have been con-

ducted e.g. in the Philippines, Sumatra, West Papua, Tanzania, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Cameroon.

The UEM-JPIC programme has supported reforestation projects in Negros Oriental in the Philippines and at the Toba Lake in Indonesia, anti widows discrimination campaigns in Cameroon, legal aid for victims of human rights violations in Porsea (Indonesia), human rights fact finding missions in the Philippines and in Irian Jaya / West Papua (Indonesia), small credit unions projects in Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania), projects for children affected by war in Kigali (Rwanda) and Jaffna (Sri Lanka), and programmes for migrant workers in East Java (Indonesia) and for female labourers in Batam (Indonesia).

On the request of UEM member churches in Africa and Asia, the UEM began calling for urgent action to be taken e.g. in cases of arbitrary detention and killings but also in cases of economic injustice and questions of land rights, by asking its constituency to appeal by letter to the respective governments and authorities.

Since 1998 the UEM, as a whole, has participated in the Jubilee 2000 Campaign for international debt release. It is also an active member of the »Clean Clothes Campaign« and participates in lobby work related to the United Nations annual human rights commissions.

The JPIC work of the UEM has been carried out in close co-operation with other ecumenical organisations, in particular with the World Council of Churches and its regional bodies, as well as with other non-governmental organisations, which are active in the field of human rights, economic justice and peace keeping.

In the six years since the member churches of UEM began networking on JPIC issues, the globalisation process has accelerated at a remarkable rate. As a consequence of the Asian economic crises, millions of people lost their jobs and the number of those living below the poverty line increased dramatically. Although the ousting of the former Indonesian President Suharto in 1998 and the election of the new President Abdurrahman Wahid has raised hopes for new advances on the road towards democracy, and for the development of a civil society and legal security, the present political situation can still be described as fragile and instable. The role of the military in East Timor in 1999, the uncontrolled violence between Christians and Muslims, particularly in Ambon and Halmahera, the pro-independence movements in Aceh and Irian Jaya (West Papua) and the ongoing economic crises, are key political issues which have to be urgently addressed and resolved, if the process of separation and disintegration of the country is to be arrested.

War and violent conflicts between different ethnic and religious groups can also be observed in parts of the Philippines and Sri Lanka. The marginalisation of minorities and indigenous people, militarisation and economic interests are often the hidden origins of such conflicts, which are difficult to resolve once violence has actually broken out.

The situation in many Central African countries is characterized by never-ending economic crises. The situation in Congo, in particular, appears to be worse now than it was under the regime of former President Mobutu. The country has been torn apart and held under the control of different factions, which receive support not only from various neighbouring governments in the Great Lakes Region but also from Southern African countries.

Other countries such as Cameroon and Tanzania are suffering under the burden of heavy foreign debts. The number of HIV infected people in Africa and Asia continues to rise at an alarming rate. At a time characterised by increasing globalisation the social gap is not only widening between North and South, but also within the South itself, between the rich elites and the majority of ordinary people. In order to survive, children in many countries have to work under extreme conditions, sell their bodies or fight as soldiers.

For many people in the world, signs of hope and change, and of peace and justice are, at the end of the second millennium, nothing more than a dream.

Some years ago in Baguio City in the Philippines a number of participants of a workshop on human rights raised the question as to how the churches can be active in striving for justice while at the same time being of help by opening up channels for reconciliation. The Workshop gave rise to the idea, whereby, interested parties would come together to reflect on »justice and reconciliation« and to exchange experiences as to how these issues can best be addressed within differing economic, social, cultural and spiritual contexts.

In the meantime the World Council of Churches called for a new Decade to Overcome Violence. The workshop of the UEM in Windhoek in January 2000 consequently reflected on justice and reconciliation by asking how the UEM and its member churches could contribute to the forthcoming Decade to Overcome Violence.

Of special interest at the workshop was the contribution of the ELCRN. Its support for the cause of justice in the struggle against apartheid, as well as its current efforts to seek justice and reconciliation in the new democratic Namibia, provided the basis for the discussion on the topic. In addition to this, the workshop looked at experiences in post-apartheid South Africa and the assessment of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. These and further contributions, which reflect on the theological dimension of justice and reconciliation or which take into consideration the experiences from within Germany and Indonesia are published together in this documentation.

The theme of the workshop »justice and reconciliation« may rouse different associations in different people. It may provoke a positive or a negative reaction, depending on the respective personal context. There are greatly differing experiences of social, political and cultural injustice in the countries where member churches of the

UEM are located. There are healing experiences of reconciliation within families and churches, within different groups in society or between different nationalities and races. It is also the case that people are tired of the word »reconciliation«, often because it is misused by those who do not genuinely care about justice.

»Justice and Reconciliation« – this topic, of course, is not an answer. It may be understood as a question – how do justice and reconciliation fit together? How can there be justice, where people continue to be enemies? How can reconciliation be realised where there is no justice? It may also be understood as a goal of Christian life and witness. We strive for justice and reconciliation in the different contexts in which we live – often we fail, but sometimes we are able to see that wounds can be healed and that injustice can be transformed into justice. The theme may also be understood as a prayer for justice and reconciliation: justice for all people and reconciliation among all people and between God and his people. Justice and reconciliation, in this sense, may be expressed as a call to God, so that he himself will give us a glimpse of what true justice and reconciliation means and what it can be, and as a call to God to bring justice to those who are oppressed and marginalised, and to reconcile our broken relations.

To the host Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia, we offer our sincere gratitude for the friendly way in which they made the workshop participants feel welcome. Without the Church's contribution to the organisation and theme of the workshop such a successful week would not have been possible.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Moderator and both Vice-Moderators of the UEM, Dr S.A.E. Nababan, Bishop E. Sendoro and Dr U. Beyer, who participated in the workshop, and who, through their contributions, clearly demonstrated that justice and reconciliation are the essence of the missio dei and thereby part of the witness of the UEM integrated Churches.

Dr Jochen Motte (Germany) is the JPIC Secretary of the UEM in Wuppertal.

Justice and Reconciliation

Message of the second UEM JPIC-Workshop 2000

We, the 50 JPIC contact persons of the UEM member churches, resource persons, guests and staff met from 22 – 28 January 2000 in Paulinum, the United Lutheran Theological Seminary in Pioneers' Park, Windhoek.

Almost five years after the first international UEM workshop on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation we came together again at the beginning of the new millennium and at the end of the most violent century in human history. We gathered at Windhoek in Namibia, hosted by our brothers and sisters of the ELCRN with whom we shared enriching encounters during worship in the congregations and exposure programmes.

I. Common Witness

We see people being wounded. Some of us have experienced violence, oppression, torture, racism, the legacy of apartheid and colonialism, civil war, genocide and social and economic exploitation in our respective countries in the recent past. Others are still being threatened by and suffering from various forms of violence, often because they belong to specific ethnic groups or religions. These experiences of violence are linked to increasing globalisation and economic injustice.

We observe that reconciliation can be controversial. Often, politicians misuse the theological meaning of the term »reconciliation« when they explain that the Christian understanding of reconciliation would mean, »to forgive and forget« and avoid talking about the wounds of the past. We observe that »reconciliation« can also be misused to silence victims, and we affirm: justice and reconciliation cannot be separated. The Biblical concept of justice and reconciliation is not meant to appease people but might lead to conflict. Reconciliation is a process and needs sensitivity and patience.

We believe that the foundation of our understanding of reconciliation and our motivation to work for JPIC is the Biblical witness for God's justice and the reconciliation he is providing for us.

Therefore we affirm with Bishop Desmond Tutu:

Even the most diabolical act does not turn the perpetrator into a demon. A distinction has to be made between the sinner and the sin. Every human, if subjected to certain conditions, is capable of committing heinous crimes. No person,

even the one who committed the most serious crime, is beyond God's compassion and his potential to change the attitude and the life of such a person.

Therefore, a healing process for perpetrators requires some opportunity for them to contribute towards building up new relationships in society that express an awareness of the seriousness of the crimes that they have committed. The recognition of the special situation of the victims and their restitution to the society are also important for the healing effect of reconciliation.

We confess that the only sovereign in our life is God. Therefore, the first aim of all our efforts as Christians and churches is to develop humanity and not to foster such divisive concepts as nations, tribes and races, to establish justice and to overcome economic exploitation.

We affirm: reconciliation is a matter of justice and peace. Genuine or authentic reconciliation is only possible when justice is served and abundant life is enjoyed by all creation.

II. Sharing experiences

We have listened to the experiences of fellow Christians from Botswana, Cameroon, Germany, Indonesia (among others West Papua), the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia, the Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Tanzania. With Windhoek being the venue of this conference emphasis was placed, in particular, on the situation in Namibia. Christians and churches here, together with the people of Namibia, have struggled over a long period to overcome the apartheid system and to achieve independence. They are still trying to come to terms with the double experience of having once been the church in the struggle and now finding themselves in the position of being the church in the new, independent nation. The declaration of the Council of Churches in Namibia »The Year of God's Grace« which did not focus on accusations against perpetrators but on restitution to victims, provided guidance. Nevertheless, the churches in Namibia are now being challenged to regain their identity, in order to fulfil their prophetic role.

In South Africa proposals for a peaceful transition had been worked out. The intention was to have a commission dealing with crimes committed during the apartheid regime. At the same time, the large-scale impunity, which had foiled the process in Chile, had to be avoided. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission provided the opportunity for victims to speak out and to confront the perpetrators with their deeds. However the process of reconciliation requires the ongoing efforts of the churches and of people of faith and good will.

During the conference we were also confronted with the special problems of the following countries, which touched our hearts. We can only report them briefly:

The ongoing war in the Democratic Republic of Congo causes immense hardship, threatens the lives of the people and results in the increasing instability of the region. Peace efforts continue to fail.

The aftermath of the genocide in Rwanda continues to cause much suffering within the population, and the efforts towards achieving reconciliation are still facing great difficulties.

The devastating effect of HIV/Aids in Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania and other African countries threatens to wipe out whole generations.

The engineered escalation of violence and riots, particularly among religious groups in Indonesia, indicates the danger of the country heading towards disintegration.

The economic crisis, due to globalisation, is seen as the biggest problem in the Philippines.

The building of a peaceful multicultural society in Germany is a task still to be realised. Yet, many Germans do not see a contradiction between their xenophobia and their travelling all over the world as tourists.

III. Facing challenges

We see, as a result of sharing our experiences, that individual Christians and churches have often been passive witnesses to, and even participants in, violence and unjust structures.

Often, the churches have lined up on both sides of the above-mentioned conflicts.

Often, they have aligned themselves with those in political power, even when they were acting wrongly and ignoring fundamental human rights.

Often, they have been too concerned with their own material interests and social influence, forgetting that they should have been standing up for truth and standing on the side of the poor and the marginalised.

Often, the churches have failed to find an adequate approach to overcome injustice and conflict within their own structures.

Therefore, all churches have to remind each other of the prophetic role they should be playing in their societies, which must not be compromised in any circumstances, especially when churches are »settled«, have gained public influence or become close to political decision-making.

Being aware of these problems concerning the churches themselves, we turn to God who has not stopped seeing us as his creation and as followers of Jesus Christ. So we are filled with new courage when reading:

»...all things are of God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation«

(2 Corinthians 5,18)

In light of the trust and the responsibility God gives us, we dare to turn our eyes to the future. The following challenges are fundamental for all churches represented at the conference:
– to participate actively in the Decade to Overcome Violence, launched by the member churches of the World Council of Churches,
– to strengthen their efforts to achieve debt relief for the highly indebted countries and greater justice in national and international economic systems.
– to become aware of the tribalism, nationalism and racism prevailing in many societies, and to educate their church constituencies to fight against these divisive tendencies.

May our churches and we, as their members, be part of a movement of hope in our efforts to strengthen JPIC in an ecumenical spirit and in mutual solidarity wherever we live.

We recommend to the United Evangelical Mission governing bodies:

1. To the Council, to propose to the UEM General Assembly to participate officially in the coming »Decade to Overcome Violence« of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and to initiate a discussion in the General Assembly on the ways and means through which the UEM and its member churches can address the issue of violence in their respective contexts in the coming years, e.g. in the following areas:
   a) Civil wars and concern for victims (e.g. post-trauma counselling)
   b) The refugee problem
   c) Disappearances of persons
   d) Violence against women (e.g. widowhood rituals, genital mutilation)
   e) Children as victims and perpetrators of violence (e.g. child soldiers)
   f) Violation of the rights of indigenous people
   g) Rural-urban migration.
2. To the Council, to propose to the UEM General Assembly the following »Principles and Guidelines« concerning the UEM JPIC and human rights work:
   a) to promote the process of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, by building up conscientisation and co-operation on JPIC issues among the churches, by undertaking human rights, lobby and advocacy work, and by supporting human rights and environmental projects within the churches.
   b) To participate fully in the WCC's »Decade to Overcome Violence«, and to assist and equip the churches for further capacity building on peace keeping and conflict transformation, human rights work and project management.
3. To the Council, to ensure at the General Assembly that the »Decade to Overcome Violence« of the WCC and the UEM Programme »New Areas of Mission« are con-

sidered as complementary efforts in order to work according to the Constitution, Article 2. This means that UEM Programmes in the field of overcoming violence can be undertaken in the framework of the »New Areas of Mission« and, vice versa, that the »New Areas of Mission« may contribute to overcoming violence.

4. To the Council, to consider the possibility of inviting JPIC resource persons to the General Assembly on the issue of overcoming violence.

5. To the Council, to propose to the General Assembly to give its constitutional priority to the JPIC, human rights and environmental work of the UEM, in terms of finances and personnel, and to extend its support for the JPIC programmes and projects of the individual UEM member churches.

6, To the Council, to increase financial support for JPIC projects and to propose to the General Assembly and to the Council, to continue with the process of transforming the financial »support for the service of the churches« into project oriented funding, and to ensure that JPIC and human rights projects are proportionally considered according to the UEM Constitution, Article 2.

7, To the Executive Committee and the Council, to consider the following suggestions, with the aim of including JPIC as an integral part in the exchange of personnel:

a) to develop possibilities, together with the member churches, of including JPIC as an area of work for long-term and short-term personnel exchange;

b) to support scholarships in the areas of JPIC and human rights;

c) to develop possibilities of appointing co-workers in the UEM office on limited project related contracts to work on specific tasks or campaigns, such as e.g. the »Decade to Overcome Violence«, and to apply the model of the West Papua Network to work in other areas of JPIC.

8. To the Council, to ask the UEM member churches to follow up the results of interregional, international and national JPIC Workshops,

a) by requesting a written report from the participant to the Church Board,

b) by inviting the participant to the Church Board for further discussion on the follow-up to the programme,

c) by conducting regional follow-up workshops/seminars wherever possible,

d) by ensuring that the JPIC contact person shares his/her experiences with other members of a JPIC task force/network within the church, and

e) by assisting and equipping the JPIC contact person to conduct the follow-up in the church.

9. To the Council, to ensure that at least one youth participant from each region is invited to interregional UEM workshops.

10. To the Council, to propose to the General Assembly that a third international JPIC workshop should be held in 2004 with the theme »Overcoming Violence« to make a preliminary assessment of the contribution of the UEM and its member churches to the »Decade to Overcome Violence«.

We recommend to the United Evangelical Mission Member Churches:

1. To continue to develop a clear position for the Church regarding JPIC issues, to enhance awareness among the members of the congregations on JPIC and to enhance the responsibility for prophetic witness in all areas of its work.
2. To continue reinforcing JPIC work as an integral part of the mission of the church. If this is not yet the case, every church should give the JPIC contact person access to the decision making bodies or set up a separate JPIC desk. Those responsible for JPIC should be adequately trained.
3. To actively participate in the UEM Joint Programmes and use the results to enhance and develop their work.
   a) To ensure that JPIC is addressed in all formal and informal training programmes of the church, particularly in the centres of theological education.
   b) To develop curricula, which prepare pastors and church workers for advocacy work and awareness building.
   c) To include JPIC in the agenda of the church, in order to educate and raise awareness among the young generation from an early age.
4. To take up and to intensify the discussion on peacemaking and reconciliation, and to commit themselves to the problems of conflict resolution, by emphasising non-violent methods, human rights education, dialogue, mediation and reconciliation.
5. To develop policies of co-operation with church organisations and other non governmental organisations (NGOs) in the field of JPIC and the »Local Agenda 21« (Rio Summit on Environment and Development, 1993), in order to enhance solidarity and networking within their region.
6. To develop ways of collaborating and co-operating with other religious and secular groups on JPIC.
7. To create a directory presenting their current JPIC activities and the names of the persons in charge.
8. To set up JPIC structures and activities, all the way down to the grassroots' level of their congregations and communities.
10. To reconsider church-state relations and to develop an attitude of positive, creative, critical, and realistic relations with their respective governments.
11. To design a health programme based on education and capacity building, in order to address, in a more efficient manner, the issues of HIV, family planning, teenage pregnancies and endemic diseases such as malaria.

Regarding the activities of the JPIC contact persons and the JPIC desk, we recommend the following:

1. To the JPIC desk, to continue with its assistance for concrete projects on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation and humans rights, and to give as much support as possible to the UEM contact persons as well as other responsible bodies and individuals within the member churches.
2. To the JPIC desk and the JPIC contact persons, to give special attention to the follow-up and evaluation of programmes.
3. To the JPIC desk and the JPIC contact persons, to assist the member churches in capacity building on JPIC, such as developing a liturgy for JPIC worship and research for (already existing) written materials on theology, JPIC issues and human rights.
4. To the JPIC desk and the JPIC contact persons, to participate in the awareness building and the enlightenment of all people, which will enable them to demand and pursue their fundamental rights.
5. To intensify working contacts and co-operation with church related organisations, governmental institutions and other NGOs, wherever they consider this appropriate.

Windhoek, 28 January 2000

Statement on the Democratic Republic of Congo

We, the JPIC contact persons and resource persons of the UEM member churches in Africa, Asia and Germany have met in Windhoek, Namibia from 22-28 January 2000 for a workshop on »Justice and Reconciliation«.

We have been informed of the atrocities of the ongoing war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and we are very much concerned about its consequences, which are worsening the already deplorable socio-economic situation of the population. We have heard from the DRC delegates of the way in which natural resources are taken out of the country, while the population is suffering under rampant poverty. Many people are displaced or living as refugees in neighbouring countries.

We call for the rapid implementation of the Lusaka agreements, and invite the Congolese citizens to settle their conflict through dialogue and reconciliation, as was indicated in Lusaka. We therefore condemn the violations of those agreements by any side. We look forward to the deployment of UN peacekeeping forces in the country.

We express our solidarity with the victims of that war, especially the child soldiers, civilians, women and children, and we invite the international community to address the conflict in Congo more seriously, so that further bloodshed can be avoided. We advocate the inviolability of national borders inherited from colonial times. We ask the belligerents to be responsible for security on their own side of the border, and we condemn any aggression by an external sovereign state.

We express our solidarity with the churches of Congo in their efforts to bring the belligerents together for a pacific solution to the internal political conflict. We also affirm the support of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) for making these encounters possible. We support the idea of the churches in Congo to hold an international conference on the Great Lakes Region, based on justice, forgiveness and reconciliation.

We invite the other churches and church institutions throughout the world, and especially in the countries involved in the conflict in DRC, to support the initiative of the Churches of Congo, so that they are able to effectively play their prophetic role as peacemakers.

Statement on Indonesia

We express our profound sympathy for all who have suffered as a result of the continuing violence in Indonesia and regret the loss of lives of both Muslims and Christians in the Moluccan islands. While appreciating the policy of the government to strengthen the National Commission on Human Rights, we are deeply concerned about the failure of the security forces to restore law and order, to end the killings in the Moluccans, Aceh and Papua (Irian Jaya) and to respond to the aspirations of the people in a just, democratic and peaceful way. We strongly encourage immediate and peaceful dialogue among religious groups, in particular between Muslims and Christians, which may help to restore peace and harmony in the country. We support a dialogue on truth and reconciliation, involving all parties concerned, and ask the Indonesian government to end the practice of impunity.

Furthermore, we ask for the continuance of the investigation into the violations of human rights in the areas of Biak and Timika (Papua), and to bring those responsible to court. We appeal to the government to speed up the demilitarisation in Papua (Irian Jaya). We strongly appeal to the Indonesian government to continue the national dialogue and to provide a democratic process in reviewing the political status of Papua.

Statement on Sri Lanka

We express our deep concern for the current situation in Sri Lanka, which continues to inflict immense suffering on innocent people belonging to all communities. We assure them of our continued prayers and support. We grieve for the children, who

have to face untold hardships resulting from the conflict, and we deplore the fact that they are being used as combatants in the conflict.

We appeal to all parties involved in the conflict, to resolutely commit themselves to a negotiated settlement.

We appeal to the expatriate Sri Lankan community and to the international community as a whole to do all within their means to facilitate such a settlement.

A Word of Welcome

Soritua Nababan

1. Let me first of all greet you warmly, and welcome you cordially to this workshop. On your behalf I would like to thank our host-church, the ELCRN, represented by Bishop Petrus Diergaardt, and the local committee for their warm welcome and preparation. I also want to thank Dr. Jochen Motte and his colleagues for the good preparation of this workshop.

2. This workshop is the first tri-continental international programme of the UEM in this new century and the last within this first four-year period, i.e. before the UEM General Assembly. We will hear later from the Executive Secretary what is expected of us through this workshop. Suffice for me to note that indeed this workshop is so important, not only because of its substance, but also because it can indicate how we in the UEM – our churches in three continents – will develop our joint activities in the future. The fresh context of this new decade and century invites us to cope with the challenges, as to how we have to organise ourselves in the future, in order to be more effective, credible and meaningful for the very purpose of the UEM.

3. We have come to this country to learn from the experiences of our sisters and brothers in this part of the world – Namibia and South Africa – on Justice and Reconciliation. This is reflected in our agenda. While this theme will be explored and expanded tomorrow, allow me to make some general remarks.

4. Firstly, for many of our churches there is still the urgent need to create, broaden and enhance awareness on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. JPIC is still seen as something alien to the common people's religion, and still seems to be the concern of a very few individuals – generally speaking, those who are, unfortunately, not yet involved in making decisions on the activities of their church. This lack of awareness is also related to poor knowledge of JPIC, the almost complete lack of provision for the members of the congregations of a Biblical explanation for the clear relationship between JPIC and our faith, and the inability of pastors and teachers to help the congregations to see that JPIC is at the heart of the Gospel. For example the inability of many Lutherans to see the relation between »justification by faith« and the call to strive for justice in daily life. Or, the difficulty of many pastors in recognising that e.g. basic justice involves overcoming patterns of exclusion and enhan-

cing participation by everyone. And basic justice is for all. Can our churches, the communion of believers, be the place to learn and to practice JPIC?

5. Secondly, as a consequence of the first point, our churches are not able to demonstrate that JPIC should be lived by every Christian and by the churches as a communion. Only if believers live up to JPIC can they be credible. In many instances it seems as if our churches are deaf. For example:

a) The 1987 Sao Paulo Call (a meeting organised by the WCC on »Churches, Christians and Economic Systems: A call for Obedient Discipleship«) stated e.g.: »The prevailing economic systems are in their foundation contrary to the intention of God's creation, resulting in poverty, injustice and death [...] (while) the structures of the powerful, mainline Western churches – not only Western, but also most of our churches – are aligned with, reflect, defend, benefit from, and are also imprisoned by these systems of death«;
b) Another appeal was heard at the 1991 WCC Assembly: »We Christians are fully part of the structures of our time [...] The challenge now is to change these structures from within. While Christians used to send missionaries to foreign countries, the challenge today lies in mission into foreign structures (i.e. in all our countries), in the sense of institutions and institutional arrangements that must be considered foreign to the gospel of justice and love.« Can we identify any church, including UEM member churches, which responds or tries to respond to this call? If we want to carry out this mission to foreign structures, we must make a start in our worship, where patterns of exclusion are overcome and participation by everyone is enhanced.

6. Thirdly, while we hail the fall of the Berlin-wall – symbolically considered as the beginning of the globalisation era, which was followed by the collapse of the iron-curtain and the withering of the bamboo screen, and while people adore capitalism and the free market, which enable them to achieve more gain and profit, we find ourselves in a threefold crisis – almost parallel to JPIC, but on the other hand, of course, contrary to JPIC, i.e.:

– in the crisis of increasing poverty – a cry for Justice;
– in the crisis of social disintegration caused also by intra-state collective violence on the one hand and jobless growth on the other hand – a thirst for Peace;
– in the crisis of environmental destruction – a longing for the Integrity of Creation.

I quote from the UN 1993 Human Rights Report:

1980 – 1993 the largest corporations dropped 4.4 million jobs, while increasing their sales by a factor of 1.4, their assets by a factor of 2.3 and compensation for their

CEO's by a factor of 6.1. In Western Europe 1 in 10 is unemployed, in Asia and Africa the number is higher.

What I am aiming at is that we should try to be context-conscious of our era. We find ourselves in the midst of the globalisation era with its impacts on the life of the churches – this is not a pessimistic view, but an appeal to cope with the risks (external and manufactured) involved. It is a call for active risk-taking. Even dinosaurs become extinct, because they do not know how to cope with new situations.

7. One more remark: In the part of the world where I come from, even Christians have a peculiar understanding of peace as being a period of relative calm and tranquillity between conflicts and wars, without a mention of justice. But peace is the fruit of justice. Peace – shalom – is founded on right relations between individuals as well as peoples, the right order among people and among nations, which is also connected with well-being and welfare. In fact the socio-economic dimension of shalom is balance-equilibrium, which is quoted in Exodus 16,18 (c.f. 2 Corinthians 8,13-15). As much as Justice and Peace are rooted in God, so too is reconciliation. The initiator and actor of reconciliation is God – and the call is »be reconciled to God« (2. Corinthians 5,19-20). In other words, out of the experience of my church, reconciliation starts when conflicting parties are ready to be reconciled by God, and, therefore, is not a purely horizontal negotiable affair. Only when we experience forgiveness are we enabled to forgive, and that is the moment to start a process of reconciliation. And it is within this framework that justice is restored.

8. With these brief remarks I wish you a blessed and creative workshop – so God help us and bless us!

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Reconciliation and Justice

WOLFRAM KISTNER

Introduction

The Preamble of the Constitution of South Africa that was adopted on 8 May 1996 summarises its objective of laying the foundation for a new political order differing fundamentally from that of the apartheid regime. The first of the tasks of the elected representatives of the people of South Africa mentioned in the Preamble is outlined as follows: »to heal the divisions of the past and to establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights«.[1] These words express a strong determination to take care that generally accepted principles of justice and human rights are protected in the new South Africa. The Constitution provides for the establishment of several institutions with extensive powers, which are to ensure that these principles are implemented: the Constitutional Court, the Human Rights Commission, the Gender Equality Commission, the Public Protector and others. At the same time, the Preamble expects the legislators to ensure that the legacy of past injustices is overcome. Two Commissions are given a high responsibility in this regard: The Commission for the Restoration of Land Rights and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

In relation to our topic, the circumstances which led to the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, prior to the inauguration of the present Constitution, require careful attention: A serious crisis had to be resolved in the negotiations between the two hostile political camps about preparing the way for the first non-racial democratic elections, and the handing over of power by the apartheid regime. Being aware of the terrible human rights violations that had been committed by many within the ranks of its supporters, as well as by key functionaries in its structures and its security forces, the National Party insisted on a general amnesty for all politically motivated crimes. Those negotiating on behalf of the liberation movements were not prepared to grant such a concession.[2] It would have undermined their

1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Act 108 of 1996.

2 A. Boraine/J. Levy/R. Scheffer (ed.): Dealing with the Past. Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa. IDASA. Cape Town, 1994.p.138-140.

credibility among their members and, in general, among black South Africans. They were prepared to agree only to a conditional amnesty.

The solution that was found in the impasse is reflected in general guidelines for amnesty legislation to be passed by the new Parliament after the general election. The guidelines were incorporated into the Interim Constitution[3] in a passage under the heading »National Unity and Reconciliation«. It was added as the final section to the Preamble and became known as the »Postamble«[4]. The guidelines laid down in it envisage an amnesty legislation »on the basis that there is a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for ›ubuntu‹ but not for victimisation«. The style of the Postamble resembles the liturgy of a worship service. Its ending, with the first line of the new national anthem – originally a church hymn – encourages South Africans to rely on spiritual resources, empowering them to transcend what normally lies within human potential.

In history, examples of nations achieving a new understanding after a past characterised by extreme strife and human rights violations without vengeance and retaliation, are rare.

My contribution will be an attempt to describe and evaluate, from the limited perspective of a retired South African pastor, what the Commission has achieved and what it has failed to achieve. The first section will be an overview of its mandate, its structures and its work, the second an overview of its achievements, its limitations and the responses within and outside South Africa to its activities. In the third section the outcome of the whole process will be summarised.

I. The Mandate, the Structure and the Work of the TRC

The release of prominent political leaders from imprisonment and the lifting of the ban on hitherto prohibited political organisations at the beginning of the year 1990, stimulated the search in South Africa for a peaceful transition from a society that had experienced repression, conflict, and violence for decades to a democratic dispensation, based on the rule of law. Politicians, theologians, lawyers, philosophers, journalists and others participated in the discussion and exchanged views. The Institute for Democratic Alternatives organised conferences on this issue and took pains to

3 An Interim Constitution was introduced at the end of January 1994 as a framework for the first democratic election and for the transition to a new political order. This new order was to be consolidated by a new Constitution after the general election. A number of basic principles laid down in the Interim Constitution to be adopted later by a democratically elected Parliament.

4 Government Gazette, 28 January 1994, Act No 200, 1993 p.180.

ensure that account was taken of the experiences of other countries, which had had to cope with a similar transition.[5]

The Nuremberg trial of German war criminals, which took place in the wake of World War II, received careful attention by the experts in South Africa, who sought to work out proposals for a peaceful transition to democracy. They soon found that it could not be an appropriate model for the task South Africans were facing[6]. In spite of its merits and its contributions to international law the Nuremberg trial had caused bitterness among the German people. It had been initiated by the victorious Allies after a crushing military defeat of another nation.

The attempt of other countries to secure a peaceful transition from a dictatorial regime to democracy, by instituting a truth commission appeared to offer a better model for a solution in South Africa. Truth commissions had been set up in other countries in similar situations as temporary bodies for the investigation of human rights violations. Their main objective was to discover and publicly disclose the crimes that had been committed, with the view to avoiding their repetition in the future.[7] However, it soon became clear that such commissions have not in all cases ensured respect for law and order in the new dispensation.

Recent events in Chile offer an example of a truth commission that made a comprehensive effort to disclose the crimes that had been committed. Nevertheless, it found its objective largely foiled as a result of the continuing control of the leaders of the previous military regime over the army. Here the government under President Alwyn established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1990. It produced an extensive report on the human rights violations committed by the military government. The report was widely discussed in public. However, prosecutions proved to be difficult. The military government had passed an amnesty law before handing over power to an elected political authority. The amnesty covered the period of the worst excesses, in which thousands of people were killed or disappeared. The Supreme Court upheld the amnesty and thereby limited prosecutions.[8]

5 A. Boraine/j. Levy/R. Scheffer (ed.): Dealing with the Past, Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa. IDASA. Cape Town, 1994.
A. Boraine/J. Levy (ed.): The healing of a Nation. Justice in Transition. Cape Town, 1995.

6 Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report of South Africa, Cape Town, 1998. Vol. I, p.5.

7 A. Chapman: Coming to Terms with the Past. Truth Justice and Reconciliation. Unpublished paper presented at a conference on »The TRC: Commissioning the Past«, organised by the History Workshop, University of Witwatersrand and the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.

8 A.Boraine/J. Levy/R. Scheffer: Dealing with the Past. IDASA. Cape Town, 1994. p.47-53.

The South Africans, working out proposals for a peaceful transition, opted for a truth commission for dealing with the crimes during the apartheid regime. At the same time, they aimed at avoiding the large-scale impunity that had foiled the process in Chile. The solution they suggested lies somewhere in the middle, between that of the Nuremberg trial and that of Chile. Their suggestions were taken account of in the amnesty law of July 1995, under the heading »Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act«[9].

The law came into effect in December 1995 after the President had appointed 17 Commissioners from a list drawn up by a special committee, which had screened the numerous proposals submitted by members and institutions of civil society. The selection was guided by the concern that the Commissioners should be people of high standing in the eyes of the public, but of low political profile. Care was to be taken to avoid suspicions that party-political interests were represented in the Commission. The State President asked Archbishop Desmond Tutu to be chairperson of the Commission. The first meeting was held on 16 December 1995, the national holiday formerly known as »Covenant Day« in memory of the battle between the Zulu army and the Voortrekkers at Blood River in 1838, but renamed as »Reconciliation Day« in the new South Africa.

The main provisions of the Act are summarised in the following four points:

1. The Act provided for amnesty for politically motivated gross human rights violations, authorised or endorsed by a political authority during the time of the apartheid regime, on condition that the perpetrator disclose the full truth about what had happened, and could prove some reasonable relationship between the political objective and the human rights violations. The time frame for the crimes for which amnesty could be applied was 1 March 1960 to 10 May 1994. Amnesty applications could be submitted by members of any organisation involved in the South African conflict, be it in support of the apartheid system or in the struggle against it. The opportunity to apply for amnesty was restricted to the perpetrators of the most extreme human rights violations such as killings, abductions and torture.

2. Although the conflict about the granting of amnesty had been the original reason for introducing such legislation, the Act shifted the focus away from amnesty for perpetrators towards giving those, who had been the victims of human rights violations, the opportunity to tell their story in public and to expose the evils of the apartheid system. The human dignity of those, who had resisted injustice and had been defamed by the apartheid regime in many ways, had to be restored. »Reconciliation

9 Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Truth and Reconciliation Report. Cape Town, 1998. Vol. I. p.52-53.

through Truth« was the title and the contents of a book by several authors, who were involved in devising the process.[10]

3. The Act also made provision for recording and giving publicity to the crimes that had been committed, to ensure that something similar did not happen again in the future. The insight underlying this principle has been highlighted by Archbishop Tutu, the chairperson of the Commission. At the beginning of his new book on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process he refers to the words of the philosopher George Santanyana, quoted as the inscription at the entrance to the museum on the site of the notorious concentration camp established by the Nazi regime in Dachau: »Those who cannot remember the past are bound to repeat it.«[11]

4. The Act provided for recommendations to be made by the Commission to the government concerning reparations to people who had suffered from the human rights violations.

The Commission had the right to subpoena people to give evidence. Its work was to be undertaken by three committees. Their functions and powers were defined by law:

- The Amnesty Committee was instituted to receive, investigate, and grant or refuse amnesty applications. It was to be comprised, primarily, of legal experts. No appeals could be granted against its decisions.
- The Human Rights Violations Committee was to receive evidence on gross human rights violations and to carry out investigations of such violations.
- The Reparations and Rehabilitation Committee had the task of gathering evidence on the damage and harm caused to people by gross human rights violations and to work out and submit to the government recommendations for their rehabilitation.

The Commission opened regional offices in different parts of the country and employed researchers to carry out its investigations. It trained statement takers and established a network throughout the country, to collect evidence from people who had suffered from gross human rights violations. It also enlisted the help of trained experts in psychology, who could support those giving evidence as well as staff members hearing evidence, and help them to cope with their traumatic experiences. It carried out hearings all over the country and took steps to provide extensive media coverage.

The Commission started its work on 16 December 1995 and submitted its preliminary report of five volumes to the State President on 29 October 1998. The following

10 K.Asmal/L.Asmal/S. Roberts: Reconciliation through Truth. A reckoning of apartheid's criminal governance. David Philip Publishers. Cape Town/Johannesburg, 1996.

11 D. Tutu: No future without forgiveness. Rider. London/Sidney/Auckland/Johannesburg, 1999.p.12.

figures can only convey a modest impression of the workload, with which the Commission had to contend in a limited period of time, and under tremendous psychological pressure amidst much suspicion and accusations raised against its activities: 21,300 individuals filed gross human rights violations petitions with the Commission[12]; by 30 June 1998 the Amnesty Committee had finalised 4,443 amnesty applications and granted 122 amnesties; 2,684 amnesty applications had not yet been finalised.[13]

II. Achievements and Limitations of the TRC and responses to its work

Achievements

1. The Commission comprised members of diverse cultural, ideological, religious and racial backgrounds. In his overview of its work the chairperson remarks »that the meetings during the first year or so were hell«[14]. The fact that the Commission managed to work together as a team in spite of many and serious tensions, and in spite of the traumatic sharing of the pain of the people giving evidence during the hearings, is, in itself, an astounding achievement and a model of reconciliation in the new South Africa.

2. Through the hearings the Commission has given many people, who had experienced gross human rights violations, an opportunity to speak in public for the first time about their suffering. Their human dignity and the dignity of those who lost their lives in the conflict were affirmed.

3. The hearings brought to light the astounding willingness to forgive, prevailing among the many people suffering from the consequences of human rights violations. This willingness to forgive can be an invaluable asset for the future of South Africa.

4. The Commission went out of its way to facilitate encounters between perpetrators of injustice and the people who had suffered from their crimes.

5. Although the Commission had to limit the number of incidents about which evidence could be given at the hearings, it was in a position to collect extensive data for an overall understanding of the apartheid system and its structures, and of the context in which the crimes were committed, as well as of the role which the various institutions played in backing up the crimes. Many of the crimes would probably not

12 Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report of South Africa. Cape Town, 1998. Vol. I. p.34.

13 Ibid, p.276.

14 D. Tutu: No future without forgiveness. Rider. London/Sydney/Auckland/Johannesburg, 1999. p.70.

have come to light without the work of the Commission. The insights into the structures and the working of the apartheid system have affirmed the conviction, widely prevailing in the international community, that apartheid was a crime against humanity. They are a constant reminder to the people of South Africa to be on the alert in future, to ensure that what has happened never happens again. The hearings have shown that systems, practices and ideologies of race discrimination have an inherent trend towards genocide.

6. The continuous media coverage of the ongoing work of the Commission, the careful documentation and, finally, the comprehensive report of five volumes, compiled and published in a relatively short time – in spite of some weaknesses, is an extraordinary achievement. All the material that has been gathered and registered will be an invaluable resource for South Africans and also for people in other countries, helping them to recognise those aspects of religious life, culture, legislation, education and the economy, which will require special attention in the future.

7. The research, the media and the publications of the Commission have made it possible for every South African to recognise what has happened. They have made it necessary for each person to consider his or her own share in the responsibility for the crimes of the past and for the continuing injustice, and to examine the implications for his or her future involvement in the life of South African society.

8. The hearings and the research work connected with them, have enabled the Commission to work out proposals for efforts to overcome the divisions caused by the apartheid system and for measures to be taken in the new South Africa.

9. The hearings and the findings of the Commission are of particular value for the churches and other religious communities in examining their role during the time of the apartheid regime. Many of those, who were involved in the most atrocious human rights violations, were Christians participating regularly in worship services. Some even believed that the crimes in which they were involved were necessary for the promotion of the kingdom of God. Churches, ministers and congregations should raise the question: How has the Gospel been proclaimed and the Christian faith been practised at the time of the apartheid regime?[15] What lessons do we, as Christians, have to learn for our involvement in South African society and for our task in bearing witness to the Gospel?

10. The example set by the Commission of listening to suffering people, encouraging them to speak about their suffering and attending to their pain, has had important spin-offs. The records of the hearings are an educational tool for teaching South Africans to listen carefully to people, who otherwise have seldom had an opportu-

15 C.W. du Toit (ed.): Confession and Reconciliation. A Challenge to the churches, Research Institute for Theology and Religion, Unisa. Pretoria, 1998. p.9-11.

nity to articulate their experiences. Possibly the poverty hearings, organised by a number of non-government organisations, can be regarded as a spin-off of the hearings organised by the Commission.

Limitations

Any attempt to outline the limitations of the Commission and to consider its weaknesses and mistakes, has to take the following factors into account:

– The Commission was bound by a legal framework, which emerged from a political compromise between two parties involved in a bitter and bloody conflict.

– The Commission embarked on an unprecedented venture of promoting restorative justice in a crime-ridden and disrupted society. It tried to avoid the difficulties and mistakes of similar ventures in other countries. In taking this course it could not foresee the enormity of its task and the difficulties that would crop up in the course of its work.

– The limited time given to the Commission to carry out its assignment, and the effects of the disclosure of heinous crimes that had been committed, put an enormous strain on the Commission and all its staff members.

Provided that these factors are taken into consideration, it can be helpful to take account of the limitations of the work of the Commission, for the sake of rectifying their effects, as far as that is possible.

1. In explaining and trying to promote an understanding for its concerns, the Commission initially tended to announce its objectives in a way that awakened far reaching expectations in the public, particularly with regard to the healing of wounds in South African society. According to its terms of reference, the main task of the Commission was to disclose the crimes that were committed. This was an important and indispensable contribution towards reconciliation, but did not, in itself, constitute healing. In many respects the wounds have been opened and have not yet been healed. The Commission laid the foundation for a process of healing that was bound to remain incomplete, particularly in view of the limited time that was available.

2. The Commission has rightly highlighted the great openness and preparedness it experienced in the hearings through the statements of those people who have been the target of heinous human rights violations. Nevertheless, insufficient account was taken of the ups and downs in the emotional life of those, who have to cope with such a past, and with the fact that the same people often make contradictory statements about their willingness to forgive. There is good reason to assume that for many people the healing process will take many years and will require support. Moreover, the statements of the Commission concerning their preparedness to forgive, come mainly from the limited number of people who had direct contact with its work and who participated in the hearings. It is not clear whether, and how far, the statements are representative for South African society as a whole.

3. Possibly the most important driving and energising forces in the work of the Commission were the following unshakeable convictions of its chairperson, Archbishop Desmond Tutu. These were convictions rooted in the Christian faith that were shared by others in the Commission and in South African society:
– Even the most diabolical act does not turn a perpetrator into a demon.
– A distinction has to be made between the sinner and sin.
– Every human, if subjected to certain conditions, is capable of committing heinous crimes.
– No person, even one who has committed the most serious crime, is beyond God's compassion and beyond God's potential to change the attitude and the life of such a person.[16]
On the other hand, precisely on the basis of these convictions, questions have to be raised, which have received insufficient attention:
– Does a perpetrator's healing process not require some opportunity for him or her to contribute towards building up new relationships in society that expresses an awareness of the seriousness of the crime that has been committed?[17]
– Are there enough opportunities for the many people in South African society, who have suffered and who have not had the opportunity to give evidence before the TRC, to express their pain and their anger in the context of a process that aims at forgiving and healing? Is the lack of such an opportunity one of the factors that explains the slide of many people into criminal violence after the violence practised in the political context has come to an end?[18]

4. The guidelines for the Amnesty Committee for granting an amnesty encountered much criticism. The Committee was under an obligation to grant an amnesty if the conditions of truthfulness of the evidence, of a political motive and of authorisation and the proportionality of the act in relation to the objective were fulfilled. This applied, even if the applicant showed no signs of remorse or repentance. It could not hold an applicant responsible for making amends, in some way or another, for the damage that had been sustained by the victim of the crime. There are indications that many such people insist that the perpetrator must be made responsible for what he or she did.

5. The hearings of the Commission mainly served the purpose of bringing to light the human rights violations of individuals. It did not provide the same opportunity to

16 D. Tutu: No future without forgiveness. Rider. London/Sydney/Auckland/Johannesburg, 1999. p.73-77.
17 A. Chapman: Coming to terms with the past. Truth Justice and or Reconciliation. Unpublished paper presented to a conference on »The TRC: Commissioning the past« at the University of the Witwatersrand, 11-14 June 1999.
18 G. Simpson: A brief evaluation of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Some lessons for societies in transition? Unpublished article.

expose the human rights violations inherent in the apartheid system, such as the forced removals, the homeland system and the Bantu education system. Moreover, the hearings' concentration on the most obvious and extreme violations could have the effect of diverting attention from the responsibility of many South Africans who did not directly participate in criminal acts, but allowed them to happen. Many South Africans benefited from the injustices inherent in the political system.

6. Tensions arose again and again between the government and the Commission on the issue of »even-handedness«. Can people involved in crimes, in the context of their struggle against a fundamentally unjust system, be held accountable in the same way as people who defended a system of fundamental injustice, and who were backed up by all the instruments of the power of the state: the security forces, the emergency laws, financial resources, the administrative and communication infrastructure? Controversies on this issue absorbed much of the Commission's energy and diverted it from its main concern to articulate the voices of the people who had suffered from human rights violations.

7. Party-political power struggles weakened the impact of the work of the Commission. The Inkatha Freedom Party refused to co-operate. The withdrawal of the National Party from the Government of National Unity had the effect that it no longer shared in the common responsibility with the ANC to support the work of the Commission. The two parties tended, rather, to exploit the work of the Commission for the purpose of mutual accusation.

8. The distinction between victim and perpetrator was indispensable in the hearings on the human rights violations. On the other hand, it was too simple and did not adequately demonstrate the diverse factors, which can lead to the eruption of violent conflicts in some communities, and which have to be taken into account, if peaceful and more just human relationships are to be promoted.

Responses

1. The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has generally received high praise in countries outside South Africa. Numerous books have been written or are being written on the TRC, and research projects have been initiated that make use of its material and its experiences. Its approach to promoting reconciliation and restorative justice is widely regarded as a model for other countries and societies trying to cope with the legacy of similar conflicts.

2. Within South Africa the response to the work of the TRC is far more diverse than outside the country:

– Critical voices can be heard, particularly from South Africans who had experiences of extreme human rights violations at the time of the apartheid regime, and who feel that their concerns have not been adequately considered. There appears to be a widespread demand for some form of punishment for those involved in serious cri-

mes, or for some contribution to reparation on their part. Many people expect compensation and help from the government.
– On the whole, the response of the South African churches and of other faith communities to the work of the TRC has been positive. However, until now, the follow-up work undertaken by churches in an effort to heal the wounds that are still open, has reached out only to a limited section of the church constituency and South African society.
– Generally, the work of the TRC appears to have made a very limited impression on the lives of many white South Africans.
– In South African academic circles the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is, on the whole, appreciated as a comprehensive and unprecedented attempt at paving the way for restorative justice that merits careful study and attention from the perspective of the different disciplines. The following are examples of critiques that have been articulated by academics from different disciplines:

- The theologian Prof. Tinyiko Maluleke at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg draws attention to the silence on the TRC within wide sections of the people of South Africa. To him, this silence is informative. Many white and many black South Africans keep silent on this issue for widely differing reasons. Generally, whites do not want to speak about the TRC because it raises feelings of guilt among them. Many black people keep silent on the TRC because they feel that the amnesty provisions are unjust and do not take seriously the hurt that has been caused to the victims. In his view, the TRC has mixed up theological and legal considerations, with the result that the understanding of justice as well as that of reconciliation becomes unclear.[19]
- At the University of Cape Town Prof. Mahmood Mamdani, a historian and political scientist with great expertise on the history of the African continent, has pointed out that the TRC has concentrated on exposing and bringing to light the most extreme human rights violations during the time of the apartheid regime. These crimes have, however, been committed by a relatively small number of people. The great number of South Africans, who, in one way or another, have benefited from the apartheid system and its injustices, are left out of consideration. In fact, the concentration on the most abhorrent crimes diverts from the responsibility of the beneficiaries of the unjust system. The beneficiaries continue to enjoy their privileges as if nothing has happened.[20]

19 M. Guma/L. Milton: An African Challenge to the Church in the 21st century. Cape Town 1997. P.109-132. Contribution by T.S. Maluleke.
20 Southern Africa Review of Books, Nov./Dec.1996. Article by M. Mamdani on »Reconciliation without Justice«.

– In his evaluation of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission Dr Graeme Simpson, the Director of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, shows a high appreciation for its work. For him the TRC arrangement represents a fusion of an amnesty process with a truth recovery and a reparative component from which lessons can be learnt by other societies in a process of transition. The combination of the legal dimension of a search for truth concerned with fact-finding, and the psycho-social dimension concerned with story telling and experiences, was a serious dilemma in the hearings of the Commission. Like Prof. Maluleke he has reservations about a soft understanding of reconciliation. True reconciliation in South African society can be achieved, only, by integrating the anger, sorrow, trauma and various other complex feelings of victims, rather than by suppressing them. In his view, the violence and conflict have not been overcome in South Africa. Rather, the forms and expression of violent conflict have changed and shifted in nature. Reconciliation initiatives must tackle the deep rooted social imbalances, which underpin the culture of violence.[21]

III. The outcome

The work of the Commission was designed to be open-ended. A comprehensive report with recommendations for follow-up work had to be submitted to the State President. The findings and the recommendations were intended to be considered by the government as well as by civil society. The outcome of the work of the TRC, therefore, depends largely on the responses of the public and on the follow-up work in state and society. At present, an evaluation is premature. However, it is possible to consider issues that have come to the fore since the publication of the Report. They will have an effect on the outcome. The following issues require our attention: continuing prosecution of politically motivated crimes under the apartheid regime; reparation and rehabilitation; the healing of the nation; and the issue of national sovereignty.

Continuing prosecution of apartheid regime related crimes?
In his recently published account of the TRC process, Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes the purpose underlying the provisions for making amnesty accessible to offenders in return for disclosure, as follows: Amnesty was to be »the carrot of possible freedom« in exchange for truth. At the same time, amnesty was to be the stick

21 G. Simpson: A brief evaluation of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Some lessons for societies in transition. Unpublished article.

because of the »prospect of lengthy prison sentences for those already in gaol, and the probability of arrest, prosecution and imprisonment for those still free«.[22]

Towards the end of the TRC process it became clear that there were still many people who, possibly, were guilty of serious human rights violations, but who had not applied for amnesty. The question arose: Should the stick still be applied against such people? Had the time not now come to let the past be the past? In KwaZulu-Natal the two main political parties, the ANC and the Inkatha Party, have made progress in improving their relations, and in joint efforts to bring politically motivated violence to an end. Would the threat of continuing prosecutions not endanger this progress? Other arguments against continuing prosecutions, are the high costs to the state and the inability of the already overburdened courts to deal with a great number of such complicated cases.

In responding to a question in a synod of the Church of the Province of South Africa, the chairperson of the Human Rights Commission, Dr Barney Pityana, who, at the same time is an Anglican priest, expressed, in a private capacity, his views on TRC related issues. He argued that the prosecutions should come to an end. Not an amnesty, but an indemnity should be pronounced. Prof. Charles Villa-Vicencio, the former Director of Research in the TRC, has made a more cautious suggestion. In his view the National Directorate of Public Prosecutions should be relieved of the »duty to prosecute« and should be allowed discretion in selecting only some cases for prosecution. He admits that this would be a compromise and a messy way of handling the situation. However, it would have the advantage of avoiding outright impunity.[23]

Until now the issue of continuing prosecutions has not yet been resolved. The question arises: How would the different ways forward, which have been suggested, affect the credibility of the work undertaken by the TRC, and how would they affect the emotions of the many people who have been affected by gross human rights violations? This question is also of concern to the perpetrators, who have applied for amnesty and appeared before the TRC.

Reparation and Rehabilitation

The number of South Africans who submitted statements on gross human rights violations was far greater than that of the people who were admitted to give evidence at the hearings. Many of the people who made statements expect some reparation to relieve their plight. The Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee of the TRC has submitted recommendations to the government to support those South Africans who have given evidence on the violations they experienced. Until now, very limited

22 D. Tutu: No future without forgiveness. Rider. London/Sydney/Auckland/Johannesburg, 1999. p.34.

23 New South Africa Outlook, October 1999. p.9.

steps have been taken by the authorities to follow them up. Obviously, budgetary constraints impose limitations on the government. However, for victims who have suffered from politically motivated crimes, the degree to which their plight is recognised by some sort of assistance, is not an issue of the budget, but of respect for the price they had to pay and the contribution they have made.

The relevance of the task of rehabilitation to the renewal of relationships in South African society cannot easily be overestimated. Perpetrators and sufferers of injustice depend on one another for such renewal. Their ability to contribute towards a new South Africa is interlocked.[24] It is not only the perpetrator of injustice and the beneficiary who continues to benefit from apartheid that have to be transformed. At the same time the person or the group, which has been the target of oppression, has to be empowered to be prepared to forgive. This does not mean that feelings of retaliation have to be repressed, but that they should be integrated into a process of forgiveness, in which the energies are redirected and used for co-operation between survivors and perpetrators of human rights violations, for the sake of a common future.

On the basis of my own personal experience, I have come to the conclusion that the primary potential and initiative for such mutual liberation lies with those who have had the experience of being treated as discarded people. There is scarcely a more powerful means of changing hardened people in privileged positions than an encounter with those, whom they disregard, if the latter assert their dignity and are prepared, at the same time, to accept their counterpart and express their willingness to forgive. If this insight is correct, the transformation of South African Society, depends, to a considerable extent, on the people who have been marginalised for decades if not centuries. Can we expect such a contribution from them if they continue to be marginalised in the new South Africa, if the resources are not available to relieve their plight and if the gap between a limited number of well-to-do people and the majority who are either poor or destitute, continues to widen?

The healing of the nation

The objective of the TRC process has often been described as »healing the nation« or, alternatively, as »building the nation«. The Act providing the legal framework for the TRC is called »The Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act«. Reconciliation, here, is to serve the purpose of achieving or strengthening national unity. However, questions arise if one takes the concepts of nation and national unity seriously. Has South Africa ever been a nation before 1994? If it has not been a

24 Ibid, p.35.
G.Mueller-Fahrenholz: The Art of Forgiveness. Theological Reflections on Healing and Reconciliation. WCC Publications. Geneva, 1997. p.28.

nation, can that nation be healed?[25] If it has never been a nation and if the task is to build a nation, what type of nation are we aiming at? Do we take our concept of nation from the nation-states who have colonised Africa?

I suggest that the theological principles, which Archbishop Desmond Tutu has outlined in his book, and, in particular, his emphasis that no human being is out of the reach of God's compassion, makes it necessary for us to question the traditional concept of the nation-state and its understanding of national sovereignty. Sovereignty is originally a religious concept. It belongs alone to God. When, according to the tradition in the Hebrew Bible, God decided to give guidelines to the people he had delivered from bondage in Egypt on how to live a different life from that of surrounding nations, he brought it into the desert to a place where no ruler took control over what was to be recognised as right or wrong.[26] Here he told them how to live as a people belonging to the God that sees the plight of the oppressed. In Jesus, God has completely overturned the concept of sovereignty prevailing in empires, including the concept of national sovereignty of the modern state and including the assumption that states have to follow the principles inherent in an economy that develops according to its own laws.

Against this background, I suggest that churches, in their involvement in public responsibility, should search, in co-operation with people of other faiths and other people of goodwill, for a reconciliation in which not the healing of the nation or the building of the nation is the first priority, but the building of a humanity that transcends national identity and national interests. Only if the latter objective is observed as a priority, will nation states be prepared to comply with human rights principles, even in cases in which they do not serve what they consider to be their national interests.

In the first Volume of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, Namibia is called »the Achilles heel of the South African government«.[27] It was precisely the international status of Namibia, which provided the arguments for the liberation movements and the solidarity movements in other countries to contest South Africa's claim that apartheid was a domestic affair. For the churches, it was of high significance that bishop L. Auala, through his Open Letter from a theological perspective, took a stand against this claim.

25 S. Stacey: »A New South Africa: The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Vexed Nation-Building Project«. Unpublished lecture presented at a conference on »The TRC: Commissioning the Past«. University of Witwatersrand, 11-14 June 1999.

26 F. Cruesemann: Die Tora. Chr. Kaiser Verlag. München, 1992. p.75.

27 Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report. Cape Town, 1998.Vol. I. p.37.

Conclusion

In my view, the TRC process has been of great significance to South Africans in laying bare the apartheid system and exposing it as a crime against humanity. Disclosure of what has happened is a necessary first stepping stone towards the healing of the wounds. Whether the healing will succeed or not, depends not on the Commission, but on the follow-up work and the contributions of the people of South Africa, the state and the institutions of civil society. For me the most important contribution of the TRC lies in the issues it has placed on the agenda of the churches, the ecumenical movement and of the international community, at a time in which we are in the midst of a religious, cultural, economic and ecological crisis of global dimensions, which threatens the survival of humankind. In this crisis, churches and other religious communities are challenged to spell out their understanding of sin, forgiveness, reconciliation and restitution. In short, this means: in every worship service to spell out the topics that are of central importance.

With a view to our contribution, as churches, to reconciliation and justice on a global and national level, I would like to conclude with a passage from Paul's letter to the Romans: »I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.«

Dr Wolfram Kistner, a retired pastor and leading South African theologian, was a prominent figure in the anti-apartheid campaign, who, together with Dr C.F. Beyers Naudé ran the Ecumenical Advice Bureau in Braamfontein/Johannesburg from 1988-1997.

28 Rm.12,1-2.

Reconciliation from the Human Rights Perspective

Ngeno Nakamhela

Vote of appreciation

It is tremendous to be acknowledged, right at the beginning of the year 2000, as a »resource person«, and to be invited as such to participate in, and contribute to, the International JPIC Workshop 2000 on this crucial topic »Reconciliation and Justice«. I appreciate the acknowledgement and the invitation wholeheartedly, and thank the UEM for the confidence, singling out Rev. Henog Kamho, the ELCRN assistant secretary, and Dr. Jochen Motte who have honoured me with their request.

Focal point: Public Acknowledgement, Human Rights and Social Reconciliation

»God's promise of salvation to those who mourn, for those suffering injustice for righteousness' sake, for those who are poor and looked down upon, for those who struggle for peace against all adversity – points us to our calling in the world to turn to those suffering from injustice and violence, who are deprived of their natural conditions by poverty, war and persecution«.

This is a quotation from the »Recommendations of the JPIC Workshop of United in Mission, 1995«. I have opted for this quotation to start with, because it expresses the direction I wish to take in my contribution. Indeed, we have in Namibia, those who mourn because they are denied the right to know the truth about what happened to their relatives; we have in Namibia, those who are poor – the gap between the haves and the have-nots is widening, the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer; we have in Namibia, those who are looked down upon, rejected, not only by their relatives and next of kin simply because they are stigmatised as HIV/AIDS sufferers or as »spies«, but also despised by those who are supposed to defend and protect their rights and dignity, namely, church women and men. The question, to what extent the Church has been pro-active in embracing the stigmatised, so that others could learn from and follow them, can only be answered with disappointment. Except for the »Living Positively with AIDS« Campaign« from the Namibian Catholic Bishop's Conference, the Church has failed to take the first steps in the fight for the

rights of HIV-positive members of the community. Secular and legal institutions stood up in the fight for the rights of HIV-positive employees in the work place.

Fear and ignorance constitute a large part of the discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS.

It can be true that the discriminators believe themselves to be morally justified in their actions and attitudes. There is no such a thing as moral justification. Who, but the Church, can teach that? And this is the Church's responsibility.

Shameful as it is, Namibia, the Church included, has adopted a culture of non-admission to the wrongdoing, especially regarding mistakes made in the past, those being made at present and, I fear, the wrongdoing that will be committed in the future! The Church in Namibia has fallen victim to a culture of non-admission, a pain-inducing and upsetting culture of silence and a culture of fear. This has been well illustrated by the detainee issue. The attempt of the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN), to address this issue was meant to be a helpful and salutary guide for the churches, the SWAPO Party, the government, individuals and organisations to acknowledge their faults publicly.

The focus of the CCN was overwhelmed by misunderstanding/misinterpretation and was personalised. The Church attempted to demonstrate its commitment »to expiation, reconciliation, and renewal«, regarding itself as »well situated to take the lead« in an issue which carries national interest. Many people automatically looked towards the Church as responsible and most capable of fulfilling this social purging. This responsibility, which the people of Namibia automatically bestowed upon the Church, was a vote of great confidence, trust and faith in the '60s, '70s, and '80s. The Church must not take this trust for granted. Once the trust is breached, the confidence will be lost. It is doubtful if the Namibian Church still enjoys the trust it had in the early '90s, when angry Namibians showed their frustration with the Church for being absent, for being inactive. If it is the case that anger and frustration with the Church no longer exists, that means that we, as the Church, have lost that trust. The next time Namibians seek to have their rights, dignity etc. protected, and promoted land acknowledged, they will approach others: political parties, lawyers, traditional leaders; but not the unions, because they, too, have compromised their independence from the powers that be; they, too, have lost the trust of those who need protection against the powerful.

We may not tolerate a situation in which Namibians, who feel themselves unfairly and inequitably treated, believe that terrorism is the only means of getting what they feel they are entitled to. If the gap between the rich and the poor is growing wider, if there are many social and socio-economic circumstances which can possibly give rise to feelings of resentment, jealousy and powerlessness, then let us initiate a culture of dialogue now before it is too late, before the gap between »us« and »them« (whoever »we« or »they« may be), becomes so great that Namibians cannot

hear each other anymore. The one who turns to violence and criminal behaviour is the one who has given up on being heard in dialogue.

The Council's main point of focus was that »a public acknowledgement of fault might also assist many people, including the victims themselves, as well as the wrongdoers, to engage in dialogue and to negotiate the passage from the old frames of reference to the new, in which we do not act within the paradigm of resistance and acquiescence, but rather with autonomous self-responsibility«. Unfortunately this attempt was harassed by the SWAPO party and government, and by fear and distance from numerous Namibian church leaders.

This attitude, which I term »serious denial«, did not benefit the policy of national reconciliation in any way whatsoever, nor has it supported the process of healing. Instead, it has demonstrated how »superficial« our »national reconciliation« indeed is.

It is my belief, therefore, that conflicts should be resolved through negotiation and mediation, for the sake of justice, because justice is the basis of human rights and social reconciliation. We all know that people oppressed by economic, social and political systems, and those who experience injustice, should appeal to God to intervene, in order for their rights to be restored (Ps. 146,7-9). God's justice concerns social relationship and aims at creating an egalitarian community, in which all classes of people enjoy their basic rights.

God judges in favour of the oppressed. He establishes justice, reflected in the daily life of society and in the world at large, by eliminating inequality.

In several biblical passages, particularly in the Psalms and Prophets, God is portrayed as having a special concern for the poor, particularly the widow, the fatherless and the oppressed, Ps. 10,17-18:

»You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted, you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.«

Ps. 113,4-9: *»The Lord is exalted over all the nations, His glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, the One who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; He seats them with princes, with the princes of the people. He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the Lord«* (New International Version, NIV).

God's administration of justice concerns social relationship, and aims at creating a community, within which there are benefits and equal opportunities for all citizens, and in which all classes of people maintain their basic human rights.

Reconciliation, Human Rights and the Church's Identity Crisis

In this section I shall attempt to give my viewpoint and compare the Namibian Church of the '60s, '70s, and '80s I knew so well, and the Namibian Church of the '90s. The Namibian Church of the '60s, '70s, and '80s, unshakeably believed itself to have been the sole instrument in God's hand; it took God's Word and its authority very seriously. This applied to both the vertical as well as the horizontal relationships. The vertical relationship: the Church »obeyed God, not men« (Acts 5,29). In obedience to God and to the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, the Church was uncompromised and was visible locally, nationally, regionally and internationally. In short, the Church lived out its first loyalty, namely, to God, through carrying publicly the blame of the cross of Jesus.

The horizontal relationship: the Church in its prophetic role and moral responsibility was visible. It resisted the threats of everyday life, such as »divide-and-rule policies«, apartheid, discrimination on the basis of colour, race, religion or sex; it publicly condemned those things that contradicted its order, purpose and nature. Both the vertical and the horizontal relationships of the Church were intact during the time referred to above. I cannot recall any moment during those years when the Church was referred to as suffering from an identity crisis or as being silent, as I have so often heard since the independence of my country in 1990.

Examining reconciliation from the human rights perspective, and dealing with the issue of the Namibian Church's identity crisis in the '90s, one needs to bring into the picture the reason why the Church, in a way, lost sight of its role of promoting and defending human rights, even after the country gained independence, and after democracy was accepted as an indispensable companion of reconciliation, reconstruction, nation building and human rights exercises. One of the reasons may be that the Church has adopted a culture of compliance in its attempt to be on good terms with the rulers and the powerful! Seeking favour, striving to be in the good books; tempted to defend injustices and to keep the status quo; tempted to please itself, thereby misusing others in order to secure its own (leadership) position falsely, and manipulating God's people!

At no time, do I remember the Namibian Church, for example, welcoming the establishment of the National Society for Human Rights, let alone encouraging it to deal with human rights issues objectively and constructively. The Church did not do so probably for the mere fact that the founder and director of the Society and some of his staff members are known to be former SWAPO dissidents. He, like many others, will not be forgiven or offered reconciliation for having parted from SWAPO, and the Church, on the other hand, does not really keep company nor exercise solidarity with those who cut their ties with SWAPO or used to criticise its activities and its government.

It is well-known in the whole of Africa, if not across the entire globe, that Namibia has an admirable Constitution! The Namibian Church is aware of this. This, however, did not restore the Church's lost identity. On the contrary, the Namibian Church in its disposition to an endless »independence honeymoon« is failing to interpret, horizontally, the fundamental human rights and freedoms. It is neither my intention to discuss the Namibian Bill of Rights here, nor is it my intention to discuss all the fundamental human rights and freedoms that appear in Chapter 3 of the Namibian Constitution. Nevertheless, I am aware of the honour of making use of this august platform to refer to the fundamental human rights and freedoms that cannot be changed. The question we need to examine and resolve, is whether these rights refer only to the vertical application, for example, the state, or whether they also apply horizontally, i.e. between persons/citizens.

Let me take the liberty of referring specifically to, and quoting Article 8 of the said Bill, which deals with »Respect for Human Dignity«:

(1) The dignity of all persons shall be inviolable.

(2) (a) In any judicial proceedings or in other proceedings before any organ of the State, and during the enforcement of a penalty, respect for human dignity shall be guaranteed.

(b) No person shall be subject to torture or to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment.

Having quoted from Chapter 3 of the Namibian Constitution, the challenge now is whether these rights refer only to the vertical application such as in relation to the State and law enforcement institutions, or whether they also apply horizontally, that is between citizens, for example in protecting people who are stigmatised?

I mean to say that it is part of human rights and of reconciliation that an individual regain his or her dignity. It is, therefore, unacceptable that a person should be beaten up simply because he or she has exercised his or her constitutional right and freedom of association, e.g. with a new political party.

Here the Church must fulfil its responsibility to educate its members on tolerance, diversity and different political and sexual identities. The stigmatised ex-detainees are still living without dignity, in that they are not being afforded the opportunity of telling the truth, of living as Namibians without the stigma of being labelled as spies. We Namibians, we the Church of Jesus Christ, are denying them their dignity.

Namibia has chosen the path of »civil society« as the one that can secure stability. Space does not permit a discussion of civil society – and I do not claim to be a suitable person to attempt it, but some of the main characteristics are as follows:

– Asserting the rights of the individual as paramount over all other claims – including those of the state, as long as they do not attempt to overpower God's laws;

– Viewing the state and its officers as »servants« of the individual and public will and individual rights.

– Putting in place means and procedures by which conflicts can be mediated - a constitution, elections, law-making bodies, a legal system, procedures for the appointment of those who directly benefit from the resources of the state.

For the Namibian Church to recover from its identity crisis, reclaim its liberating social ministry and remain the guardian angel of human rights and reconciliation, it must insist upon, and indeed defend, the worth and dignity of the individual. Further, in order that reconciliation and human rights in relation to God, to fellow human beings and to the whole of creation, are understood and implemented, the Church must produce ambassadors through Christian education and training. The Church cannot afford to rely, exclusively, on secular schools. Only Church schools and education by Christian missions, especially in Africa, have succeeded in producing African leaders who respect human rights instead of generals.

In my view, however, the dilemma the Namibian Church is facing today is that many pastors, some of whom have responsibility as members of a Church or Circuit Councils, or as leaders of congregations, are simultaneously active participants in party politics. This situation has already contributed to discrediting the prophetic role of the Church and is a serious hindrance to the Church in its mandate to develop, promote and defend human rights and democratic, moral and Christian values.

Instead of human rights and reconciliation, the Church is becoming more power-oriented and cannot therefore take the lead in the forefront of critical solidarity, confessing mistakes and failures. It appears to be incapable of understanding victims, through whom genuine reconciliation is possible, because »it is through the victim that the wrongdoer is called to repentance and forgiveness«.

There was a time when people who entered the theological/pastoral profession did so because they were obediently following their calling. That time seems to be over. For many now this profession is just a means of achieving material wealth and political influence. How do we see this profession and how do believers, the members of our churches see us as their Church leaders? The Church is losing the moral high standing which it had in the ’60s, ’70s and ’80s. Without this moral high ground the Church cannot call the powerful to account, to repent, to take responsibility, and to reconcile.

Cracks, Reconciliation and Human Rights

At a »Forum for the Future« meeting, which took place in Windhoek last year, I was asked to speak on the topic: »Namibia in the 21st century: Are We Prepared?« Among other things, I said the following, and I quote: »Another task of Christians in the 21st century will be to see what they can do to slow the widening gap between the rich and the poor. This situation needs to be addressed in practical ways, so the

poor can begin to enjoy the attention they deserve. The rich of our nation need to understand the responsibility they have to share with the materially disadvantaged among us«.

The area of cracks is comprehensive. The black township Katutura – »Wir haben hier keine Bleibe«/«No place for us to stay« – is a symbol of poverty and a place for the materially disadvantaged. Other places with similar characteristics of poverty are, for example, »Vyf Rand« near Okahandja, and there are other crack areas such as Babylon, Okuryangava in the area surrounding Windhoek, where you can find the majority of poor people living under poor conditions, in poor housing – the so-called »Oumbashu«. This dehumanising situation is found in almost every town in Namibia.

Looking at this situation of poverty, and considering the increasing unemployment rates in Namibia, one is tempted to doubt whether the dream and vision of eliminating or reducing poverty can be realised.

With independence, an exodus of some middle class Namibians from the black township Katutura to quiet, more developed, luxurious and more expensive areas of Windhoek city has taken place.

This represents improved status for those who can move to better areas, but is an irritation for those who remain behind and cannot move. To move to Windhoek city is, in my view, attractive in the sense that one has access to many things. The better schools with better, modern facilities are in Windhoek city. The fully-equipped libraries are in Windhoek city. The banks with better services are in Windhoek city. The better and modern-equipped recreation centres, e.g. Maerua Park, are in Windhoek city…

The majority of those living in »Oumbashu« areas are young people who are labour potential searching for employment. They come from rural areas and from other towns in Namibia that are subject to discrimination because they are not as well cared for as Windhoek, since all the specialised things happen in Windhoek.

Credit must be given for the upgrading-programmes being undertaken, for example, by town councils and other companies such as the National Housing Enterprise (NHE), which are promoting the rights of property ownership for low-income citizens, as one way of mending cracks.

Another effective method of reconciliation, in my view, which can nurture the process of coming to terms with the past, and which can liberate us, as Namibians, from always referring to the wrongs of the colonial oppressors, is to repair the current cracks in our society and, thus, to ensure a better and just future for all Namibians.

In conclusion, to quote myself again: The churches of Namibia will need to strengthen their commitment to caring for and comforting individuals and families, as our

loved ones are claimed by diseases such as AIDS, by the increasing crime and border insecurity and by the pressures of life. As we approach another decade and another century, Christians around the world will need to renew their concern for the brokenness of our societies. Families are torn apart and marriages are failing. I believe that healthy families will produce healthy societies. The task of Christians will be to find ways to heal the brokenness which we see around us.

Our pastors will require refresher courses to help them stand at the forefront of the new struggle facing Namibia. They will need to be able to read the signs of the times and interpret them for the churches and society, for those in authority of whatever kind. Christian values and the prophetic voice of the churches were not silenced in the past. They must remain strong in the future, if the churches are to contribute to genuine reconciliation and justice, and to the building of the nation.

The way forward for the Namibian churches should be one which creates room for genuine dialogue, mediation, conflict resolution, transformation, counselling/comforting, confession, forgiving and being forgiven.

Let us walk in the light of God in obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This implies that we as the Church:
– shall have courage to persuade people
– shall present ourselves as being fearless before the people, so that they can respect and develop pride in us
– shall be compelled by Christ's love to live for Him
– shall allow the process of renewal and prophetic obedience to God
– shall have creative love that controls life
– shall be prepared to renounce popularity for the sake of the risen Christ
– shall develop a long-term, millennium vision, leading to a joint, united ministry/mission of reconciliation, focusing on eternity
– shall engage in matters that please God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We are not yet there where we want to be, but we are on the way to reaching our end!

We are strong, united in Evangelical (ecumenical) Mission because women and men, children and youth have formed a reconciling chain of commitment and determination which will never be broken. We are »set free by Christ to live free«.

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The Contribution of the Evangelical Churches in Germany

Cordelia Kopsch

For the past few months, in Germany and beyond, one subject has been raised again and again in news reports and in the newspapers: the greatly delayed financial compensation for those women and men, who had been carried off from their home countries and driven into forced labour in Germany during Word War II. Many thousands of people – men, women and children – were brought to Germany and had to work very hard, often under degrading conditions. Thousands became seriously ill, many died. Now at least those people, who have survived until now, shall get some kind of symbolic recognition and compensation for what was taken from them: their home, their youth, their health, their hope. Today, we must admit that this success – however late – was not achieved at the insistence of the German Churches. No – the German companies, which had participated in the Nazi system and profited from the forced labour of so many people from all over Europe, will now put together the money – i.e. part of the promised 12 Billion DM – because victims' lawyers have put massive economic pressure on them.

The financial compensation for forced labourers during World War II is one of the on-going questions, which aptly demonstrates that we cannot speak about justice and reconciliation in Germany and in the German churches, without reflecting on our approach towards recent German history, and, especially, on the time of National Socialism, the »Shoah« – the attempt at the complete extinction of the Jews in Europe, the time of World War II and its consequences.

Therefore, I would firstly like to recall some events and subjects, which can remind us of how the German churches tried to find their own approach to the dark sides of our recent history. In doing so, I will focus, especially, on the protestant churches in Germany belonging to the EKD, the Evangelical Church in Germany.

I The Approach of the German Churches to National Socialism, the Shoah and World War II

a) The Stuttgart Confession of Guilt

After World War II, the churches in Germany were isolated. Over the years, all contacts to other churches and all ecumenical relations had been restricted and diluted.

It must also be taken into account that the majority of church members and church leaders had neither resisted nor fought against the Nazis. And even those, who had resisted and who had belonged to the Confessing Church, had not protested against the genocide carried out against the Jews. In the eyes of the ecumenical community this was a heavy burden for a new beginning. In 1945, some prominent delegates of the ecumenical movement visited the Evangelical Church in Germany. From the outset it was very clear that the German churches could not be welcomed back into the ecumenical community without first presenting a clear sign of repentance and a confession of guilt concerning their role during the time of Hitler's regime. The Stuttgart confession of guilt became the first document, in which the German churches gave witness to their willingness to admit their own guilt and their lack of solidarity with the victims of racism and anti-Semitism, inhumanity and violence, war and persecution. The most famous part of the Stuttgart confession of guilt reads: »We accuse ourselves for not having prayed more faithfully, for not having loved more burningly, for not having confessed more courageously«.

However, this confession was disputed both at the time and later: Many people in Germany found it went too far. They refused to identify with the »we« pronounced in the above sentence. They were not willing to shoulder the guilt and reflect on their own role in the past. Others, however, objected because the wording of the confession was so generalized, that those responsible for injustice and guilt were not clearly named. Church leaders who were willing to speak to synods or at public assemblies about the guilt of Christians and the churches at the time of National Socialism had to face difficult debates and were often confronted with walls of resistance in the auditoria and even with offensive personal attacks.

b) Attempts at finding ways towards reconciliation

Not very much later, the churches had to ask themselves: what would be the consequences of the Stuttgart confession of guilt, what would follow the sermons on guilt and forgiveness, and which practical actions could come out of the yearning of many Christians for reconciliation with God in post-war Germany? And these questions became very urgent for those people, groups, nations and countries that had suffered most from the Nazi-regime and World War II. Therefore, one of the problems the churches had to confront, was their attempt to open up ways for a renewal in the relations between Christians and Jews.

The relations between Christians and Jews

During the decades after 1945, the German churches made strong efforts on all levels to reflect on, and renew, the relations between Christians and Jews, and to recall the Jewish roots of Christianity. Many people were shocked by the realisation that Christians had given their Jewish sisters and brothers almost no support during the

time of the Nazis, and, indeed, that most Christians had refused to perceive that genocide was carried out in their neighbourhood. Theologically, the bitter question was asked, whether – and if yes, how – it was possible to stick to the Christian faith and formulate a theology after Auschwitz? Contacts were established with the few Jews who had survived and were prepared to live in Germany after all that had happened, with the dwindling Jewish communities and, also, with Israel. The organisation »Aktion Sühnezeichen« (»sign of reconciliation«) was founded as a symbol of repentance and good will. Young people went as volunteers and without payment to Israel and to other countries, which had suffered heavily at the time of National Socialism. They wanted to ask the people there for forgiveness, and to work together for a common future in peace. They worked in social and reconstruction projects. Many churches in Germany, such as the Rhenish church represented here, and also the Protestant church in Hesse and Nassau, to which I belong, have changed their constitutions to include the part concerning the relations between Christians and Jews, which says: »We confess our guilt towards the Jews and we confess that their election by God is still in force.«

Today in many churches there are official groups and associations, and on-going theological efforts to reflect on and vivify the relations between Christians and Jews. The Leuenberg Community of Reformed Churches in Europe will shortly publish a common study on the »Church and Israel«. But the relations between Christians and Jews, Germans and Jews have not really been relaxed. When, during the important church gathering, the Evangelischer Kirchentag in 1999, there had been a public discussion planned on mission between Christians and Jews, the Jewish participants insisted that no one, who was in favour of Christian mission to the Jews, should be granted the right to speak. Consequently, some of the Christian participants cancelled their contribution. The debate continues. This event clearly demonstrated, once again, that after more than 50 years the irritability and sensitivity in Christian-Jewish relations in Germany are still very great and far from normal.

Facing the East: The visit of Martin Niemöller to Moscow in 1952

In 1952, Martin Niemöller, first church president of the Protestant Church in Hessen and Nassau, made a visit to the Soviet Union, to Moscow. He wanted to take up the contact to the Russian Orthodox Church, and, in discussions with politicians, he wanted to plead for the return of the many German prisoners of war who were still being held in captivity within the Soviet Union. For many people in Germany this journey was scandalous, since, in their eyes, Niemöller had gone to the enemy, and even worse, had, through his visit, given a kind of legitimacy to the communist system. When Niemöller returned to his house in Wiesbaden, his adversaries had hung up banners over the street proclaiming, »Go back to Moscow!« Evidently, it seemed to be too early to open up a channel for reconciliation with the Soviet Union, and it was

a sign of the continuing strength of anti-communism in Germany. Only decades later, during the 1980s, Christian groups and some churches helped to find a new approach towards the Soviet Union, and made the attempt to seek reconciliation.

But during the intervening time, the churches often made important contributions to the varied attempts at reconciliation, for example, with Israel, France and Poland. I cannot report in detail how, from very small steps at the outset, important steps towards new relations have been made. But I would like to share one development with you, which also had very important political implications, especially, for relations with Poland.

The »EKD memorandum on Relations with Eastern European Countries«

In the 1960s, the churches played a very important role in seeking new relations, especially, with Poland, and in seeking ways for reconciliation. What they had discussed and prepared within their own membership, ultimately became the impulse for the new foreign policy of the Federal Republic of Germany towards Eastern European countries. The situation was very complex. On the one hand, Germany had started World War II with the attack against Poland, and the Nazis had erected the largest concentration camp, Auschwitz, there. But on the other hand, many Germans were not willing to see this, since they thought predominantly of what the Russians, the Polish and the Czechs had done to the Germans after the war. Hundreds of thousands of Germans had been forced to flee their homes, with many being expelled by force. Many had lost their homes, their friends, their property, their health, and their lives. What, then, could »justice« and »reconciliation« mean in this context? Before anything else, many Germans sought compensation for their losses and a return to their homeland.

The approach of the churches was, primarily, to differentiate between cause and effect. First of all, it had to be made clear that Germans had brought immense harm, death and war to Eastern European countries. Therefore, it had to be said that all the suffering and death experienced by Germans had been a consequence of what had been carried out previously in the name of Germany and with the support of Germans. In Germany, this approach caused great controversy. Families, friends and communities were torn apart. At the end of this process, the new German foreign policy was strongly influenced by the Memorandum of the EKD. Many parishes initiated partnership relations with parishes in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

c) Fundamental decisions in German policy after World War II and the churches

The Federal Republic of Germany, founded in 1949, was still in its infancy when important decisions had to be taken concerning the future role of the country. Should Germany have an army again? Or would it be better to follow the many Germans who said: »No more war – at least not with me!«? The questions of German re-

armament and the Protestant Armed Forces Chaplaincy Service also caused furious debates in the synods. Was it legitimate for Christians to be soldiers again after all that had happened? Was it not their obligation to refuse military service, if they wanted to follow their faith? What had the churches of the WCC's founding Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948 intended, when they said: »War shall not be after Gods will!«? Refusing military service, the new army and, only a short time later, the question of nuclear weapons – there was much debate during the 1950s, but no clear results. In the EKD, in fact, conservative positions were successful. Refusing military service was considered to be complementary to military service. Some official papers spoke about service for peace with, and without, weapons. The Armed Forces Chaplaincy Service was introduced, and it is still very well equipped to this day. Scruples about nuclear weapons were treated half-heartedly in many official positions. It was the strong peace movement in the 1980s, which raised all of these questions in the churches again.

Summing up these deliberations we can say that since 1945, the German churches have been influenced very strongly by their attempt to come to terms with recent German history. Justice and reconciliation had to be defined within this horizon. During this time the churches were among the very few institutions dealing with these questions – in the Government, Civil Service, Legal Authorities and Army, many tried to merely ignore the problems of the past. Many prominent representatives of these institutions had been in important positions already in Hitler's time, and had just taken up their posts again. On the other hand, the churches themselves were often divided and uncertain, because many of their members refused to reflect on guilt and reconciliation, on perpetrators and victims. Many people of my generation in Germany have gained the motivation for their political and social commitment through an often very painful confrontation with their own parents, relatives and through tough debates on the need to keep these questions in mind. However, the churches have been a very important institution in Germany, in which pain and guilt, blessings and forgiveness could be dealt with. These very intense controversies, as to how to come to terms with the past, were an important factor in the commitment of many people in their concern for justice, peace and the integrity of creation in the 1970s and 1980s.

II Ecumenical learning in the German churches – three examples

a) The 1970s: Development – Anti-Racism – Anti-Apartheid

At the end of the 1960s, people in Germany became more and more aware of the world beyond Europe. In economic terms, Germany had started to become very strong in exports. For many people, it was attractive and affordable to visit foreign

countries on holiday. For the churches, the ecumenical movement and the ideas arising from the General Assemblies of the WCC, e.g. in Delhi and Uppsala, were a very important impulse to take up the questions of development, economic justice between North and South and, generally, to become aware of the One World with all its implications. In an important church study of the FEST, questions of development and peace were connected. The aim was to create a worldwide policy to minimize violence, hunger, need and fear. In 1972 the EKD launched a Memorandum on development, which was also adopted in many aspects of German development policy. Many institutions for development and inter-church aid were founded in the late 1960s and '70s, most of which exist to this day. Germans, especially those with church connections, became committed donors to development projects. Dealing with development issues, the churches soon discovered related questions.

The situation in South Africa became the example for the German churches to learn about racism. The particular situation in South Africa, and the question, whether financial support for the Funds of the PCR (Programme to Combat Racism by the WCC) could be taken from church tax revenue, was controversially discussed. When the synod of my church agreed to give DM 100,000 for that purpose in October 1970, many people inside and outside the synod declared that this was not tolerable. In their eyes a church was never supposed to support a liberation movement, which was considering violence as a possible means of resistance, acceptable in specific situations. The conflicts surrounding this decision continued for a long time and were still evident when we had a seminar in 1995, to look back at 25 years of the PCR, and at what came out of the synod decision in 1970.

At the end of the 1970s people had learned and gained much knowledge in the field of development and justice, and in the field of racism. Their perspective had widened to see the whole world when justice and reconciliation were discussed. And they had discovered the close relationship between justice and peace. This was very important for the new focus, which was to emerge at the beginning of the 1980s.

b) The 1980s: Peace – Disarmament – The new agenda: JPIC

The contradiction between the need for development in many countries of the world on one hand, and the immense costs of the arms race on the other, was one of the insights concerning justice between North and South. People in Europe in the 1980s were very much aware of the political and military risks of the East-West-Confrontation. They felt that almost 40 years after World War II, peace between East and West, between the Soviet Union and the United States of America had not yet been achieved. When a new »generation« of nuclear long-range missiles was to be installed on the soil of the Federal Republic of Germany and other West European Countries, many people became aware of the danger these weapons would cause in case of conflict or war. They realised that they would be the first targets for the corres-

ponding weapons of the other side. Until 1983, hundreds of thousands attended huge demonstrations against the arms race, against the installation and use of the new weapons, and against nuclear weapons in general. The churches were asked, as a matter of urgency, to stand up for peace and to support the pacifist position. The question of conscientious objection and refusal of military service was put even more sharply than before. Evangelical churches in the East and West held assemblies, synods and launched declarations. The relationship between development and the arms race was outlined, the biblical foundation of peace and justice provoked new reflection. A priority in the option for non-violence in all conflicts was proclaimed. Refusing military service was declared »the clearer expression of faith« (»das deutlichere Zeichen«) compared with military service. A peace movement of an unprecedented number of people had grown in a short period of time, and people connected to the Christian churches played a leading role in it. But at the same time, the theological arguments, the political analysis and the conclusions of the many peace groups were not shared by all church-leading bodies and by the EKD. Some regional churches – and they are always the same ones – had their own learning process and found a very clear profile in their attitude towards the peace-question. The Moderamen (the governing board) of the Reformed Alliance, for example, issued a very important Memorandum dealing especially with the issue of nuclear weapons. Other Churches and most of the EKD were much more reluctant, and tended to include the views of »both sides« in their statements.

In the 1980s, the German churches – willingly or not – had to put topics on their agenda that had been considered merely »political«, »economic« or beyond theological and ethical deliberation. It was the peace movement and the impulses coming from the WCC Assembly in Vancouver in 1983 that helped the churches to discover that questions of justice, peace and the integrity of creation belong to the day-to-day agenda of their work, and have to be seen at the core of theological reflection. When the ecumenical process for JPIC started, hundreds of thousands of people in Germany were eager to participate and urged their churches to take an active part. Parishes, groups and individuals, church boards and newly created institutions collected information, held seminars, launched papers, planned actions and events in the public realm, to make clear their will, »that the churches of the world should speak with one voice in a way the world cannot overhear« (as Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker had put it) – in order to achieve more peace, more justice and a sensible attitude towards creation.

But German policy decisions were disappointing for many, and, ultimately, it was the end of the East-West-Confrontation at the end of the 1980s that brought a change. From 1985 on, many people, who had committed themselves to the peace movement, became the initiators of a reconciliation process, which had been long awaited – the reconciliation with the people of the Soviet Union, which had lost more than

20 Million people during World War II. Many people in Germany had only reluctantly accepted that Germany had attacked the Soviet Union in 1941, and acted with great injustice towards countless people, who had been led into forced labour in Germany. In particular, the role of the German army (»Wehrmacht«) in the Soviet Union was discussed again in connection with a special exhibition, which has been showing in many German cities over the last three years. For many men, who had been soldiers themselves, it seemed incredible that German soldiers were being accused of having participated in crime, rape, kidnapping, execution of civilians and the planned extinction of the Jews in Europe. The image of the honourable »German Soldiers Ethic« had been darkened. The discussions continue.

But many churches, parishes and groups succeeded in forging new relations with people in the Soviet Union and now Russia, the Baltic countries, Ukraine and Belorussia, and were touched by the friendliness and the willingness to forgive all that had happened in the past, that they found there. Today »Hope for Eastern Europe« – an important programme of inter-church and social aid, many projects in the region of Chernobyl, and many partnership relations between cities, schools and communities have come to life.

But since the end of the East-West-Confrontation, most of the questions dealt with in the 1980s remain unanswered, and the need for an Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence is at hand.

c) The 1990s: Foreigners – Refugees – Sanctuary

The question of human rights had already been the motivation for many church initiatives since the 1970s, but in many respects, human rights seemed to be merely a problem of others – but not of Germany. Human rights – they dealt with the oppression of any kind of opposition in China, political prisoners in Chile or Turkey, with torture, and, yes, with the Anti-Apartheid-Policy in South Africa... At the beginning of the 1990s more and more people in Germany noticed that racism, discrimination of minorities, intolerance and the readiness to »solve« conflicts with violence had increased at a tremendous rate within their own country. Not only in the eastern part of the now reunited Germany were many acts of hatred, intolerance and violence committed against foreigners as individuals, and against the homes of refugees. Of course the social problems brought about by a high rate of unemployment and the hopelessness of many young people regarding their future were factors in this. Another important factor was that many people from different cultures, with differing languages and religions now lived in Germany – but isolated and not bound together in a truly multicultural society. It is quite remarkable that today the churches and church parishes belong to those institutions in Germany which take the side of the foreigners, of the people applying for asylum, of the refugees. »The stranger, living within your gates« became a very important Memorandum of the EKD and the

Catholic Church in Germany. In the controversies relating to our constitutional right of asylum, the churches, on the whole, displayed a clear position. In many cases when people are threatened by deportation, experts within the churches and parishes help to discover if there is a chance of judgements being reconsidered. Counselling and legal aid for refugees is provided, and, in some cases too, refugees are given sanctuary in churches to provide time for further discussions with the authorities. Of course the groups in the churches play a very important role, in that they collect special information, remind the church bodies of their own commitments and decisions and deal with actual political topics.

III The situation today

When we try to identify the effect of dealing with all the questions of justice and reconciliation described above, we see that the churches in Germany have not always spoken with one voice when challenged to react to actual questions. In relation, for example, to anti-racism, peace, disarmament and asylum, many people found that the official statements of the EKD were not as clear as the expectations and statements from NGOs or some of the regional churches. However, in our society the churches are considered to be competent in these questions, and until today their opinion is heard and also respected, for example, by politicians. I believe that whenever the churches were willing not only to issue some general statement but also dared to be clear about what they were saying, they were, indeed, credible. Whenever they were also ready to face up to complicated questions and to bear the conflicts caused by the controversies within and among the churches and in public, they have been effective. Today, all over Germany, we can see that the churches are very much preoccupied with themselves. The attempts to adjust their own structures to the needs of the people and society today, the need to reorganise church-life under changing financial conditions often dominate discussions in parishes, districts and synods. Talking about money and internal structures, of course, is not very attractive to those outside the church, and does not promote JPIC concerns to any great extent. So I hope these self-obsessive tendencies can be overcome as soon as possible.

But looking at the present situation in Germany we must also say that the conditions for the commitment to JPIC have changed a great deal during the last few years. Our society is very much influenced by secularism, individualism, the economisation of all areas of life, multi-culturalism and multi-religiosity. The two big Christian Churches – the Catholic and the Evangelical Church – have lost part of their public influence. In former years their official statements and papers were given much attention. Today the churches have a chance to be heard, especially, when they pick up real issues, when they dare to deal with controversial topics and when they are

ready to stand up and be counted in a conflict. But there are also changes in our general political culture, which have a discouraging effect on those people who are needed in their commitment to JPIC. In Germany, we speak about a crisis of democracy. During recent months, a chain of scandals concerning the attitude of politicians and parties towards the law and cases of corruption and personal enrichment, have shaken the trust of many people towards the politicians to a greater extent than ever before. This, in addition to other reasons, such as the trend towards individualism, is one basis for the evident crisis in civil movements and political activities. Inside and outside the churches, the number of groups, societies and initiatives involved in all areas of JPIC since the 1970s and 1980s has decreased. In the churches we ask ourselves how we can involve more people and, especially, more young people in the commitment for human rights, ecumenical relations and the JPIC-related questions.

Among the churches in Germany, the gap between the richer and settled churches in the Western part of the country and the poorer churches in the Eastern part, is a challenge for the future.

Now in the year 2000, we are facing questions and ecumenical challenges, which were already present in the three ecumenical learning stages described above. In the German churches we have put on the agenda, for the coming years, three important areas relating to justice and reconciliation:

– The Jubilee 2000 campaign and the question of justice on a worldwide dimension, connected with the burning question of social justice in Germany;
– Christian identity and the dialogue with other cultures and religions, including the question of the peaceful development of a multicultural and multireligious society.
– The Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence, with a specific attempt to strengthen the possibilities for non-violent conflict resolution in local, regional, national and international conflicts.

I hope that we will be able to strengthen our commitment, our common understanding and action in these areas – as has been the case in the past – in ecumenical solidarity, and often, too, with the help of impulses, questions and support from our partner churches and the WCC. The Protestant Churches in Germany, from 1945 on – remember the Stuttgart confession of guilt! – have always needed the ecumenical perspective and profited from it. Our yearning for more Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation needs the ecumenical community as the house of hope, today and tomorrow.

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Reconciliation and Justice

From an Indonesian Perspective

Selamat Barus

In general, the current political, social and economic condition in Indonesia is poor, although Suharto's government (called the »new order«), which had been dictatorial and riddled with corruption, was replaced in September 1999 by Gus Dur's government, which is more democratic. However, there has, in fact, been little change in the condition of Indonesia, and four major difficulties must be faced and resolved by the new administration, namely:

1. Religious and tribal conflict
2. Mob violence
3. Disintegration
4. The state of the economy

Religious and tribal conflict

The current religious conflict between Christians and Muslims has been going on since 19 January 1999 in Ambon and, apparently, the government can do nothing to end the violence, which has claimed more than 3,000 victims. Thousands of houses have been destroyed in addition to the public facilities such as governmental buildings, hospitals etc. More than 600 Churches have also been destroyed. In December 1999, around Christmas, at least 597 people lost their lives. The conflict, which has spread to other parts of the Moluccan islands, began with a fight between a Christian taxi driver and an unemployed Muslim on Idul Fitri day (»Islamic great day«), which the police were unable to bring under control. The escalating conflict involved Christians and Muslims, native people and those recently settled in the area. In actual fact, conflict between Christianity and Islam is not anything new in Indonesia, manifesting itself in the burning of Christian churches and schools and in the prohibition of, and obstacles to, the construction of new churches. The prohibitions and obstacles were the result of government rules, which stipulated that the construction of every religious facility must meet with the prior approval of the people living around the proposed site. Such a rule makes it extremely difficult to proceed with projects.

The conflict between Christians and Muslims has been evident since the establishment of the Indonesian Republic in 1945, especially in the provinces, where fanatical and dominant Islamic people live, such as in Aceh, South Sulawesi and West Java. In these provinces, the construction of Christian facilities has always been severely hampered.

Several years after the development of the Indonesian economy, the migration of people from the villages to the cities became widespread throughout Indonesia. The provinces, which, formerly, were homogeneous and inhabited exclusively by the members of one tribe with one religion, became increasingly heterogeneous through the mixing with other tribes and religions. This led to an explosion of conflicts among the religions, societies and tribes. It was often the case that the settlers were economically more successful than the native people. Such success led to social envy.

Indonesian history has shown that churches and other Christian buildings have been burning at an increasing rate from year to year. During the 25 years from 1967 (the beginning of the development of the Indonesian economy and the government of the »new order«) until 1992, 21 churches were destroyed – an average of 8.4 churches per year. During the 3.5 years from 1993 until May 1996, 58 churches were damaged – an average of 16.6 churches per year, or in other words a 100 percent increase.

Sharp increases occurred between June 1996 and March 1997, with incidents in Surabaya, Situbondo, Tasik Malaya and Rangasdengklok. 64 churches were burnt down. Within the space of ten months the rate of increase had reached 450 percent. In 1998, 38 churches and Christian schools were damaged. The conflict was spreading: the Ketapang incident occurred on 20 January 1998; the Kupang incident on 30 November; the Purworejo incident also on same day; and the Bekasi and Kerawang incidents in December 1998. The intense conflict has now been raging in Ambon for over a year. Various attempts at bringing the troubles to an end have been made by the government and religious institutions, but it would seem that the current conflict cannot yet be resolved. Will this religious conflict come to an end or be ended? No one can answer this question. The government and religious institutions made suggestions to prevent the reoccurrence of similar events. Unfortunately, the theological school and the rehabilitation centre for drug addicts, which belonged to the Pentecost Church, were burned down on 15 October 1999. A theological student was also burned in one of the buildings. The question is, why no one has yet been brought to court for these crimes? Police always seem to arrive too late, and, on this occasion, too, after everything had been badly damaged, the police finally arrived. In several instances, groups of rioters passed the offices of security men. What causes such religious conflict?

There were Islamic fanatics in Indonesia. They said that their religion was the most righteous, and claimed that they belonged to the majority group. Because of

this majority status, they believed that it was, consequently, their right to govern Indonesia. They tried to establish an Indonesian state based on Islamic Law, but they failed in their attempt. They made accusations that their failure could be blamed on the Christian people. During the time of the Dutch colonisation, they had already accused the Christians of being too close to the Dutch colony. In 1945, when Indonesia gained independence, they wanted to establish an Indonesian state based on Islamic principle, but this was rejected by the Indonesian people from the eastern areas, where Christians were in the majority. If the state had been established on Islamic principles East Indonesians would have refused to be part of such a state. Ultimately, Sukarno was appointed as the first President of Indonesia, and »Pancasila« was established as the principle of the new state.

In 1950, a movement of Islamic separatists developed in the provinces of Aceh, West Java and South Sulawesi. The movement once again sought to establish an Indonesian state according to Islamic principles, but failed because of the intervention of the Indonesian army. Then, during the period of President Suharto's government yet another attempt failed because some Islamic fundamentalist movements were put down by the military. They made the accusation that Suharto employed many Christians in his government and in the Indonesian economy.

All these failures resulted in historical revenge, as a result of the means employed to extinguish the separatist movements, namely, military intervention. The problem for the churches was that the Islamic people believed that Christians were the cause of their many failures. In the mosques, it was said that in Indonesian history the Islamic people had often been oppressed.

Towards the end of Suharto's government, around 1990, Prof. Dr B.J. Habibie established the ICMI (Association of Indonesian Islamic Intellectuals). This association was not a political party but it became very much involved in politics, especially in the struggle to secure positions in government for Muslims. It prepared Islamic figures for high office, but the person who was elected President in the 1999 general election was Gus Dur, a traditional Muslim, who, nevertheless, was also a liberal and moderate thinker, with a strong sense of democracy. Megawati Sukarno Putri of the PDIP (the Indonesian Democratisation Party) was elected Vice-President. Megawati encountered many obstacles during the Suharto administration and was accused of siding with the Christians, although she, herself, is a Muslim.

So, the problems faced by Christians in Indonesia were caused by political and historical events, a state of affairs, which has not yet ended. Some people believed that the religious conflict developed because the group of the »new order« government (Suharto's) did not want civil government and democracy in Indonesia to succeed.

Mob violence

Mob violence can be seen as a riot, which is ignited, without any clear purpose, by a great mass of people. One example of this was the riot, which took place at the Medan-Belawan harbour on 27th December 1999. Two men were suspected of stealing and were caught by security men, who then proceeded to beat them up. This was witnessed by a group of people, who then protested at the actions of the security men. The size of the mob increased rapidly and, suddenly, a riot erupted, climaxing in the burning of the fishermen's harbour and the storehouses of fish, which had been prepared for export. Such extreme action by large mobs are commonplace.

According to experts, the causes of such behaviour are very complex, and include, among other things, the poor state of the economy, the resulting high unemployment rates, social envy engendered by the great gulf between the rich and the poor, and the mob's lack of faith in, and hatred of, the security forces and others. The existence of such conditions mean that conflicts between different groups can arise very easily.

Disintegration

Some provinces – Aceh, Irian Jaya, West Kalimantan and Riau – demanded that the government hold a referendum. This claim was an attempt to disintegrate the unity of the Indonesian republic. Such a claim arose because the pro-independence supporters had won the referendum in East Timor, and the people in the three provinces above were keen to emulate this success.

Two main factors led to the demands for independence:
– Historical factor: the people of Aceh and Irian Jaya believed they had been forcibly integrated into the unity of the Indonesian state.
– During Suharto's government there was unfairness in the economy, in politics and in society with all the economical, political and social systems being centrally controlled by Jakarta.

The natural resources of the provinces were controlled by central government without any concern for the prosperity of the provinces. Even worse, the government removed their land rights without paying any heed to the system of land ownership, which had been in operation for centuries. All community systems were imposed by Jakarta without any consideration for the local systems. In order to impose the will of central government, the provincial governments were also centrally arranged and controlled by Jakarta. Efforts to oppose the will of the centre were punished with great severity. Many people, who were brave enough to criticise the government were caught. Formerly, many activists who had opposed the government simply disappeared, and to this day we do not know what has happened to them. The situation described above was

the root cause of the desire to bring about the disintegration of the Indonesian nation. The people in the provinces believed the government was treating them unfairly.

The determination to gain independence was again evident in 1957, and was once more the result of the same problem, i.e. that the provinces were dissatisfied with being forced, unfairly, to share their resources. But the current desire for independence is much stronger since the central Indonesian government decided that those areas seeking self-determination were to be identified as DOM (areas of military operation). During the military operations human rights violations took place, including the execution of people without any legal process, tortures, rapes and other abuses. Civil, political and economic rights were also ruthlessly violated. The commission for human rights of the Indonesian government discovered mass graves, and uncovered evidence of the burning of villages and of cases of rape, which had been carried out at the time of the military operations in Aceh. These human rights violations created an atmosphere of trauma and fear within the community. Consequently, calls for a referendum grew even louder. The Aceh province, which shares a border with the province of north Sumatra, has proclaimed independence and recruited soldiers into the new »AGAM« (Army of the Aceh Liberation Movement). The AGAM have employed guerrilla warfare to fight against central government and driven out Christians and Javanese living in Aceh. At present, North Sumatran towns near the border are overflowing with refugees fleeing Aceh.

The state of the economy

Since July 1997, a number of crises have developed within the Indonesian economy. Before the crises the exchange rate of the US Dollar with the Indonesian Rupiah was 1 US $ to 2,000 Rp., and afterwards, 1 US $ to 10,000 Rp., even hitting the level of 14,000 Rp. at one stage. Before the crises, the Indonesian economy was growing at a rate of between 5 and 7 percent per year, but that dropped in 1997 to 5 percent and in 1998 to 3 percent.

All industries became weaker because of the exchange rate with the dollar. According to data, up to 20 million workers lost their jobs, with high unemployment affecting all areas. The source of the Indonesian economic crisis was the system of bureaucracy, which was so corrupt that Indonesian business was unable to compete in the global market. Workers' wages were low, the workers' right to demonstrate was forbidden, tax was low and workers' rights were severely limited – all these things resulted in very poor conditions for workers during the Suharto era.

The Indonesian economy has still not emerged from this period of crisis, mainly due to the high level of Indonesian debt – about 200 billion US $. If the total amount of gross income from exports were used to pay off the foreign debt, the length of

time required to erase the debt would be twenty years. People from the lower classes have suffered most as a result of the poor conditions described above. The rate of poverty is about 40 percent of the total Indonesian population, or in other words, around 80 million people. Around eight million children are about to drop out of school and two million children under the age of two suffer from malnutrition. The number of street children is increasing. There are 20 million registered unemployed, and the number of job seekers is growing by about 2.5 million every year.

How can Indonesia emerge from this drastic situation and, in particular, how can Indonesia overcome the problem of national disintegration. Some people, in discussions, have said, »Give the provinces seeking independence a referendum, just like East Timor, because it is their right«. Many others, though, object to this suggestion, saying that the Indonesian state cannot be changed and that it would no longer be based on the constitution of the Indonesian republic. If national disintegration were to come about, this would be accompanied by a process of social disintegration.

Many Indonesian communities consist of many tribes, which have mixed together as a consequence of urbanisation and transmigration throughout Indonesia. If a province were to gain independence, it would mean that all those who had settled there in recent years would have to move back to their homelands, as happened when East Timor seceded from Indonesia, with 300,000 people being forced to return to their former territories. Such a situation would create a great deal of suffering and human rights violations. Provincial autonomy or a federal state is preferable to granting independence to the provinces, and human rights violations must be dealt with in a court of law – these are the steps which should be taken in the future. To do the latter, though, would be difficult because the military are so powerful. Can Gus Dur bring members of the military, responsible for human rights violations during the military operation in the provinces of Aceh and Irian Jaya, before a court of law? Well, that is something, which is being attempted now! The KPPHAM (the Commission of Investigation on Human Rights Violations) has been established, and has already called a number of generals to account. We sincerely hope that the KPPHAM is successful in its operations.

Church Programme for JPIC

After returning from a JPIC workshop in Colombo in 1995, member churches of the UEM in North Sumatra introduced steps to implement a JPIC programme, stressing that the programme should make the churches aware of the fact that JPIC belonged to the tasks of the church. The programme was carried out:

1. By holding discussions on JPIC issues at the congregational level and at church meetings. At that time the most pressing issues in North Sumatra were labour and the environment. JPIC contact persons co-operated with Non Governmental Organisations

(NGOs) in the struggle against the poor conditions of workers and their living environment. For example, a large pulp factory was damaging the environment and producing pollution near Lake Toba. Once the local community was made aware of the damage being caused by the factory, they demanded the closure of the factory.
2. Through preaching. Member churches of the UEM in North Sumatra co-ordinated material for Sunday preaching and youth Bible studies. Before writing the material, a seminar was held to decide on the important issues to be included in the sermons and to be examined in the bible studies over the course of one year. JPIC issues were also incorporated into the Sunday preaching material, especially during the week around the day of celebration for worldwide human rights.
3. Through meetings of JPIC contact persons. Such meetings were held every six months to discuss JPIC issues and to make decisions on joint programmes and on the programmes of each individual church.
4. Through the reforestation of Lake Toba. Churches in North Sumatra, both together and separately, carried out a reforestation programme in the area surrounding Lake Toba. The GBKP and GKPS churches, together with UNESCO co-operated in introducing a programme of sustainable development for the people living in the vicinity of the Lake. Institutions of church governing bodies, NGOs, target groups and UNESCO will jointly hold a seminar on the topic »Reservation of Lake Toba«, from 21-28 January 2000 in Parapat, Lake Toba.
5. Inter-religious dialogue. Indonesian communities are very pluralistic, with a mix of religions and tribes. Tribal and religious conflicts, similar to those currently taking place in Java, the Moluccan islands, Kalimantan and central Sulawesi, have often been commonplace. In order to prevent such conflicts occurring, it will be essential in the future to create a common understanding within all Indonesian communities of »democracy, human rights and the law« as the basic principles of life. To achieve that goal, frequent dialogues between congregations of different religions have been initiated by a number of NGOs and the churches.
7. By helping Aceh refugees, through ensuring that they are cared for and supported within the churches of North Sumatra.

Conclusion

This is the present condition of Indonesia. We expect suggestions from all of you, so that the Indonesian churches can find ways to act as peacemakers in the current conflicts.

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Justice

Ulrich Beyer

Introduction to the Topic

A speaker, coming from Germany, is tempted to explain a basic term like justice by means of a definition. This being so one would have to take into consideration that justice is concerned with principles of equality, equal treatment and balance. This being so, one would have to define »just means of distribution« and »retributive justice« more accurately and establish criteria for their impact. In this unfortunately short lecture, which is intended to generate impulses, we have, on the one hand, no time for such questions of definition, and, on the other hand, no real reason for them. For this lecture is being delivered in Namibia, and thus in a country within the southern hemisphere, in which the inhabitants endure the continuing anguish of injustice. Ultimately, though, I am speaking at a consultation organised by the Desk of the United Evangelical Mission responsible for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, which has joined the struggle to enforce the demand for a world order, which takes full account of principles of justice for all people and all life. The experiences of injustice in the south and the demand for a socially, ethically binding standard of distributive justice will therefore be the main points of emphasis in what follows.

1. Looking at things realistically

In 1989 – in other words, 10 years ago– »Bread for the World« launched a programme »Justice for the Poor«, with the aim of creating a balance between the rich north and the economically impoverished south. However, the high expectations have not been fulfilled and the initial positive feeling of setting out on a new course has dissipated. I certainly do not want to undervalue the limited successes in the area of justice or of the project work of the UEM Churches, but unfortunately, in an era of globalisation it has not been possible to wipe out structural deficits in justice. Indeed, the pauperisation processes are increasing steadily. According to the World Bank, 1.5 billion people, a quarter of the world's population, now number among the very poor, or, in other words, among those who have only one US dollar per day to live on. In 1970 ›only‹ 400 million people lived in absolute poverty. The English historian, Eric

S. Hobsbawm, in a recent article in the »Frankfurter Rundschau« referred to the unimaginable wealth of today's multi-billionaires. I quote: »The wealthiest 200 people on earth – and note well, I do not mean multinational concerns, but individuals, with two legs, who eat breakfast in the morning and who can only shove one mouthful at a time into their mouths – the wealthiest 200 individuals had collective assets last year (1998) totalling 1,000 billion US dollars, or in other words, approximately equivalent to the Gross National Product of the Chinese economy, or roughly half of Germany's Gross National Product.«

Yet, the frontier between the super rich and the desperately poor does not simply correspond with the geographical border between north and south. In many countries in the north poverty is growing, and in the sprawling metropolises of the south small westernised elites number among the well off in their countries, while the rural population becomes increasingly impoverished.

The loser in the global economic competition is, above all, Africa, which contributes a mere two percent to world trade figures. A development expert reached the following macabre conclusion in a recent report: »If today the continent of Africa were to sink in the ocean, only a handful of people throughout the rest of the world would notice.« The exclusion of Africa, in particular, from the collective drive towards detaching the third world from the process of wealth accumulation in a flourishing world economy, is especially evident. In view of the intensification of the problems brought about by poverty, the present state of affairs is particularly unfortunate, whereby the development commitments of State and Church, for example in our country, are decreasing markedly. Only 0.27 percent of the Gross National Product – as against 0.35 percent up until a few years ago – was made available from public funds for political development measures. Only around 1.18 percent of church tax revenues, instead of the 2 percent, as agreed at the 1986 EKD Synod in Bad Salzuflen, continued to be made available for the Church Development Service. One trend within our church, which cannot be overlooked, is, that in the face of diminishing finances, it is falling back onto its own familiar territory and, as a matter of choice, only promoting the so-called core pastoral responsibilities. The rejection of just distribution consolidates existing unjust structures and destroys the right to life of the majority of the world's population.

2. Judging biblically

This is a biblical finding: Justice creates life; injustice, correspondingly, engenders hunger, poverty and, ultimately, death. In line with the biblical understanding of justice, I quote from Amos (5,24): »Instead, let justice flow like a stream, and righteousness like a river that never goes dry.« God-inspired justice is like water that quenches thirsty land, like a spring that ensures life and survival in a desert land. The

just are like »trees that grow beside a stream, that bear fruit at the right time, and whose leaves do not dry up« (Psalm 1,3). To advocate justice and thereby to bring about life, is a clear biblical command: »Suppose there is a truly good man, righteous and honest. […] He doesn't cheat or rob anyone. He returns what a borrower gives him as security. […] He feeds the hungry and gives clothing to the naked. […] He is righteous and he will live.« (Ezekiel 18,5.7.9). Justice, from this biblical standpoint, is to do everything that advances community relations and preserves and engenders well-ordered relationships, not only between one person and another, but also between man and God and between God and creation. Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah, proclaims the option for the poor, which is anchored in Israel's established laws, in his inaugural sermon in Nazareth, which I will not expressly quote here (Lk. 4,18-19). And in his parable of the Last Judgement Jesus, as judge in the world, offers a clear exegesis, in concrete terms, of the demands of justice: the deeds of the just have served in providing for the basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, health, security) of the ›least important‹, in whom Jesus himself is encountered.

A guideline for Justice as a task of the Conciliar Process is, consequently, the advocacy of a world order based on the principle of justice for all life, in which each person can live in accordance with his true worth as a creature of God, made in the likeness of God. For »everyone has the right to life, freedom and personal security«, as stated in Article three of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from December 1948.

3. Concrete Action

In a third step I would like, today, to put into concrete terms the necessary measures of our solidarity in the struggle for justice. I do so, convinced that we in the UEM, as a church-based NGO in alliance with other action groups, can surely accomplish something in the promotion of the viability of the human community. The success of the campaign »Jubilee 2000 – Development requires Debt Cancellation«[1], supported by a broad cross-section of church organisations, shows that a concentrated effort targeted at a concrete development goal can bear political fruit. NGOs should be able to prove their value as bearers of hope for social development and to nourish the ability to hope amongst the people among whom they work. I consider the following perspectives and measures to be essential, although I do not claim that this is an exhaustive list.

3.1. In the face of extensive impoverishment in the south, the struggle against poverty, in the sense of fulfilling basic needs and improving living conditions by means

1 English title: »Jubilee 2000 – We believe in life before death«.

of appropriate project promotion, continues to be a declared aim of each example of development co-operation with our partners in Africa and Asia.

Over and above this, internationally recognised models of social development are also relevant:
– enablement of the population to help themselves
– on the scene participation of the partner
– just consideration of both sexes (promotion of women)
– sustainable development as a means of ensuring the fundamentals of life for the present-day population and for their preservation for the coming generations.

3.2. Project promotion, in itself, is certainly insufficient, and in this one can identify a certain one-sided involvement of many church-circuit partnerships in the south. Projects carried out solely on the micro level cannot bring about safeguards for the survival of people in the south. On the contrary, it is essential for church-based NGOs to work untiringly to create a discerning public audience for peace and justice concerns, and to be involved in the formation of political spheres, which are concerned with the struggle against poverty.

3.3. Also directly part and parcel of this, is an active involvement in the processes of value development and reference to the foundation of ethical positions in the religious traditions of Christianity. In view of the neo-liberal globalisation of the economy and markets, it is thereby appropriate to set in motion a »globalisation of solidarity«, which can commit itself to the political option for a social redistribution of the world's resources. In the face of the increasing egoisation in the execution of the globalisation process, according to which one's neighbour is oneself, it is appropriate to underline the social and ecological responsibility of the individual as well as of the community of nations. In this respect, a project such as Hans Küng's ›World Ethos‹, in which the traditions of the world religions are assigned to the task of helping to make at least a minimum of generally accepted ethical standards, values and attitudes relevant in guaranteeing a dignified human coexistence of the world community. In many nations, multicultural and multireligious societies do already exist. The co-operation of the great world religions will play an absolutely necessary role in the realisation of the vision of the world as a real ›home‹ for all human beings, who can then live together in peace and justice.

3.4. One concrete form of standing up for justice is also by supporting the campaign »Clean Clothes«, which denounces the production of manufactured clothing under inhumane working conditions in low-pay countries, above all in East and Southeast Asia. Here, middle-sized businesses, often in joint venture with local firms, exploit the mass availability of cheap labour, for the most part women, who then produce

goods for the large markets of multi-national concerns. It is, therefore, direct advocacy work on behalf of justice when this campaign stands up for the concerns of fair pay, humane working conditions and compulsory insurance for employees.

3.5. Finally, acquainting oneself with the so-called »Casino Capitalism« is also part of the shift in learning required to move towards principles of justice. According to the most recent information, daily worldwide movements of speculation capital have reached a level of 70 billion US dollars. Professional legal work on behalf of justice will strengthen the demand for the introduction of the so-called »Tobin Tax«, which intends skimming off, as tax, the top level profits from international financial speculation and channelling these, in turn, into development projects.

Outlook

In the newly begun millennium, the UEM, in network with other NGOs, should lead the discourse on justice, neither with over-exuberant optimism nor with resigned pessimism. However, in its commitment to advocacy work, it should provide inspiration to put the confession of the ›God of life‹ into action through acting courageously on behalf of the survival of the human race.

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Reconciliation in Dispute

Wolfram Kistner

Introduction

The topic of this conference reminds me of the contribution, which Lutheran churches in Namibia made towards a deeper understanding of the biblical message of reconciliation. In particular, I am thinking of the ›Open Letter of Bishop Auala and Pastor Gowaseb to the Prime Minister, Mr Vorster‹ (of South Africa) of 30 June 1971. Through this public pronouncement, the two Lutheran church leaders gave their support to the judgement of the International Court of Justice of 30 June 1971, declaring the occupation of Namibia or South Africa to be illegal. They demanded that the South African authorities should see to it that human rights be put in operation in their country and that it should become a ›self-sufficient and independent state‹. Explaining their actions to their congregations through a pastoral letter under the heading ›Epistle to the Namibians‹, they pleaded with them: »We appeal to you to maintain the peace and with a peaceful disposition to continue seeking our brothers in all racial groups. We want to advise you also to build bridges and not break down contact.« They furthermore stated: »Our purpose is to stand for the truth and for a better future for our people and races, even when it involves suffering for us.«

From well-informed friends, I know that the two public declarations, the Open Letter and the Epistle to the Namibians, were not merely a spontaneous response of two church leaders to a critical and highly volatile political situation. They were the outcome of intensive theological reflection and discussion of a number of people in the church, including lecturers and students of the theological seminary at Otjimbingwe. Though the word ›reconciliation‹ is not explicitly used in the two documents, the people involved in such witness were inspired by a commitment to the Biblical message of reconciliation and, at the same, by the awareness that pronouncing it can provoke and intensify conflict and imply suffering for the people concerned.

In a short-term perspective, conflict, indeed, was the outcome of the publication of the two documents. It was a conflict not only between the churches in Namibia and the political authorities, but also within the individual churches, including the Lutheran churches. On the other hand, the two public pronouncements contributed towards empowering many people to take up the struggle for justice. I remember reports of that time pointing out that in December 1971, the contract workers in Walvis Bay sang

church hymns when downing their tools and embarking on a strike that caught the authorities completely unawares. Their example had an impact on workers in the Durban region, who, in 1973, initiated an equally unexpected strike in South Africa. Both events paved the way for an intensified struggle in the two respective countries, in an effort to bring a fundamentally unjust political system to an end.

Three occasions in our more recent South African experience can serve to demonstrate that reflection on the Biblical concept of reconciliation does not necessarily contribute to the immediate calming down or ending of a conflict. It can inspire people to take a resolute stand for justice and provoke conflict as a result. When in 1963, Dr C.F. Beyers Naude, a leading Dutch Reformed minister, was inducted in a worship service as Director of the Christian Institute, he preached a sermon on the key passage on reconciliation in the letters of the apostle Paul: »In Christ, God has reconciled the world.« Reliance on this reconciliation was the foundation of Beyers Naude's resistance to the apartheid system, which resulted in his being banned by the South African political authorities and marginalised by his church. The Message to the People of South Africa in 1968, issued jointly by the Christian Institute and the South African Council of Churches, refers to the same text in condemning racial discrimination and the ideology underlying the apartheid system. It intensified the conflict between South African churches and the political authorities, and also provoked tensions and divisions within the constituencies of the member churches. The same observation applies to the Belhar Confession of 1982, through which the Dutch Reformed Mission Church challenged its Reformed sister churches to take an uncompromising stand against the apartheid system from the perspective of the Gospel. By highlighting the commitment of Christians to the God »who, in a special way is the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged«, this confession drew attention to the other great danger South African Christians were facing during the time of the Apartheid regime: the growing gap between the rich and the poor. It was a gap that did not disappear with the demise of the apartheid system.

Underlying my presentation is the assumption that the Biblical concept of reconciliation largely coincides with that of justice in the sense of setting relationships right. This explains, at least in part, our common experience in the recent history of South Africa and Namibia, that reliance on the Biblical message of reconciliation can provoke intense political conflict and expose believers to persecution, even by people who are professing their commitment to the Gospel. For this reason, I have given this contribution the heading »Reconciliation in Dispute«. I have refrained from mentioning justice as a separate topic.

The specific stance of the message of reconciliation in the second part of our Bible has, presumably, to be attributed to the apostle Paul. The first part of my deliberations will, therefore, be an effort to understand the context and the concerns underlying his ministry which induced him to borrow the Greek term for reconcilia-

tion from the diplomatic terminology of his time, and to give it a new meaning, so as to convert it into a tool for the proclamation of the Gospel. The second part will be an attempt to show how he integrated the understanding of reconciliation, resulting from his encounter with the crucified and risen Christ, into the Jewish religious tradition, in which he was rooted. Thirdly, I will try to formulate some general and tentative guidelines for our task to spell out reconciliation from a Christian perspective. They will pass over into tentative guidelines for discerning the potential and the limits of co-operation with people of other persuasions and with public institutions in the area of justice. The Conclusion will indicate open questions, which require our attention in our worship life as well as in our involvement in promoting reconciliation in society.

I. »Reconciliation« in the letters of the Apostle Paul

The English word »reconciliation« generally refers to an effort to end a conflict between people and restore a friendly relationship between them. The meaning of this word has a close affinity to that of the Greek word ›katallage‹, which the apostle borrows from the language of diplomats of his time. In their usage it had a political connotation and referred to the reconciliation between two hostile parties through mediation and formal agreement.

In the apostle Paul's usage, this word reconciliation, does not, in the first instance, refer to a broken relationship between humans that requires mediation to be restored. It refers to the broken relationship between humans and their Creator that is the cause of the broken relationship between humans. The initiative for such reconciliation is not taken by humans, but by God. It does not refer merely to human individuals or parties and their mutual relationship, but to all humankind and to its relationship with God's creation.

God's reconciliation with the world has already been accomplished in Christ. On this victory the followers of the crucified and risen Christ may rely. On the other hand, the consummation of this reconciliation still lies ahead of them. It will happen with the glorious revelation of Christ. The reconciliation that has been accomplished in Christ, and its consummation by the risen Christ, demarcate the space in which Christians are called to spell out its implications in their own community life, in their inter-personal relationships, as well as in the responsibility for life they share with the human community as a whole.

The word ›katallage‹ occurs only six times in the writings of the second part of the Bible, in each case either in the letters of the apostle Paul or in writings probably compiled later by Christians, who relied on his writings and adapted his message to their own context, such as the letters to the Ephesians and to the Colossians. The

apostle tends to use this term in passages, in which his message reaches a climax. No equivalent to the Greek word ›katallage‹, with approximately the same connotations, can be found in the Hebrew Bible, from which the apostle otherwise drew so heavily in the proclamation of the Gospel. These observations, in my view, support the assumption that the apostle may be the author who has given the Greek word for reconciliation a new meaning, so as to use it as a vehicle for proclaiming the Gospel. Furthermore, such linguistic data give rise to the question whether particular experiences in his faith and in his ministry may explain why the apostle, in this instance, found it necessary to coin a new concept.

Several Biblical scholars, drawing extensively on their knowledge of Jewish religious tradition, have highlighted the apostle Paul's rejection of the Roman Empire, of the world order it imposed on the nations it subjugated and the world peace it offered. In his view, believers were to be alerted to this world power, which claimed to have divine authority. At the same time, they had to be warned not to fall into the trap of employing the same methods in their own resistance, as those used by their enemy for their oppression. Such findings can be of help for a tentative effort to discern the context and the contents of Paul's message of reconciliation.

In his interpretation of the letter to the Romans, the German theologian Jankowski draws attention to the difficulties, which Jewish believers experienced in the Diaspora of living according to the Torah without compromising their faith. It was threatened, not only by the divine authority claimed by the Emperor, but also by the temptation to adapt to Hellenistic city culture. The cities were thriving on the exploitation of the rural people and smaller landowners in their environment. The danger of adapting to the Hellenistic culture promoted by the Roman Empire prevailed particularly in regions, which had been incorporated into it by ›voluntary‹ submission and not by military force. People in these regions, as a result, experienced a milder form of Roman rule.

According to Jankowski's understanding, Paul had come to the conclusion that it was impossible for a Jew to live according to the Torah in the world system of the Roman Empire. He shared this insight with those Jews in Judea, who embarked on a course of armed resistance against the Empire. These resistance fighters, however, tried to enforce strict adherence to the Torah on the Jewish communities in the Diaspora, as well as on non-Jews, who had been attracted to the Jewish faith. They also expected the believers in the Diaspora to participate in their armed resistance.

In this regard, Paul differed from the resistance fighters in Judea. He came to reject their attempts to draw the Jewish communities in the Diaspora and their non-Jewish sympathizers into an armed resistance against the Empire. His encounter with the crucified and risen Lord as the Messiah had opened up for him a new insight and a new understanding of the Jewish faith. Since loyalty to the faith required the Torah not only to be known but, also, to be observed, Jews, who knew the Torah and did not observe it, were just as guilty as the non-Jews who were not

bound by the Torah. Consequently, all people, whether Jews or non-Jews, were sinners and guilty before God. However, through the resurrection of Jesus, who had been crucified as a rebel against the Roman world system, God had opened up a new community comprising Jews and non-Jews. In this community, all believers of whatever background could live according to his will, being liberated from the condemnation of the Torah and at the same time empowered to fulfil its purpose. This liberation, however, involved them in an obligation to resist the world system of the Empire in a new way: not by armed force, but by living as an alternative community. In this community Jews and non-Jews accepted and complemented one another as members of the body of Christ.

By living according to different standards from those that were promoted by the Roman Empire, the Christian communities constituted a form of resistance that was bound to undermine the Empire and its unjust structures. This Empire could cope with armed resistance more easily than with a community relying on reconciliation brought about by a God, who shared the suffering of the people. Through the reconciliation with the world in Christ, God had responded to the abuse of power by love of the enemy in a way that did not detract from the injustice, violence and atrocity inherent in such abuse, and from the responsibility of the perpetrator. Believers were expected to leave punishment of evil deeds to this God, and to respond to the injustice they had suffered by love of the enemy.

Though the details of this interpretation are open to question, and require further research, I suggest that its general trend is reliable: the apostle Paul's message of reconciliation is pronounced as a direct challenge to, and refutation of, the Pax Romana offered by the Roman Empire.

II. God's Reconciliation in Christ as the Fulfilment of the Torah

In his letters, the apostle Paul gives a new meaning to a Greek term and coins it as a concept of hope and transformation that is understandable for believers of a Jewish and non-Jewish background. At the same time, he links it up in his letters with that of the Jewish faith traditions, in order to show that the new Christian community is an outcome of the Jewish faith and its understanding of liberation.

The Hebrew Bible uses terms derived from the Jewish judicial practice to describe Israel's liberation from bondage. Within the framework of the metaphor of slave-owner/slave relationships, God is seen as the redeemer who paid the price for redeeming Israel and its possessions from the owner, to whom it had been enslaved. This experience of being redeemed placed a special responsibility on the people not to betray and lose their own liberation by withholding it from others suffering oppression and exploitation, including the foreigners in their midst.

After the return of the exiles from the Babylonian captivity, Israel faced the task of building a new social order, avoiding the repression and the abuse of power they had experienced previously, either under foreign rulers or under their own kings and ruling class. Preventative measures were required against a re-emergence of the oppressive structures and practices of the past. The ›Day of Atonement‹ was instituted as an annual opportunity for a public confession to God, for penitence, for receiving God's forgiveness and for rectifying what had gone wrong, as far as that was possible, by acts of restitution. The name ›Jom Kippur‹ (Day Of Covering) intimates that such confession and restitution is to ›cover‹ sins after they have been confessed, and to protect society against the consequences and after-effects of any evil deeds that had been committed. In particular, in every seventh and every fiftieth year, the Day of Atonement initiated special measures of redistribution in the economy and of correcting imbalances that had arisen from the greed of humans, as well as from asymmetric economic patterns. These measures also provided for the release of the people from a bondage they had incurred through debts.

In the later phase of Israel's history, the tradition of the Sabbath Year (every seventh year) and the Jubilee Year (every fiftieth year) had a strong impact on the ministry of Jesus and his followers. It is reflected in the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer, according to the version of the Gospel of Matthew: Here, the metaphor of a great landlord and his renunciation of debts owed to him is used to express the forgiveness, which the believer asks from God after having extended forgiveness, in accordance with the same pattern, to fellow humans. The close association of this with the preceding petition for the divine gift of bread and resources for each day, and with the third petition regarding support for the doing of the will of God, enhances the emphasis on the obligation of the believer, relying on God's forgiveness, to share resources and to contribute daily to the removal of economic imbalances.

The tradition of the Jubilee Year also forms the background to the well-known passage in the Gospel of Luke on Jesus‹ sermon in Nazareth. Traces of the same tradition can be discerned, too, in the letters of the apostle Paul, particularly in the passages on the collection for the poor in Jerusalem, which he initiated among the believers in Macedonia.

The apostle Paul integrated the strong communal component of the Jewish faith, in which he was rooted, into a comprehensive theology of reconciliation pertaining to the liberation of the whole of the human community and creation. By establishing this link, he counters the danger of confining the promises and interventions of God as the God of the poor and the oppressed, of which the Hebrew Bible bears witness, merely to the people of Israel. The universal reconciliation, which God has achieved in Christ, places an obligation on believers to overcome hostilities in the human community and to combat structures and practices of excluding people from an equitable share in the material and spiritual resources of humanity. Where he uses such

concepts as expiation and forgiveness, they relate, primarily, to the covenant tradition of Israel and its worship life, but are not confined to it. Terms, which remind one of sacrifices, are modified by the fact that God takes the initiative in forgiving.

The specific Greek term for reconciliation, ›katallage‹, is, on the other hand, used primarily to describe God's act of reconciling humankind and creation to God's self. Here, reconciliation relates not in the first instance to the covenant, but to God's intervention to recover the whole of humankind and creation from the destruction, which humans have unleashed. On the other hand, it is also necessary to bear in mind that in the Hebrew Bible the story of God's covenant with Israel, though starting with a special relationship between God and an individual people, aims at the liberation of the whole of humankind.

The special feature of Paul's message of reconciliation is that it articulates the universal dimension of God's covenant with Israel in the context of his experience as an apostle to the Gentiles. The reconciliation that God has accomplished in Christ, obliges and empowers believers to stand up for justice for all humankind and for the well being of creation, even if this implies confrontation with, and persecution by, world systems and world powers, claiming to be entrusted with absolute authority over the lives of people and of creation.

III. Guidelines for spelling out God's Reconciliation in Christ

In the churches of Western countries, which maintain a strong link with the political forces controlling the state, there has been a tendency to stress the individualistic and mystic dimension in Paul's message of reconciliation. This stance has a certain validity as far as it underlined the insight also inherent in the apostle's theology, that humans need to be liberated not only from the outside oppressor, but also from the personal trend, latently alive in each of the oppressed, to oppress and dominate others, which often comes to the fore as soon as one is entrusted with power. However, the neglect of the communal and cosmic dimension of the message of reconciliation easily lends itself to be used as a religious argument for persuading oppressed and exploited classes in society or subjugated nations to acquiesce in their plight. The rediscovery of the communal and the cosmic dimension of Paul's message of reconciliation has, largely, to be attributed to believers in countries, who experienced extreme repression, and to the publicity, which the ecumenical movement gave to their insights.

General guidelines

I suggest the following general guidelines for the response of believers to God's reconciliation in Christ:

- God has broken the cycle of violence by affirming the same Jesus, who was crucified as a traitor of humanity, as the risen Lord. Believers, who want to follow his footsteps, are under an obligation to take a stand against all forms of violence. In terms of the Biblical tradition, this requires attention, not only to overt forms of political or military violence, but also particular attention to economic imbalances and injustices inherent in economic systems and practices, which deprive people of their freedom as well as of their means of livelihood.
- God's reconciliation in Christ entrusts believers with a potential to transform human relationships. People who have experienced special forms of injustice and repression have been endowed with a special gift. By overcoming the urge for retaliation and revenge, they can make a contribution towards changing the minds and the behaviour of oppressors. After a change in power relationships, they can maintain critical contact with the people, who, from within their ranks, have recently acceded to power, and help them to resist the temptation to abuse that power. However, any expectation that people, who have suffered extreme injustice, can contribute towards a new beginning, requires a careful concern in society and in faith communities for their needs and for the recognition of their dignity.
- From a Biblical perspective, reconciliation does not merely aim at restoring human relationships, which have been disrupted by the abuse of power, to conditions that existed before. It enables perpetrators and victims of violence to arrive at a new relationship that transcends everything that has existed before, and to engage jointly in projects to overcome and transform unjust power structures and practices. Reconciliation, in this sense, includes all human beings, and cannot be restricted to the members of one particular nation and society, and to nation building.
- Reliance on God's reconciliation requires the promotion of a new relationship between humans and Nature, and attention to ethical criteria for the use of modern science and technology in shaping the life of humans and creation.
- God's reconciliation in Christ obliges the believers to be involved in the struggle for justice for all human beings and for creation, and to be prepared to share the suffering that results from participation in such a struggle.

Criteria for co-operation with people of other convictions and secular institutions, and for compromises

In church life, believers are dismissed at the end of the regular Sunday worship service with the appeal to go into the world and serve the Lord, and with the assurance, through the Benediction, that the triune God whom they have encountered, will go with them. All of us are aware that this service to the Lord in everyday life happens in the most complex situations, in which we have to take our decisions, and in co-

operation with people who do not necessarily share our convictions and beliefs, but who in many cases may be people of goodwill. We are also aware that in public life, particularly in politics, decisions have to be reached, in which the distinction between what is just, and what is unjust, is not necessarily clear-cut. Nevertheless, delaying or avoiding decisions would be more harmful than making a questionable decision. In such situations, it is necessary to make compromises that are guided by ethical principles. In some cases, a compromise can be an essential and life-saving contribution to advances in the struggle for justice. In other cases, it can come close to a denial of one's faith. On many occasions, it is difficult to foresee the implications of a compromise and misjudgements can easily occur.

The following are suggestions for criteria to discern the potential and the limits of co-operation with people of other persuasions and secular institutions:

- Since God's reconciliation in Christ pertains to the setting right of relationships in the whole of humankind and in creation, Christians are under an obligation to seek co-operation in promoting justice with people of other faiths and with people of no particular religious affiliation, in as much as their concerns are compatible with their own commitment to the God, who has entered our situation in Christ, and shares the suffering, which humans inflict on fellow humans. Christians share in the responsibility of the state and secular institutions to search for the best ways of ensuring and protecting justice.
- The basic criterion for the potential and limits of such co-operation is the respect for the life, dignity and well-being of all humans and creation, and the sharing of resources and responsibilities with the marginalised sections and members of society.
- A compromise is good if its advantages outweigh its disadvantages for all the people affected by it, and if it takes into account the needs of the weaker and vulnerable sections of society.
- A compromise should be seen as a temporary measure that obliges the people concerned to use the time they gained to strive for a better solution.
- An important criterion for a compromise is the question, whether or not it facilitates practices of love and mutual acceptance of people from all ranks and interest groups in society.
- The religious dimension of reconciliation empowers the believer to discern the appropriate time to accept or reject a compromise or for outright resistance. A decisive criterion for such difficult decisions is the question: Whose interests are best served by the compromise, and whose interests are neglected?
- In fairly normal circumstances, a responsible decision on whether to enter or to resist a compromise requires extensive consultation and disputation. In situations of extreme repression it can require lonely decisions by individuals, who have to be prepared to face rejection or persecution.

– In their everyday lives, believers continuously have to take decisions on whether or not, or to what extent, to enter compromises. The risk of compromising one's faith obliges them to seek refuge in the encounter with Christ in their communion services and in the fellowship with other believers, to be relieved from the burden of sin and guilt, to engage in acts of restitution and to be strengthened for the ongoing struggle for justice and peace. At the same time, such reliance on regular spiritual nurture and fellowship makes it necessary for them to participate in the responsibility that worship services take account of the issues people are facing in their everyday lives, and that a language is used, which relates to their problems.

IV. Conclusion

The Biblical concept of reconciliation overlaps considerably with that of justice. Efforts at reconciliation aim, primarily, at overcoming the evils of the present that stand in the way of justice. However, in situations in which a people has survived circumstances of extreme repression and injustice, dealing with the past becomes a priority. It is a presupposition for any effort to make a new beginning in the life of the society concerned. In such a situation the message inherent in the title, which Archbishop Desmond Tutu has given to his recently published book on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, becomes highly relevant. The title reads: »No future without forgiveness«.

Ever since the end of World War II, the insight underlying the title of Archbishop Tutu's new book has been articulated, not only by church leaders and committed church members, but also, at times, by politicians and political scientists. They raise the issue of forgiveness when grappling with the moral devastation, which wars and international conflicts have brought about.

In some cases it has become clear that the judicial prosecution of people, who have committed terrible war crimes, does not necessarily contribute towards restoring a sense for law and order and respect for moral norms in the life of society and state. This applies, particularly, to offences of a socio-ethical nature. The term refers to crimes for which the whole, or a considerable section, of society shares a responsibility because of generally accepted norms that have promoted a willingness of people to commit the most heinous crimes (e.g. the Vietnam War, shooting on people at the Berlin Wall etc.). In many cases such people believed that the crimes they committed, or were ordered to commit, were necessary for the well-being and defence of their country. Is justice promoted by prosecuting such people in cases where they were expected, or even instructed, to commit crimes by their superiors, even if their actions were not illegal in terms of the laws that were in force at that time? Can the legal system that prevails in Western countries and its understanding of punish-

ment be applied in such cases for the benefit of the society concerned? On the whole, this legal tradition aims, primarily, at repairing the damage, but pays little attention to changing the outlook and the norms guiding the perpetrator.

It is in connection with such questions that some people have suggested the introduction of institutionalised occasions for dealing with a crime ridden past, that have some affinity or analogy to forgiveness, as pronounced by churches in their worship life. Such occasions should be an opportunity for perpetrators to acknowledge their responsibility and would, thereby, give them the opportunity to be reintegrated into society. However, many details have remained open and controversial. An acknowledgement of responsibility may bring some relief to a perpetrator, but does not necessarily imply forgiveness. Who gives public institutions the authority to pronounce forgiveness? How are the people, who suffered injustice, involved in such decisions? How can the human dignity of the people, who suffered under extreme human rights violations, be respected, and the wounds and the pain inflicted on them be acknowledged and healed? Can the wounds, which a perpetrator has inflicted on his, or her humanity, be truly healed, if such a person is not expected to contribute in some way or another to reparation? Can the person who was exposed to the cruelty of such a perpetrator, take the acknowledgement of responsibility seriously, if the latter is not expected to render some contribution towards restitution?

The title of the book by Archbishop Tutu makes it also necessary to raise far-reching questions pertaining to the theology and the pastoral practice of the churches, especially with regard to the confession of sins and the pronouncement of forgiveness. Are we, as church members, expected in our worship life to disclose, in concrete terms, the truth about ourselves and about what we have done or have left undone? Do we not, as a rule, already receive forgiveness at the beginning of the worship service without disclosing the truth, except for a very formal affirmation of a confession spoken by the minister on our behalf in the liturgy? Have issues of social, economic and international justice been adequately addressed in our worship life?

Far-reaching implications emerge as soon as we consider the Biblical insight, ›No future without forgiveness‹, in the light of the prayer, which our Lord has entrusted to us for daily use. We do not take it seriously, if we overlook its allusion to our obligation to share resources, and to our responsibility to be involved in the struggle for economic justice for all people. Can we expect God's reconciliation with the world in Christ to contribute towards the transformation of our human relationships and our society, as long as the majority of the people, who have experienced extreme political repression for decades, continue to live in dire poverty? On the other hand, can we expect mere economic measures to promote reconciliation, if no steps are taken to disclose the injustice and the hurt that has been inflicted on human beings, and if we do not engage in a process of mutual forgiveness, with the aim of making a new beginning in our relationships?

I am raising these issues for the purpose of drawing attention to the importance and implications of the efforts that have recently been undertaken by the South African state to overcome the legacy of the past, in such a way that it paves the way for a new future. This is the topic of my other contribution, which focuses on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a venture intending to combine reconciliation and justice, and to achieve restorative justice. The Commission has received worldwide attention. Prominent church leaders and ministers, members of the church and other religious communities, and people without any particular religious affiliation co-operated with the state in this venture.

The Issue of Reconciliation in the Philippine Context and in Asia

Rosa Celeste Camba

Introduction

It is very timely to speak of reconciliation as we have now ushered in the new millennium. Ahead of us, we have a year of contemplation and reflection, as to what we would really like to have in the church in particular, and in society in general. This applies, particularly, to the issue of reconciliation, given the social context that is coupled with the call for jubilee throughout the world. At a time when globalisation is now aggressively being pursued, it is, in reality, for the benefit only of the rich countries and the disadvantage of poor societies. That is why we are here today in this workshop, to thoroughly understand and discuss the issue of reconciliation. If ever there was an issue of reconciliation between the rich and the poor, the powerful and powerless, the economic oppressor and the oppressed marginalised sectors of our societies, then, please allow me now to start with an understanding of the origin of the word »reconciliation«, vis-à-vis justice and peace, as reflected upon in this theological input.

Origin of the word: »reconciliation«

The Greek word for reconciliation is »katallasso«, which occurs for the first time in Romans 5,10: *»for if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by means of (›dia‹) the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved in His life«*. Contained here are four explicit ideas (cf. F.E. Marsh, the Structural Principles of the Bible, p.388):

1. those reconciled – *enemies*
2. the means by which the reconciliation is effected – *by the death of His Son*
3. the person to whom the rebels were reconciled – *to God*
4. the power to which reconciliation leads – *saved in His Life*

Related words to »reconciliation«

It is only in the New Testament books at the time of Jesus that reconciliation is revealed. It is, therefore, more significant and full of meaning. For example, the Greek word »allos« is a primary word which signifies, ›that which is different‹ and is rendered ›otherwise‹. We also find in Galatians 5,10 that from »allos« the word »allasso« is derived, which means, ›to make different‹, hence there is ›a change‹. »Katallasso«, therefore, is derived from two words: one is »kata« and the other is »allasso«, which denotes ›a mutual change‹. Hence, it rendered a meaning ›to come to an agreement, and be reconciled‹. From »katallasso« comes »katallage«, which is now the word for ›reconciliation‹. In itself, it means ›an adjustment‹. Other Greek words such as ›Diallasso‹ and ›Apokatallazo‹, which mean, respectively, ›to change thoroughly and to conciliate‹ and ›to reconcile fully‹, as found in Ephesians 2,16 and Colossians 1,20-21.

The spirit's teaching regarding reconciliation is that God effects in us a thorough change from enmity and unbelief to faith and love; hence God's purpose in the death of Christ was to bring people to each other, as well as bring them to Him. Therefore, we read the effect of faith in Christ is to break down the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles – *»that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby«,* (Ephesians 2,16). When people are right with God they want to be right with each other. Hence, Christ most emphatically says, *»if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembered that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled (diallasso) to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift«* (Matthew 5,23-24).

Reconciliation in the Philippine Context

Reconciliation, therefore, is at the centre of the Christian Gospel. It is the heart of the ministry of the Church. In our country, the Philippines, reconciliation can be a real thing if we, as people of God, would seriously examine:
– the reasons and root causes that have brought about the suffering of our people, who live in dire poverty;
– the hostility and the brokenness that separated our people from accessing the country's economic resources;
– the fact that a new kind of political arena exists in our country today, whereby the threat of militarism and cronyism seems to be returning, after the 20 years' experience of martial rule under the authoritarian rule of the Marcoses.

Reconciliation will then only come about, when the people resolve their malady by establishing a new order, which is a just and equitable social, political and economic order.

But let me, for a moment, pose a number of questions in reflection of what we are doing now. To whom do we really address the message when we call for reconciliation, especially since we are surrounded by hostilities and hatred? With whom do we want to be reconciled? For all these years the Church has been continually preaching reconciliation, but with whom have they succeeded in reaching reconciliation? Was it with the privileged few and the powerful? Or, was it with the countless underdogs and the powerless? Or, shall we be reconciled only with those who guarantee protection, and help to promote their wares, rather than criticize their defective systems and biased policies?

National reconciliation in the Philippines can only come about when the government truly serves the very purpose of its being – which is to serve and protect its people. But there will be no reconciliation as long as our government continues to be subservient to the dictates of foreign economic powers. There will be no reconciliation as long as it compromises the interest of the people by adopting the ideology of globalisation. And there will be no reconciliation as long as it dislocates and marginalises the very people that voted them into power, as in the case of the implementation of the mining act of 1995, and other anti-people laws and mechanisms. Henceforth, for a reconciliation to take place, the basic social services must be provided for the suffering people. There must be genuine distribution of land, instead of the present situation where the land is controlled by foreign investors, together with their accomplices. If that were to continue, there would be no more land for the farmers to till. The workers must be given just and appropriate wages, because no genuine reconciliation can take place as long as the management exploits workers and as long as the repayment of foreign loans, and the development and expansion of the military and its armoury remain the central budget priorities. Reconciliation can only come about when justice is served, and the ultimate reality would be genuine peace. The people will soon celebrate the jubilee and will be proud to live a life that is abundant for all.

In concrete terms, the church, as an agent of reconciliation, must follow the way of the cross as exemplified by Jesus Christ. In His desire to effect an authentic reconciliation between God and human beings, He took pains to seek out his most dangerous critics and advisers. He drove Himself out into the places where the human spirit, crippled by social oppression, was no longer capable of respecting itself, much less of reconciling itself with the powers around it. To Jesus, reconciliation should only be offered to those, who are victims of injustices, as in the case of the thousands of victims of human rights violations during the dark years of the Marcos dictatorship, and even up to the time of the present Estrada Administration.

From the perspective of faith, any sincere effort to call for reconciliation will demand a greater degree of humility and the recognition of sin. The biblical passage in 2 Corinthians 5,19-20 clearly explains this claim: *»That is, God was in Christ*

reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God«.

The life teachings and work of Jesus can all be summed up in one word – humility. In the words of Paul, *»though He was God, he took the form of a servant and dwelt among us«* (Philippians 2,5-11), God, becoming man for the sake of reconciliation, is the core of biblical faith. In other words, although he He was all-powerful, He stripped himself naked, taking the first step toward reconciliation.

It has always been beyond human comprehension that one who believes in the cause of genuine reconciliation must brace himself for sufferings and tragedies. Biblical theology reveals that the way of reconciliation is the way of the crucified. The cross of Christ – the Christian symbol – reveals, primarily, the cost of reconciliation. Indeed, it is the message behind that symbol which is disturbing. Reconciliation, as seen through the eyes of the Christian faith, is an expensive grace. It demands a high price that the human imagination fails to figure out. Reconciliation, therefore, should not be taken too lightly nor spoken of loosely.

In other words, when a person is anxious about the loss of power and pride, that person is not ready for peace or reconciliation. In the same manner, national reconciliation is not possible, when the government representing authority will not humble itself and recognise its sins or shortcomings against the people. For as long as the government cannot deliver the basic socio-economic services to the people, such as food, shelter, health, clothing, education etc., then that government is a farce. Instead of providing land to the farmers, the government has taken land, which was awarded to them through the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) of the Cory Administration, and has handed it over to the real estate developers for conversion to golf courses. Similarly, most of the vast regional and provincial lands are now awarded to foreign investors as a result of recent government policy, which has focused on privatisation. This move has succeeded in marginalising the peasants, various national minorities, workers and the mass of ordinary people. Instead of providing housing for the urban poor, their houses are being forcibly demolished or mysteriously burned, thus, driving them to extreme and sub-human conditions. Even the essential services that are needed by the people are now in the hands of local or foreign capitalists, whose insatiable hunger for profit have sacrificed the welfare and security of the people. In the end, if such events or situations continue, the call for jubilee and reconciliation will surely be very difficult to pursue, even with the arrival of the new millennium.

The Asian context

Most of the nations in Asia had been colonised. The colonisation process destroyed and displaced the people from their land. They became squatters in their own land. They were treated as second-class citizens. If these former colonisers (the Europeans, Americans and Japanese) do not rectify the sins they have committed against the people of God, genuine reconciliation shall never be realised. Colonisers have not only exploited the people but they, too, are instrumental in destroying the integrity of God's creation. As an integral part of the culture of Asian nations, the natural environment and its scenery, such as the prairies, the trees, the rivers, the wild animals and so on, should have been respected. In fact, these things should be treated as brother or sister nature. But the white people came with their chainsaws, pesticides, and other hazardous gadgets and introduced them to the people. Little by little, they have poisoned the mentality of the local inhabitants and they have helped destroy the fabric of their very existence within nature.

In a similar way, no reconciliation among the citizens of the world is possible if the ›first world‹ continues to impose onerous treaties or agreements positing the ideology of globalisation. They have succeeded in globalising poverty, even as it endangered the food security of the ›third world‹ countries, including the smaller nations in Africa. In spite of the fact that the ›third world‹ countries are their source of raw materials and cheap labour, the wealth of nations continues to be concentrated in the hands of the few. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has fittingly announced that the richest 225 individuals in the world have a combined wealth of over $1 trillion, i.e. equal to the annual income of the poorest 47 percent of the entire world's population. In addition, the UNDP declares that, »the three richest people in the world have assets that exceeded the combined gross domestic product (GDP) of the 48 less developed countries«. But the other sad fact is the one that relates to factory workers. For example, try comparing the income of the American basketball player, Michael Jordan, with that of the Asian Women who work in the Nike shoe factory. Jordan earns $20 million a year just to promote »Nike Sneakers« – which is higher than the combined annual income of 30,000 Asian women factory workers. With this kind of inequity, can there ever be authentic reconciliation? Will there ever be justice? Will there ever be peace? Are the rich nations humble enough to accept their shortcomings? Will they be willing to follow the way of the cross? That, to me, is a puzzle!

Conclusion

The issue of reconciliation, therefore, is the issue of justice. The issue of justice is also the issue of peace. Therefore, genuine or authentic reconciliation is only pos-

sible between the rich and poor nations when justice is served and peace can be enjoyed by all creation, by adopting the theory of North-South reconciliation, while solidifying the South-South relations. In that way we could fight the culture of poverty among the poorer nations and societies. And so, we must build unity in Christ, if we want to follow the way of the cross! So be it!

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Introductory sermon on 22 January 2000

Bible text: Genesis 4,9-16

Petrus Diergaardt

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Then the Lord said to Cain, »Where is Abel your brother?« He said, »I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?« And the Lord said, »What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength; you shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.« Cain said to the Lord, »My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me this day away from the ground; and from thy face I shall be hidden; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will slay me.« Then the Lord said to him, »Not so! If anyone slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.« And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest any who came upon him should kill him. Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod east of Eden.
Genesis 4,9-16

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ!

»When does the night end and the morning begin?« This question was once discussed among three Jewish rabbis. The first one suggested that the night ends in that moment, when one can distinguish the mountains from the night sky. The other one responded that, no, the new day was there when one could tell the difference between branches and leaves of a tree. The third Rabbi listened to them and thought for a long time. Then he said, »The night ends and the morning begins when it is bright enough to recognise your fellow human being as your brother or sister.«

This is a controversial story. I found it in a newspaper when I visited Cape Town at the beginning of this month. The writer, a Muslim theologian and veteran of the liberation struggle, told it in order to raise questions about the state of reconciliation

in South Africa. His problem with the story of the three rabbis was the vision, which it involves. Can we, he asked, really expect the wounded, the victims of torture and oppression, to desire to see the faces of their torturers, the murderers of their families, those who have exploited and despised them for longer than anyone can remember, as their own brothers and sisters? Doesn't the very idea of brotherhood or sisterhood become an affront if it is imposed upon the victims? And worse, isn't the whole debate on reconciliation and brotherhood also double edged, in that it silences, yet again, those who are hurt and those who are angry, since it denies them the room to mourn, to cry out their anger, and to tell their story in public?

If I look back over the ten years, which have elapsed since we gained independence here in Namibia, I can share some of the disappointment of the South African writer. His words contain more than a grain of truth, when he indicates that we have longed so much for brotherhood and sisterhood in our countries that we may have suppressed our own pain and chosen not to tell our own stories in public. The first act of the newly elected government was to proclaim the policy of national reconciliation and declare a general amnesty for all war-related crimes and atrocities. The world stood in awe and praised the Namibian people and particularly the victims, for their apparently endless ability to forgive. But today we must ask ourselves: Did we really forgive? Did our hearts really believe when our leaders told us that reconciliation in our country could only be achieved, if we »forgave and forgot«?

Our short history as an independent country shows that no policy of national reconciliation could wipe out the legacy of war and oppression. Our people are still wounded and the wounds are not healing. One can sometimes get the feeling that the disease becomes more severe every day. I ask: Do we still long to become sisters and brothers? And I can answer: I think so. I know of hardly anyone, who is really satisfied with the status quo. But are we prepared to make reconciliation, to make brotherhood and sisterhood the foundation of our lives? Here, I have my doubts. While our mouths might still proclaim the ideals of reconciliation, our hearts might share the scepticism of the theologian from Cape Town. Deep down, we might question and even reject the very idea of brotherhood, because we may feel that it did not bring about the liberation, which we had all hoped for, but rather, that it keeps us in the tight grip of the legacy of our past.

This is why I chose the story of Cain as the text for the opening service of this JPIC workshop. Cain had killed his brother Abel. He is a killer, a murderer, and no act of reconciliation can undo this fact. Secondly, the murder had set in motion a curse, which would first affect Abel, but would soon involve more and more people. God's pronouncement reads like a description of the fate of many of the torturers, the killers and the soldiers of the apartheid's system of terror. Many of them, today, are breaking down, crushed by the curse of their evil deeds. But that is not all. The biblical text goes as far as warning that Abel's murder could become the source of even

more violence. People might kill the murderer, which could incite other acts of revenge. And then the story tells us that even God himself confirms, that »if anyone slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.«

Is this our future? Are we heading for the re-emergence of the cycle of violence we had to endure during the war? I know of a number of people, who will not totally dismiss this possibility. And, in general, one could say that the mood in our country is far from being optimistic. I think it is this fear of a new outbreak of violence, which propels many Christians and some of the church leaders in our country to resist the temptation to abandon the idea of brotherhood, and to intensify the striving for sustainable reconciliation.

This was, and still is, an arduous task, because the new leadership of our country, in formulating the policy of national reconciliation, had borrowed Christian terminology. It proved to be very difficult, even in the churches, to convince ourselves that the slogan »forgive and forget« does not, indeed, represent the Christian meaning of reconciliation, nor does it lead to sustainable peace or brotherhood or sisterhood. On the other hand, we found ourselves in a situation where the traditional Christian understanding of reconciliation, according to which, culprits are expected to confess their sins and repent, was neither a realistic option in our society, nor did we fully trust its power. We were afraid that such a process could damage the authority of our new leadership, which, to a certain extent, was also tainted by the atrocities. In our effort to contribute to sustainable reconciliation in our country we, therefore, opted for the Old Testament concept of the Year of God's Grace. According to Leviticus 25, Israel had a law, which stated, that in every 50th year, all those, who, in the previous 50 years, had lost their land, their belongings or their freedom as a result of an unjust economic system, should be entitled to regain all they had lost or been deprived of. According to the Old Testament, the Year of God's Grace is not a year of judgement, but of restitution. The focus is, consequently, not on the perpetrators but on the victims. It was our intention, not to accuse or to put blame on anyone, but to address the pain of the victims, and to work for their restitution. We were aware that this programme fell short of the idea of brotherhood or sisterhood. According to our story of the three rabbis, it was not a programme for ›the morning‹ but for ›the first very murky twilight of the dawn‹.

After 10 years, we now have to ask ourselves if our efforts have been successful. There is no easy answer to this question. I believe, that with our pronouncement of the Year of God's Grace, we made the church a place for those people, who continue to suffer the pains inflicted by the past. We maybe released them from their loneliness, but I am afraid we were not very successful in our attempts for their restitution. Many wounds are still open and refuse to heal.

What is our situation now? I do believe that the two ways, which we have explored, are not yet exhausted. I still hope that more and more of the perpetrators of past

crimes will open the door of salvation by publicly confessing their sins and asking for forgiveness. And I pray that the victims will be granted more opportunity and space, and, especially, sympathy and support to air their memories and their pain, and that we will begin to see restitution as a national task, which should be taken up not only by the nation as a whole, but also by all institutions and in all relationships, in which people have committed violence and injustice against each other. But seeing the failures of both approaches, we cannot stop here. Our situation is dangerous, in that we could become satisfied with the consciousness that we have at least tried to do something.

When I read the text of this morning's sermon, I feel that the story of Cain and Abel was written precisely for a situation like ours. The story tries to answer the questions, which we all might carry in our hearts. Remembering the atrocities and seeing the culprits walking on the streets, we ask ourselves: What will happen to those people? What will happen to a world, which is full of such people? Responding to these questions, the sermon text is very realistic in stating clearly, that nothing will undo the murder of Abel. It resembles our own situation even more when it emphasises that a new cycle of violence may arise from this murder.

But in all its realism, the story of Cain is, nevertheless, a story of hope. Cain does not die; the world does not sink into violence. The story seems to envision a way of dealing with violence and atrocities, which is far below the threshold of reconciliation and brotherhood or sisterhood. The symbol for this possibility is God's mark on Cain. According to the story, it effectively stops the cycle of violence and prevents the world from perishing in chaos. At the core of the story, I find remarkable confidence in God's sustaining power. Even if the deeds of humans are terrible, the writer wants us to believe that the world is still in God's hands.

Since the very beginning, the Church has speculated on the meaning of the mark of Cain. I believe that the answer to this question can be found in the story of Cain and Abel itself, because God does not only attempt to prevent violence at the end of the story, but also at the beginning. When Cain is angry about Abel's success with his sacrifice, God approaches him: *»The Lord said to Cain, ›Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lying at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.‹«* (Genesis 4,6-7).

Doesn't this sound very similar to the third rabbi's answer to the question of when the night ends? Like the rabbi, God encourages and assures us that the night of violence and war will end in that moment, when we look up and see the face of our fellow human being. The mark of Cain therefore is our human face. It will protect us from violence and destruction. Perhaps the Rabbi went too far when he suggested that, if we look at each other, we have to see a brother. What God encourages us to do is to discern the human face, the uniqueness of each creature. He does not request

special feelings of affection. But He assures us that, if we see each other's face, we will not harm each other.

Let us, finally, consider what this means for our dealings with the atrocities of the past. The whole of the biblical testimony encourages us to continue to strive for reconciliation, brotherhood and sisterhood, and the restitution of the victims. But the story of Cain and Abel suggests another dimension. It leads our eyes, not so much to look to the past, but tries to focus them on the present. It lives from the faith that the cycle of violence can be stopped in that moment, when we look up and see each other's face. If we stop violence and injustice being committed now, we will give the wounds of the past the chance to heal. This is a great challenge to the church. If the church wants to make a contribution to overcoming the past, it needs to become much more involved in striving for justice and peace in the present. I, therefore, want to call upon this workshop to find ways, which will promote a culture of care, where we once again learn to see our faces as the marks of Cain. Let us proclaim to the world that the night has ended and that in the light of the new morning we see the face of our fellow human being. Amen.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all our understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, Amen.

Petrus Diergaardt is Bishop of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN).

Namibia during the Liberation struggle

The Role of the Church in the Struggle for Independence[1]

Peter Katjavivi

The Christian churches, and in particular the Lutheran Mission, originally came to Namibia with the early European explorers and traders, and were soon followed by German colonisers. Both launched an attack on the people of the territory, the latter searching for land, and the former for souls. As Steve Biko said,

> *»the arrogance of the churches and their monopoly on truth, beauty and moral judgement taught them to despise native customs and traditions and to seek to infuse their own values into these societies.«*
> (Steve Biko, I Write What I Like, Aelred Stubbs (Ed), Bowerdean Press, London. 1978, p 34.)

They took cover under German colonial rule in Namibia, as an appropriate authority, under which they could pursue their mission. On the whole they kept silent about German brutalities in Namibia and the harsh colonial rule later imposed by South Africa.

Today, the churches in Namibia play a prominent role in the struggle for independence. There is widespread local interaction between the churches and the nationalist movement, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO). Some individual church leaders also hold key posts in SWAPO.

The process of transformation of the church to this new role has been a slow one, passing through a phase of Africanisation, the gaining of local autonomy and the development of a radical consciousness at the grassroots level, which has matured into a black theology – the theology of liberation – which identifies firmly with the struggle for national independence.

Colonisation and the Churches

Missionary Activity

By the time the current borders of Namibia were laid down, the territory had already been subject to missionary activity for over half a century. Traders and explorers laid

1 Peter Katjavivi (Ed.), Church and Liberation in Namibia, London: Pluto 1989, pp. 1-26.

the foundations of European penetration, but missionaries were never far behind. The pioneer missionaries came from the London Missionary Society and the Wesleyan chapels, and began to operate in Namibia from 1802. They were followed from the 1840s onwards, by German and then Finnish Lutherans.

The first successful and stable mission was established by Hugo Hahn, a Lutheran explorer, crusader and missionary, sponsored by the Rhenish Missionary Society in Germany. Hahn established his mission at Otjikango near Okahandja in 1844 and was later responsible, in 1857, for a reconnaissance trip, which led to the opening up of Ovamboland to missionary work. The Finnish missionaries started their work in Ovamboland in the 1870s.

The missionaries originally set up their activities alongside, and linked to, the trading outposts. Both groups benefited from the other's activities as they reached wider areas and more people. Consequently, the connection between the church and those, who wished to gain an economic hold on the country, was established in the minds of the Namibian people. Indeed, the suspicion and lack of enthusiasm, with which the local inhabitants first met the missionaries, were proved well founded later, as their entry into the country was used as a stepping-stone towards formal colonisation and land dispossession.

Generally accepting that their work would be assisted by, and would be successful under, the formal sanction of colonial rule, the missionaries welcomed and contributed to its advent. Under German colonial rule, church-state collaboration became more manifest. While the Germans conducted their war of extermination (1904-1907) against the Namibian people, the German Lutheran church hierarchies did very little to stop them.

Throughout the spread of German and, later, South African rule in Namibia, the churches played an integral role as part of the colonial process. Missionaries and church workers were part of the foreign settler community. As their influence spread and the churches became established, they began to build schools and hospitals for the local population, but they did not oppose colonisation and its bitter consequences for the Namibian people. With the destruction of their society and institutions and the consolidation of colonialism, Namibians moved to join the churches in search of some sense of security through their patronage, and the salvation offered by the Christian message – hope in a hopeless situation. It was not until the churches had extended their influence throughout the land and converted the vast majority of the people, that they began to be converted themselves by their black membership and, thereby, to be transformed from a colonising agent to an instrument of change.

Church Bodies

The most widespread missionary influence in Namibia was that exercised by the United Evangelical Mission – formerly the Rhenish Mission – and the Finnish

Mission. This grouping of the Lutheran Church later gave rise to two independent black churches: the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo-Kavango Church (ELOK) (now called ELCIN) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELK). ELOK, with a membership in 1989 of some 360,000, was led by Bishop Dr Leonard Auala until his death in 1982, when he was succeeded by Bishop Kleopas Dumeni. The ELK is led by Bishop Hendrik Frederik and Revd Dr Zephanja Kameeta, who is Deputy Bishop. It has a membership of about 193,000. The white German Lutheran Church (DELK) still refuses to be integrated into the mainstream of the Lutheran Church in Namibia because of its racist attitude.

The Anglican Church started its missionary work in Namibia in 1924. Although small in membership in comparison to the Lutherans, its leaders have a reputation for being outspoken against the South African authorities. By the beginning of the 1960s, an open conflict had developed between the South African government and the Anglican Church, whose leadership had, thus, emerged as fairly influential in championing the cause of the oppressed. From 1968, this church was led by Bishop Colin Winter who, after his expulsion from Namibia in 1972, continued as bishop in exile until his death in London in 1981. The Anglican Church is now led by Bishop James Kauluma and has a membership of about 120,000.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) was one of the early churches to break away in the 1940s from the then white-controlled Lutheran Church. It is a thriving church, although its membership is mostly confined to the south and central part of Namibia. The Presiding Elder is Revd Bartholomeus G. Karuaera, who is also a SWAPO Executive Committee member. Other leading AME figures are Revd Hendrik Witbooi (also the SWAPO Vice-President) and Revd E.S. Tjirimuje (SWAPO National Treasurer inside Namibia).

The Oruuano (or Unity) Church is another breakaway community-based body. Established in 1955, and led originally by Revd Leonard Ruzo, the Oruuano Church is based in the central part of Namibia and has members only from among the Hereros. It played a dynamic role in rallying support for the anti-colonial struggle but unfortunately suffered because of political differences within the Herero community.

Apart from these, there are a few other churches, including the Methodist, Catholic and Dutch Reformed Churches. The Catholic Church began work in Namibia at the beginning of the twentieth century, by which time the country was more or less dominated by the Lutherans. Over a period of time, it established medical services and its own schools, including a high school, Döbra, outside Windhoek. It faced constant disagreement with the government over the running of its institutions and because of its well-organised communities, and its attempts to run them along lines of racial harmony. Membership is estimated currently to be 195,000. It is led by Bishop Bonifatius Haushiku.

The Dutch Reformed Church is linked to the South African Reformed Church. It stands for the policy of social separation of human groups in South Africa (extended to include Namibia in this context), and the protection of the White race, which is the repository of Christian civilisation and whose mission it is to guide the other races in a State where order reigns (cf. Zedekia Ngavirue, Political Parties, Organisations and Other Groups in South West Africa, 1945-65, Part II, Presented at the University of Stockholm, Autumn 1965). It is therefore clear, that this church works actively in cementing the ruling racist ideology of apartheid, both in South Africa and Namibia. Obviously the message has got across, even to the apostles of apartheid themselves, as shown by this report in the Windhoek Advertiser (22 October 1979):

»Missionary work by the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in South West Africa often had to cope with severe political antagonism and was sometimes referred to as the ›apartheid church‹, the ›army church‹. Some political groups and church groups continuously refer to our missionary work as a front organisation for the apartheid government.«

Since this church is seen for what it is, it has not gained membership from any group in Namibia other than the white Afrikaner community.

Competition between the churches for influence in Namibia was not as great as in some other parts of Africa. There was naturally some rivalry, but, on the whole, the various missions went to different parts of the country. Once they had become established, each consolidated its membership and sphere of influence. Today, 80 percent of the black population of Namibia professes the Christian faith.

Africanisation

Community Participation

Excluded from participation in the political life of the country, and from economic participation other than as unskilled workers with no rights, Namibians found in the churches an institution in which they could participate, and which they could begin to claim for their own. In a country in which indigenous social institutions had been destroyed or taken over, through the course of colonisation, the churches in Namibia provided a limited means of social mobility, whereby people could receive some training and achieve a certain status.

Professor H. Lasswell says that among subjected peoples,

»the precursors of nationalism may appear in the multiplication of native sects in competition with sects and denominations which are foreign controlled.«

(Harold Lasswell, Politics. Who Gets What, When, How, Meridian Books, London, 1958, p. 159)

Thus it was in Namibia. Two breakaway churches were formed, mostly amongst members of the Lutheran Church, spurred on by dissatisfaction with the particularly close identification of the Lutheran Church with the colonial authorities. The first of these was the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME). Originally founded in the USA as a result of growing consciousness among black people, its burning desire was that the community should control its own affairs. It established self-help projects to help meet the basic social and educational needs of its members. In the latter part of the nineteenth century this movement spread to Africa with the establishment of churches in Ethiopia, South Africa and, in the 1940s, Namibia. In Namibia the AME had a tremendous appeal, especially in the south. The majority of the people, including the most influential section of the community, became members and supporters. One prominent AME member was Chief Samuel H. Witbooi, successor to Chief Hendrik Witbooi, the famous guerrilla leader, who fought the Germans in the war of resistance (1904-1907). The Witbooi family continues to provide community and church leadership in the south, in defiant opposition to Namibia's South African rulers. Another dynamic figure, who appeared on the scene during the 1940s and 1950s, proselytising for the AME in the central part of Namibia, with his headquarters in Windhoek, was Revd M.M. Sephula. Many people joined the AME as a result of his efforts. Most Herero members, however, left the AME, when the Oruuano Church was subsequently established. The Oruuano Church was founded in 1955 by Hereros, leading to a mass exodus from the Lutheran Church. The decision to launch the Oruuano Church was arrived at after lengthy consultations within the community. The author recalls his aunt, Maria Mbandii Tjihungu, an evangelist in the local Lutheran Church in Okandjira in Ovitoto reserve, presenting her decision to join the new church. She laid great stress on the importance of personal conscience in this matter, and indeed, the founders of the church insisted that no coercion – moral or otherwise – should be used to encourage people to join. The Oruuano Church retained all practices of the parent church in matters of worship, but injected a new and lively element. Its direct approach to issues that affected the lives of its members created a new sense of identity in the community, in extreme contrast to the white-controlled Lutheran Church, which tended to avoid dealing openly with such matters for fear of offending the South African authorities.

Reactions to injustice

Zedekia Ngavirue, in a paper presented at the University of Stockholm, has said that:

> *»The actual break [of the Oruuano Church] seems to have been precipitated by the appointment of Dr H. Vedder, the spiritual leader of the [Lutheran] church, to the South African Senate by the late Dr D.F. Malan in 1950. This incident, and Dr Vedder's speeches in the Senate in support of apartheid could not be without implications on the church.«*

(Zedekia Ngavirue, Political Parties, Organisations and Other Groups in South West Africa, 1945-65, Part II, Presented at the University of Stockholm, Autumn 1965)

Even after a century of religious work in Namibia, most of the schools established by the Lutheran Church could offer only basic education, not exceeding Standard III (about five years' education). This was a major grievance, which led to many people leaving the Lutheran Church to form their own church, and to attempt to take control of their own affairs.

Grievances were heightened further in the aftermath of the Afrikaner Nationalist Party's ascendancy to power in South Africa in 1948, and the extension of its racist ideology and practice to Namibia. While the Anglicans and Catholics resisted, as best they could, moves by the regime to take over their schools, the Lutheran hierarchy found it more difficult to resist because of the appointment of its leader, Dr Vedder, to the Senate in Pretoria. In this way the South African government won over the spiritual leadership of the Lutheran Church in Namibia and further alienated its membership.

Pressure was also exerted, however, by those Namibians remaining within the Lutheran Church, who were seeking a greater say in the church's affairs. There was gross inequality between black and white clergy, with the white pastors steadfastly maintaining control. As a pupil during his stay in the 1950s in both Okahandja and Windhoek, the author has a vivid recollection of how African priests, some of them quite old, and including the more prominent ones, used to struggle to maintain themselves while they performed their duties as pastors. Many would walk a journey of several miles a day, while their white counterparts, some quite young, were housed in modern houses and had all sorts of facilities and amenities, including transport, at their disposal.

In an article in a Lutheran Church publication, Revd Dr Manas Buthelezi of South Africa had reported on the great disparity between the wages of white and black clergy. The same rates were then also applied in Namibia. He said:

»The naked fact is that the present salary system in our Church has made Pastors victims of poverty, even by the standards of the unhappy economic conditions in the communities they serve [...] This is a matter of deliberate policy rather than something that can be explained solely on the basis of economic factors.«

(Sunday Tribune (Durban), 9 March 1969, quoted in Namibia News, vol. 2, nos 1-3 (Jan-March 1969), SWAPO, London Office)

He cited figures for wages in 1969: Africans received between R 20 and R 90 as a top rate per month, while whites earned between R 70 and R 200 per month.

In the 1950s, a substantial portion of the black membership of the Rhenish Lutheran Church united in opposition to such inequalities and to the racial discrimination within church structures. The result was the establishment, not only of the two breakaway churches, but also of the autonomous and locally run Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELK) in 1957.

The essence of the upsurge of the Namibian people's new sense of identity was captured in a later pastoral letter from ELOK and ELK to their members. They quoted the following biblical passage (Matthew 5,39), traditionally used to suppress unrest or anger: »But what I tell you is this: do not set yourself against the man who wrongs you. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn and offer him your left.« But they then continued:

»If you are slapped on the cheek whether by an individual or by the ruling class of our country, in turning the other cheek like Jesus did before Pilate, as Christians we at least have the right to ask, ›Why are you slapping me?‹«

(ELOK and ELK text read in churches throughout the country, 18 July 1971. cf.: Peter Katjavivi (ed.), Church and Liberation in Namibia, London: Pluto 1989, pp. 136-8)

This was the beginning of a change in the church's attitude to colonial rule. Christian ideology began to be directed against South African rule, using the Christian doctrines of love and compassion to accuse the existing social, economic and political order of injustice.

Political Dilemmas

Prominent Namibian church leaders co-operated with traditional leaders, groups such as the Herero Chiefs' Council, teachers and students, in the spread of education and a growing political awareness among the people, providing leadership and an organisational framework for their mobilisation. In response to the continued harsh rule of South Africa, however, and in recognition of the need for new tactics to confront the colonial power, political parties were formed in the late 1950s on a nation-wide basis. The new parties offered an alternative forum for organisation and political action, and led to a partial eclipse of the influence and authority of church leaders.

As the political parties gained support, some of the established churches, in particular the Lutherans and Catholics, grew disquieted at the radicalisation of the political climate and nervous that their influence might be undermined. On the whole they still played a safe game, trying to keep a low profile and avoid confrontation with the South African authorities, for at that time their leaders were not yet in the same mould as Bishop Donald Lamont of Mutare, Zimbabwe, who said:

»Preach the Bishop must, not permitting himself to be silenced by merely human fears or temporal considerations; not watering down his message for the sake of spurious peace or loss of friendship with any worldly authority or possibility of being misinterpreted by wicked men.«

(Bishop Donald Lamont, cited in: Colin Winter, Namibia: The Story of a Bishop in Exile, Lutterworth Press, London, 1977, p. 168)

In particular, SWAPO's decision to take up arms was one that caused an intense dilemma for the church. It is a dilemma that persists for many to this day, as the debate

continues within the churches about the use of arms to achieve political ends. While many church leaders have since declared themselves pacifists and refused to envisage personal participation in the armed struggle, they have also been unable to denounce it. Faced with the injustice of South African rule and the thwarted attempts to bring about peaceful change, most Namibians, church members or not, have come to accept the practical inevitability of armed struggle as a means of attaining their freedom and independence.

Force for Change

Open Opposition

Many clergy and church workers actively tried to work within their own constituencies to get the church hierarchies to practise, more widely, the Christian message that they preach. The younger clergy, in particular, were responsible for shaping new directions in church policy, and getting the churches to face up to the challenges and realities of the situation in Namibia. Gradually, lines of communication were extended between the various church bodies and with other social and political formations.

This unity was forged in 1971, when, in the wake of the International Court of Custice (ICJ) decision supporting Namibian independence, the two major Lutheran churches stated jointly, and in public, their position on the issue of justice in Namibia. Trying to find weapons to use against the ICJ ruling, the South African government had approached the two Lutheran churches in Namibia, assuming, mistakenly, that they would find support for their continued rule. The churches, however, demonstrated their new loyalty to the oppressed. Thus, on 30 June 1971, in the form of an open letter to South African Prime Minister Vorster, Moderator P. Gowaseb (ELK) and Bishop Dr L. Auala (ELOK) declared their position:

> *»We believe that South Africa, in its attempts to develop the country, has failed to take cognisance of human rights as declared by the United Nations in the year 1948, with respect to the non-White population.«*

They went on to list a series of examples of injustices suffered by the Namibian people under South African rule, and concluded with the following declaration from the church boards:

> *»Our urgent wish is that in terms of the declarations of the World Court in co-operation with the United Nations, of which South Africa is a member, your Government will seek a peaceful solution to the problems of our land, and will see to it that human rights be put into operation and that South West Africa may become a self-sufficient and independent State.«*
>
> (Event, (Feb./March 1974), vol. 14, no. 2, American Lutheran Church, Minneapolis)

Simultaneously, the church boards issued a pastoral letter, stating in no uncertain terms, their opposition to the racist, apartheid colonial system:

»True peace does not allow people to hate each other. But we observe that our people are caught up with fear [...] in our opinion this fateful development is caused and upheld by the policy of apartheid. We believe that a false impression arises when it is stated that peace reigns in our country. The peace is maintained by forceful measures [...] Our purpose is to stand for the truth and for a better future for our people and races, even when it involves suffering for us.«

(Event, (Feb./March 1974), vol. 14, no. 2, American Lutheran Church, Minneapolis)

The pastoral letter was read in every church in Namibia, and its impact was profound. The two other main churches – the Anglican and Catholic – gave their full and public support to the Lutherans' stand.

»The Christian Church, as the conscience of this nation, must speak out with clarity and without fear,« stated Bishop Colin Winter on 25 July 1971. »Apartheid must be denounced as unacceptable before God.«

(Winter, Namibia, p.116)

Bishops Auala and Winter and Moderator Gowaseb were attacked by the South African pro-government press and authorities for this stand. But they remained firm in the knowledge that they expressed the will of the people. On 18 August, Gowaseb and Auala and other members of the Lutheran church boards confronted Vorster face to face in Windhoek. Unflinchingly, they presented an indictment of South African rule in Namibia and reaffirmed their commitment to national unity and independence. This courageous and inspiring leadership brought the churches into the mainstream of the nationalist movement.

The transformation of the churches, to the point where they were prepared to face national issues and stand against the colonial authorities, was slow. But when it came, it brought with it a formidable strength of opposition to South African rule. After 1971, the churches forged a unity between themselves and with other social forces, which greatly strengthened the political struggle. The ecumenical Christian Centre in Windhoek, founded in the mid-1970s, provided an educational and cultural centre and a forum for the exchange of ideas and debate on the nature and direction of the struggle for independence. In 1977, the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) was formed, and provided further opportunities for the various church denominations to come together to share their experience and make joint statements on matters of common interest. The CCN is an ecumenical body whose concerns extend from religious to social and educational matters. It was originally made up of the following churches: the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME); the Anglican Diocese of Namibia; the Evangelical Lutheran Church in SWA/Namibia (ELC); the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN); the Methodist Church; and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). The Dutch Reformed Church has never been part of

the CCN. The German Evangelical Lutheran Church became observers, and then members, but withdrew from the CCN in 1987, accusing it of being too politicised.

The leadership of the CCN is currently composed of the following officers: President, Bishop Hendrik Frederick of the ELK; Vice-Presidents, Sister Irmgart, OSB, of the RCC and Reyd Matti Amadhila of the ELCIN; General Secretary, Dr Abisai Shejavali; and Associate General Secretary, Mr Vezera Kandetu. The leaders of all the member churches are members of the executive committee, which guides the work of the CCN between its annual general meetings of church representatives. With repression of political organisations opposed to the South African regime, the CCN has become the major forum for community involvement and development, and has played an active role in defence of the victims of South African repression, imprisonment and torture. Through the CNN structures, churches are increasingly providing social, welfare, educational and legal services. In addition, individual church members also run social and educational projects within their area of domain.

SWAPO/Church Relations

Over the 70 to 100 years since missionaries first came to Namibia, the churches have come a long way. From being an active part of the colonisation process they have come full circle to join hands with the forces for social liberation in Namibia. As they share a common membership, and as individual churchmen and women have become leading members of SWAPO, the churches have become increasingly identified with the nationalist struggle. Throughout the 1970s they stood side by side with SWAPO, in resistance to South African rule, and suffered similar repression at the hands of the authorities.

In December 1971, immediately after the favourable ruling by the international Court of justice, Namibian contract workers had called a general strike. The strike, which affected the whole country and brought production, mining and farming to a standstill, was supported by SWAPO, the churches and by many international bodies.

This also helped to strengthen the working relationship between SWAPO, the churches and the workers. In Namibia News, early in 1972, SWAPO expressed the growing unity of purpose of its own and the church's activities:

> *»The overall struggle for our freedom has many facets, and the strike by our workers is a major one [...] To us Namibians there is only one struggle, of which the strike, the guerrilla activity, schoolchildren's demonstrations and churchmen's pastoral letters all are a part.«*
> (Namibia News, vol. 5, nos. 1-2, (Jan./Feb. 1972), SWAPO, London Office)

SWAPO has, however, stated in its political programme, adopted in 1976, that:

> *»In the present phase, armed struggle has become the main form of SWAPO's resistance to South Africa's racist, oppressive and exploitative occupation of Namibia.«*
> (SWAPO Political Programme, Department for Information and Publicity, Lusaka, adopted 1976)

The Church Persecuted

South Africa's reaction was to increase repression. This was extended to the church, which was told to confine itself to spiritual and churchly matters, and to keep out of politics. When its leading members refused to comply they faced imprisonment or detention, and expatriate church leaders were expelled from the country.

Nevertheless, there have always been white church members strongly opposed to multiracial churches or societies, who fought against any change. Their attitude has been characterised in a tale told by Bishop Winter: »›Jesus Christ Superstar‹,« he said, »was a bigger issue to the Calvinist ministers in Windhoek than civil floggings in public of Black students and nurses in Ovamboland.« Within the church, too, racism continues. One leading white Namibian churchman recounted an incident in the early 1970s at the home of a white church member in Windhoek. He and his black counterpart were both served refreshments by their white host – but the black churchman was left abandoned on the veranda while the whites took tea inside the house.

The first victims of South Africa's clampdown were workers from all churches, although the Anglicans were hit hardest. Three of their bishops were expelled: Bishop Robert Mize (1968); Bishop Colin Winter and his staff (1972); and Bishop Richard Wood (1975). In 1978, the Anglican Vicar General Ed Morrow was also expelled, along with Father Heinz Hunke of the Catholic Church and Justin Ellis, Assistant Director of the Christian Centre in Windhoek. Hunke and Ellis were co-authors of the booklet, »Torture: A Cancer in Our Society«, which cites affidavits detailing torture of detainees by the South African security forces.

Apart from tactics of intimidation and deportation of leading and outspoken church workers, the South African regime has adopted other methods in the attempt to undermine the churches' stand against it. It has tried to foster disunity and dissent within the churches, and to set one section against another. Visas and permits for clergy to move within their communities and abroad were denied. Fraternal visits from Lutheran clergy and others from outside Namibia were also prevented.

Within the Anglican Church, the South African government tried to instil disunity by promoting a handpicked group who ›baptised‹ themselves the Ovamboland Independent Church, under the leadership of Petrus Kalangula. The regime attempted to sell this apparently independent black church overseas, particularly in the southern US states. Appeals for funds were made through South African government circles to church bodies in the United States. The attempt to promote this church, to compete with the Anglican Church led by Bishop Colin Winter – renowned for his outspoken opposition to South African rule, failed, because of the level of political consciousness of the Anglican members. Kalangula was later to become Minister in the Ovamboland Bantustan, and is now its Chief Minister.

Indeed, this consciousness was further demonstrated when the overwhelmingly black Anglican Church Synod voted democratically to retain Bishop Winter as their

head, even in exile after 1972. It was a symbolic move to demonstrate to the South African authorities that they could not succeed in silencing the church.

The Lutherans have not avoided retaliatory action by the regime either. A vicious attack was launched on the ELOK printing press at Oniipa on 11 May 1973. Bibles and schoolbooks were among the many items destroyed. It is generally believed that South African government agents were responsible.

The churches have also been attacked by the South African authorities, through their individual members. For example, in 1974, the practice of flogging suspected SWAPO members and sympathisers became widespread in Ovamboland, conducted by the Ovamboland Bantustan authorities, with the aid and connivance of the South African police and army. Most of the victims were also church members. This led to the church taking legal action in the Windhoek High Court to stop this barbaric treatment of the regime's opponents. The action, led by Bishops Auala and Wood, was successful, and the floggings eventually ceased. But the consequences for Bishop Wood was his deportation, and for Bishop Auala, an even closer scrutiny of his movements and activities and threats to his life.

International Connections

As the churches have become more involved with the struggle for independence, they have also participated in Namibia-related work within the international community. This started mainly through their existing external contacts with associated churches that were once the missionaries' parent bodies. This external network was expanded later to include other international church bodies, and, specifically, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches and the All-Africa Council of Churches.

These bodies have continued to play an important role in providing inter-church solidarity and in taking up the cause of the people of Namibia. Although not all parent churches welcomed their clergy exiled from Namibia – as in the case of Bishop Colin Winter and Father Heinz Hunke – others, and especially the Lutherans, have shown sympathy towards the new role the church has found for itself in Namibia. Such sympathy has produced concrete results in terms of funds to support practical projects, run by the churches to assist in the social and educational advancement of the Namibian people.

The work of the Namibian churches has also extended to ministering to Namibians in exile. Church work is maintained through clergy and general pastoral work in the refugee settlements outside Namibia that are under SWAPO's care. Similarly, external church institutions have assisted in funding SWAPO health and educational projects in these settlements.

In his Reith lectures on BBC radio in November 1979, Professor Ali Mazrui talked of the Christianisation of Africa, and concluded that a necessary reassertion of

African values and cultural heritage over Western religious subculture would be slow. But he said:

»Independence is not merely an economic condition, it has also to become a cultural relationship. The Western world has to experience a shift in its way of looking at reality, a shift in the direction of cultural humility, readiness to be influenced by others, and a willingness to help construct a new and more balanced international order.«

(The Times, London, 22 Nov. 1979)

On the whole, the Namibian churches and some external church bodies have made this shift in relation to their stand on the situation in Namibia. This is witnessed in the words of Pastor Mikko Iliamaki, a Finnish missionary, who served in Namibia for ten years before being expelled by the South African authorities:

»Let us be glad that God spreads his Word and good news among people of all yskin colours in Namibia, the country of racial tensions. The struggle of the African Christians in Namibia is an example of encouragement to us and also calls us to genuine self-examination.«

(Event, Feb./March 1974, p. 41)

The Namibian churches have also been involved in making representation to Western governments, particularly the Contact Group of the Five Western members of the UN Security Council (1977-78) who initiated plans for the holding of elections in Namibia under the auspices of the UN. Earlier, they had contacted the then Secretary of State, Dr Henry Kissinger, before his meeting with South African Prime Minister Vorster in June 1976. They made the following presentation to Kissinger about the Turnhalle conference in Windhoek:

»The truth about these talks is that the vast majority of the Black population has no confidence or interest in them. One reason for this is that the Black delegations which are said to represent various population groups there have no mandate from those whom they represent [...] Another more important reason why these talks are suspect is the domination of white officials [...] behind the facade of a promised new order. We can only conclude that the Turnhalle talks in the present form have a negligible chance of success.«

(Letter to Dr H. Kissinger, 18 June 1976, signed by Dr J.L. de Vries (ELK), Bishop Dr L. Auala (ELOK), Bishop R. Koppmann (Catholic), Revd E. Morrow (Anglican). See: Peter Katjavivi (Ed.), Church and Liberation in Namibia, London: Pluto 1989, p. 139)

Since the Turnhalle talks, the Namibian churches have stood firm and united against the further Bantustanisation of the country. They have opposed the imposition of an internal settlement, the unilateral South African-run elections in December 1978 – after which the National Assembly, with majority representation from the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) was formed, and resisted attempts by South

Africa to divert the course of the nationalist struggle by setting up an interim administration with the Multi-Party Conference (MPC). The churches have, thus, gained an international standing, whereby they are consulted by international organisations, governments and the United Nations on matters concerning the future of Namibia. One example is that of the proximity talks held in New York in March 1979, organised by the Western Five with the participation of South Africa, SWAPO and the United Nations, in which the churches had observer status and were available for consultation.

Black Theology

As the churches in Namibia have grown more involved in the nationalist struggle, they have, of necessity, adapted and developed their theology. Namibians have had to face the combined force of Afrikaner-controlled church and state and the spread of Christian nationalist philosophy through the education system, with its emphasis on preparing different races for their different roles in apartheid society. The symbol of Afrikaner domination is »Die Boer met sy Bybel en sy Röer« (»The Boer with his Bible and rifle«). A vital part of the nationalist struggle has been the assertion of black consciousness and dignity. Liberation theology has developed as an important part of this struggle for a means of greater self-awareness and self-esteem, and of liberation from a state of poverty, suffering, humiliation, exploitation and family disintegration.

Steve Biko expressed the approach of black theology succinctly:

»What of the White man's religion – Christianity? It seems the people involved in imparting Christianity to the Black people steadfastly refuse to get rid of the rotten foundation, which many of the missionaries created when they came. To this date, black people find no message for them in the Bible simply because our ministers are still too busy with moral trivialities [...] They constantly urge the people to find fault in themselves and by so doing detract from the essence of the struggle in which the people are involved [...] Obviously the only path open for us now is to redefine the message in the Bible and to make it relevant to the struggling masses. The Bible must not be seen to preach that all authority is divinely instituted. It must rather preach that it is a sin to allow oneself to be oppressed. The Bible must continually be shown to have something to say to the Black man to keep him going in his long journey towards realisation of the self. This is the message implicit in ›Black theology‹. Black theology seeks to do away with spiritual poverty of the Black people [...] while basing itself on the Christian message, Black theology seeks to show that Christianity is an adaptable religion that fits in with the cultural situation of the people to whom it is imparted. Black theology seeks to depict Jesus as a fighting God who saw the exchange of Roman money – the oppressor's coinage – in His Father's tem-

ple as so sacrilegious that it merited a violent reaction from Him – the Son of Man.«

(Biko, I Write What I like, pp. 31-2)

An important centre for the development of a black theology has been the Lutheran seminary and theological college at Otjimbingwe. This has produced a number of leading pastors, who have gone on to contribute much to the nationalist struggle.

Towards the end of 1974, a group of young church members initiated a meeting between church leaders, SWAPO and other political and social groups, drawing their inspiration from the Black consciousness philosophy in South Africa. The object was to discuss and analyse the role of the church and the position it should take vis-à-vis the nationalist struggle and the South African colonial regime. Debating the question of a potential neutral position for the church, the majority of church leaders and members present confirmed their identification with the aspirations of the oppressed, and their commitment to openly challenging the South African colonial regime on matters of freedom and independence. The importance of this issue was summed up by Pastor Albertus Maasdorp.

»The question of neutrality«, he said, »is a very dangerous one. In the matter of racialism, no one may ever be neutral or silent.«

(Albertus Maasdorp, Master's Thesis of 1971, cited in Event, Feb./March 1974, p.12)

The involvement of churchmen and women, active in the struggle for independence in Namibia, continues, for some, to raise the question of whether the church had not better leave the political struggle to politicians and concentrate on their own constituency. This has been aptly answered by Pastor Kameeta, SWAPO Executive Committee member:

»The struggle in our land has to do not only with the liberation of Namibia, but it goes further and deeper than that. The presence of the South African Government is not just a political question, but it is a threat to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus, I see it as the task of every Christian to see to the knocking down of this Government.

The South African Government and its supporters proclaim [...] especially by what they do [...] a message diametrically opposed to the Gospel. While God tells us that in Jesus Christ He has broken down the wall of separation between Himself and us, and between our fellowmen and us, the South African Government proclaims and builds the wall of separation, which brings about alienation, mistrust and prejudice, fear, hatred and enmity.

Therefore, I see the struggle in Southern Africa and especially here in Namibia, not merely as a political struggle, in which all Christians are called to participate. And if this should happen, an armed struggle can be avoided, because the word of the cross is enough for us to be able to tackle this task [...] Or should

God withdraw from the history of this world, hand it over to the Devils, and restrict Himself to the temples and church buildings?«
(Cited in Gerhard Tötemeyer, South West Africa/Namibia; Facts, Attitudes, Assessment and Prospects, Fokus Suid Publishers, Johannesburg, 1977, pp. 221-2)

Conclusion

The true test of the close relationship between the churches in Namibia and the nationalist movement will come after independence in the process of the reconstruction of a new society. It is here, that the divide may grow again between church member and politics. For although the paths of the two have come together in the anti-colonial struggle to free Namibia from South African rule, they may diverge once that objective has been achieved. The British Council of Churches and the Conference of British Missionary Societies highlighted this issue in their 1970 report, Violence in Southern Africa:

»Only if the Church is, and is seen to be, on the side of the revolution in Southern Africa, suffering and sharing in the guilt of spilt blood, can the church then, from within the situation, then judge the revolution [...] Revolution inevitably involves suffering, death, separation and the ruin of human lives [...] It seems likely that only a church within the revolution can help to humanise it [...but] to be within a revolution, and from there to speak prophetically to it, may be both illogical and terrifying.«
(Violence in Southern Africa: A Christian Assessment, British Council of Churches, SCM Press Ltdy, London, 1970, p. 73)

This is the challenge that the church in Namibia accepts it must face. A group of churchmen and women from Namibia and national and international church groups further expressed this idea at a 1980 international conference on Namibia:

»It is only after being faithful to this overall imperative of truthful confrontation, and after having defeated the system of injustice and lies that the churches will be able to work towards a further step of liberation – the work of Namibian nation-building in the light of national reconciliation. Oppressor and oppressed, aggressor and aggressed cannot be reconciled by the Church except in the context of a just society under the scrutiny of truth. The aggressor must be resisted; the oppressed has not only the right, but is urgently called on by Christ to stand up and take freedom.«
(Statement by the Church Group at the International Conference for Solidarity with the People of Namibia, Paris, 11-13 September 1980)

It is to be hoped that the special relationship between the churches and the nationalist movement in Namibia will continue, and that the churches may continue to play a positive role now, and in the process of reconstruction of a future indepen-

dent Namibia. Nevertheless, the church would be the first to admit that its role cannot be one of leading a political struggle, but one of consultation and advice, as well as providing material assistance in the process of reconstruction. The leading role will have to be undertaken by a political party, and, at this stage, the only obvious candidate is SWAPO, matured through experience and suffering in the struggle for independence.

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Government and Opposition in Post-Independence Namibia: Perceptions and Performance[1]

Joseph Diescho

1. Introduction

In one African country, not so very long ago, the spectre of democratisation called for the existence and functioning of a multiplicity of parties. Each party had an opportunity to campaign across the country. After three parties had been to one particular village with virtually similar messages – that each of them was better than all the others and that only its leadership loved the villagers and would solve their problems – the villagers got tired of attending campaign rallies. When the fourth party came, the attendance was dismal. Only senior chiefs came, sent to submit the views prevalent in the village. The spokesman of the spokesmen said,

> *»We are tired of these meetings that are rendering everyone, especially our wives, lazy. You all come here, tell us that you love us and that you know how to solve our problems. We hear that, and we understand that our problem is this: Why don't you, whoever you are and wherever you come from, get together there, work out one story and come to us as one group with one solution?«*

The above story illustrates the reality of ›doing politics‹ in accordance with established western democratic principles in Africa, in general, and in Namibia in particular. One sees in this story how the vote-hungry politicians and the potential voters are at cross-purposes. The way in which the actors communicate, hints at three problems:

1. The existence of two disparate political frames of references – one a traditional African one, and the other a modern Western one,
2. An imposed and foreign political leadership style, and
3. An electioneering style ill-equipped to accommodate and mobilise cultural sentiments of a pre-industrial, illiterate or semi-literate constituency.

In 1994, shortly before the second general elections, Prime Minister Hage Geingob said: »If the opposition parties self-destruct (sic), we in SWAPO, as the

1 Source: Namibia Institute for Democracy (Ed.), Building Democracy. Perceptions and Performance of Government and Opposition in Namibia, Windhoek: NID, 1996, pp. 4-25.

ruling party will have to create a working opposition party in the interest of democracy«. This statement, though made in a jocular fashion, signifies a professed commitment on the part of the ruling party to the ideal of governing a country with opposition. Paradoxically at the same time, the ruling party, in a political sense, does not easily brook being opposed by anyone, much less by a person or by a party or parties, perceived to have been less than revolutionary in the struggle for liberation and independence – a role that SWAPO believes to have ›patented‹ for itself and no other. Herein lies the dilemma for opposition politics in Namibia – how to oppose SWAPO, without running the risk of being accused of wishing the return of the bad old days of apartheid colonialism.

Democracy and loyal opposition go hand in glove. Since independence, Namibia's democracy has developed on the premise that whoever is in power has to permit the existence and activities of opposition parties. Beginning with the first election campaign in 1989, all political parties were legal and free to participate in Namibia's national politics and to contest for governmental functions. A multiparty system, with one dominant party and a host of lesser parties, is already a mark of democracy in Namibia, something that is clearly a good beginning toward a truly participatory political system in a continent that eschewed such systems in the past.

However, despite the fact that six years have passed since the attainment of political independence in 1990, the political opposition parties in Namibia appear more shapeless, and face a bigger crisis of identity, than prior to the elections. Having been located on either side of the independence issue, the raison d'être of opposition parties is unclear, both to the parties themselves, and to their followers, for a number of reasons.

Firstly, and in a real sense, opposition parties have great difficulty in mobilising the necessary strength and resources to survive. The state machinery is too powerful, not only in terms of the state's power to co-opt and render everybody materially vulnerable, but also because the opposition itself feeds into the logic of an evolving and clientist state with a ›hero leader‹ at the top.

Secondly, as long as current opposition parties continue to project an anti-SWAPO image as their benchmark of doing politics, their role and future will remain problematic.

Thirdly, for as long as the attainment of freedom from South Africa remains the highest mark of leadership in Namibia, it will be impossible for the opposition to provide an alternative to SWAPO, the liberation movement turned political party.

The first regional elections in 1992, highlighted a number of problems relating to the nature of opposition politics: the dominance of the ruling party, SWAPO; a genaral lack of understanding of what political parties are about; and the nature of our democracy. Namibia's democracy has real problems, some of which are caused by the newness of the Namibian nation as such, while others relate to the general lack of sophistication on the part of the leaders, especially opposition leaders.

2. Historical Setting

The first experience Namibians had of democracy – the UN supervised elections in 1989 – set a pattern of non-accountability on the part of elected officials. The system of proportional representation, which meant that parties ran with individuals rather than individuals running with the party, produced political leaders who were elected by virtue of their affiliation to the party, and not because ›their followers‹ trusted them and put their faith in them. As a result, the National Assembly is filled with members who have no direct constituencies and therefore feel no sense of accountability to those who elected them. If anything, their sense of accountability is solely to the party's head, who has the power to promote and/or remove them. Members of the National Council, on the other hand, are elected directly by the constituencies in their regions and, thus, have the potential to be more accountable to their wards.

In this context, the ruling party cannot be easily criticized without reference to specifics. If potential leaders were known to their constituencies and if they represented the party's philosophy to the people, the people could more easily engage in issues that matter to them. They could oppose individual members of the National Assembly and force the ruling party to come up with better candidates. The result of our proportional representative system of voting is that people have a greater affinity with the ruling party, than with their own representatives. In this climate, our citizens are inclined to interpret opposition to the ruling party as disloyalty.

Another issue is the politics of entitlement. It will take time for politicians to learn that it is the people themselves, who make and unmake governments. In Namibia the feeling persists that those who fought for independence have more rights than others, including the right to rule the country which they liberated. It is difficult for those who sacrificed so much for independence to realise that those, who stayed at home and took their beating from the colonial regime, have the same rights as they do. So long as the politics of entitlement exists, mounting effective opposition to the ruling party will be difficult.

A further issue is the double-edged sword of the power of the ruling party. SWAPO has weakened the opposition by co-opting a large number of opposition personalities into senior government positions, where they become functionaries of the ruling party. While this was done initially in the spirit of reconciliation, it soon became a mechanism for rendering the opposition parties ineffective. We have seen that the Prime Minister himself acknowledges that the country NEEDS a strong opposition. He has, in fact, gone so far as to say that if the opposition gets weaker, the ruling party will create a better opposition. Strange as it might be for a high official in the ruling party to say this, the Prime Minister does appear to understand that if Namibia is to grow as a democracy, it needs a viable opposition.

As a new nation in Africa, it is clear that Namibia faces a major impediment to opposition: we have had no cultural experience of the kind of opposition necessary to strengthen a republic. There is no neutral word for opposition in our African languages. To ›oppose‹, in our languages, means something bordering on permanent disagreement, with a degree of hostility. A built-in sentiment in the African notion of opposition is that the party to be opposed is doing something wrong. Both the message and the messenger are thought to be doing wrong. To oppose them, therefore, means to eliminate them. It is very difficult for our citizens who love and respect SWAPO for leading the country to independence, to side with the opposition, even when the opposition is correct on certain issues. They fear they may be sending out a negative message about their long-awaited government. The questions that spring to the minds of people when they hear opposition politics are: What do you want? Where were you when Nujoma and his friends were fighting for the country? What do you have against independence? Do you mean, with your opposition, that SWAPO did a bad thing by fighting for independence? These are issues that will continue to encumber the role of opposition politics for a long time to come, or at least until President Sam Nujoma is no longer a factor in Namibian politics.

Three discernible historical factors in Namibia have ill equipped Namibians to understand objectively, let alone appreciate, oppositional politics after independence.

a) Tradition

The patterns of migration of the African people, who settled in Namibia, have left each group socio-politically autonomous from the others, as ›home‹ and ›identity‹ were established. Although there has been some degree of economic interaction among some tribes and ethnic groups, the patterns of political authority and power remained largely unaffected. The first significant political interaction came in the wake of liberation politics (SWAPO) on the one hand, and semi-liberation politics (Turnhalle) on the other.

As a result most, if not all, political formations in Namibia, including SWAPO, have a debilitating tribal and/or ethnic base, which impedes oppositional politics in general. Similarly, the indigenous languages, which transport the most fundamental and primordial feelings and sentiments about politics, do not have words to cater for a dialogue about ›opposing‹. The local languages have a word for ›oppose‹, very similar to ›refute‹, ›argue‹, or even ›hate‹. In essence, ›to oppose‹ is to want to replace immediately, a context which does not recognise another essential element of opposition politics, namely to participate constructively as a shadow office holder.

In addition, there is something to be said about the whole idea of ›differing‹ in an African setting. The African identity is based on ›belonging to‹ rather than ›dif-

fering from‹ the collective. Differing could, and does, have severe personal, spiritual and material consequences. In an African milieu such as Namibia, with its low level of formal education, it is perhaps unfair to expect people to disagree with a leadership that is associated with freedom and independence, especially if such disagreement could be construed as a lack of appreciation of those who delivered independence.

b) Colonialism and apartheid

The painful experience of the divide-and-rule tactics of both colonialism and apartheid, discouraged all forms of dissent, especially with regard to ›official‹ views or positions. Any form of disagreement with the authorities was seen as a form of destroying the existing order. Even today, therefore, dissent is associated with the desire to destroy, undo, or overthrow the existing government.

c) Liberation Politics

The political leaders of the liberation and independence struggle learned a great deal from the apartheid system, namely not to tolerate difference of opinion. Because the desire to end oppression was so legitimate, the struggle assumed a total agreement on the part of those who opposed oppression. Individual disagreement was scorned and the will of the collective, often ill-measured, overcame all dissent. When disagreement occurred, as was the case with the Shipanga Rebellion in 1976, a major split in the party arose. No room for constructive disagreement was allowed. As a result, what could have been healthy disagreement to improve the party, led to a total polarisation, which still manifests itself today at personal levels, as well as in relation to ideological positions.

The sum total of these three trends, which ran concurrently most of the time, is that opposition politics is a new game altogether. All three scenarios sketched above, placed people in a position where an ›US‹ versus ›THEM‹ mentality developed, similar to the irrational old biblical notion of being either ›for us‹ or ›against us‹. The politics of independence, which caused SWAPO to grow to the level of one party that has a claim of having brought about independence, therefore renders the need for, and debate about, opposition even more difficult.

Opposing a SWAPO-government is also more problematic in the context of the international politics of the Cold War Era, which bestowed juridical recognition on SWAPO, regardless of the fact that as a political party, SWAPO did not prove itself on the merit of good leadership in the eyes of its constituencies. International politics, as such, gave SWAPO an added advantage over the other parties, both materially and psychologically.

3. Lost opportunities

One would have expected serious opposition to SWAPO to emanate from three significant quarters:

1) The disgruntled SWAPO membership, which left SWAPO in 1976 with the Shipanga rebellion. The first real opposition movement led by Andreas Shipanga, the SWAPO Democrats, fizzled out, primarily due to the lack of any significant differences between SWAPO-Nujoma and SWAPO-D. SWAPO-D tried too hard to be the same SWAPO it purported to oppose and its message was subsequently lost in its pre-occupation with opposing personalities. Also, SWAPO-D lost potency as a liberation movement, through its acceptance by the South African authorities on its return home – SWAPO-Nujoma had the upper hand in the armed struggle against South Africa.
2) The next opposition movement, the Committee of Parents, who tried to champion the cause of those, whose rights were violated by SWAPO in exile. They sought to provide an alternative to ›the SWAPO‹ with which they and their children were familiar. They failed for the following reasons: their activities were curtailed by limited resources at the time when SWAPO enjoyed the international accolades as the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people; the bitterness that escorted their message was a deterrent to potential supporters; and, importantly, their bona fides was undermined directly by their close association with the South African military. To the average Namibian, this collaboration with the South African Defence Force indicated SWAPO's original charges that they were agents, harmful to the cause of independence.
3) Once SWAPO came to power, the churches, which had championed the cause of human rights and political independence in Namibia prior to independence, no longer had a clear role. A number of formerly outspoken church leaders were co-opted in government or are continually used to sanction the activities of the state.

The end result is that there is no real opposition to SWAPO, and this state of affairs is likely to prevail in the foreseeable future.

4. The role of fear

One of the stark realities, which is a direct consequence of both apartheid colonialism and the struggle for independence, is the amount of fear in the Namibia body politic. Neither apartheid nor the liberation struggle socialized the citizenry adequately to articulate disagreement in a healthy and constructive way. In the old apartheid days, one hated more than opposed the system. In the struggle for liberation, one did

not dare criticize the leadership for fear of being accused of being an enemy agent, the consequences of which were severe.

After independence, this fear was exacerbated by the ›Perfect Man‹ syndrome. President Sam Nujoma, being the Father of the Nation, is not supposed to be criticised by ›good Namibian patriots‹. Only the ›misguided‹ ones, who either have hidden agendas or represent the cause of some enemy, criticize the President.

There is an unspoken code in SWAPO ranks, which prescribes good political conduct and proscribes political differences. Cadres are rewarded for compliance and ability to survive. In the context of what happened in Lubango and other SWAPO detention camps, where real and imaginary enemies of the revolution were detained under reprehensible conditions, those who were hurt and remain silent on their hurt were rewarded politically and materially. Thus the ruling party succeeds, optimally, in marginalising and maligning potential opposition to the power base, or silencing, through co-option, to symbolic but powerless positions in the echelons of the state.

One of the strengths of SWAPO is its ability to appear to transform itself from a non-democratic, authoritarian, top-down organisation to a democratic, participatory organisation, while essentially remaining the same, It is this style of political chicanery that makes it very difficult for opposition against SWAPO. In this context, SWAPO owes its resilience more to a lack of challenge than to its own strength. There is also a strong pretence at accountability, while the party remains accountable only to its leader, who continues to more likely reward on the basis of loyalty to him.

A Psychosis of fear is permeating the entire Namibian society. There are also too many beleaguered personalities who have been traumatised and who cannot afford to make a single incorrect move for fear of returning to the days of trauma. Their silence is amplified by the political ›Johnnies come lately‹, who have not been part of the culture and, therefore, do not know enough to be fearless.

Ultimately, it is more than a culture of silence – it is a lifestyle, the norm and acceptable political language. This reality is compounded by the fact that most people in political office would have nothing else to do if they left, or were told to leave their posts. To them, losing political office is tantamount to losing political wealth, societal status and everything else. So the ruling party will continue, for as long as it can, to reward and punish in this way, and entrench its power. In the end, there is no distinction between state interests and party interests, as the party leader becomes provider for his loyal flock. It is in this context, that it is the ruling party as such, and not the state, which has to decide who, in the interest of democracy, should fund an opposition to contest democratic elections. This gives the ruling party more power to use resources to direct and control the conduct of opposition parties.

Against this background, one can only conclude that, not only is there a need for opposition parties to get their act together, but also that the ruling party itself must commit class-suicide, in order for opposition to become a functional, rather than a

debilitating phenomenon. In the end, only when it is the politics of the day and not of yesterday or tomorrow that is the true raw material for political leadership, will the two symbiotic and complementary roles – governance and opposition – no longer be mutually exclusive in a sustainable, progressive, forward-looking and participatory democratic culture.

In the meantime, there ought to be an infrastructure for loyal opposition – an environment that will allow academics, lawyers, the business sector and other professional entities to contribute constructively to the process of good governance and legitimise disagreement as a healthy feature of democratic life. In this sense, disagreement with Government will not always have negative connotations but will imply that the Government of the day is, in fact, able to adopt positions advanced by the opposition and embrace them for the benefit of national programmes. It is important that opposition, at times, should serve as a motor or catalyst for good governance. It is critical that opposition propels the Government of the day to do better, and to encourage good planning, public policy and their implementation, in an accountable and transparent manner.

Further, this culture of silence is buttressed by the cultural norms, which disallow criticism of one's elders. Therefore, criticising leaders such as Nujoma carries multiple consequences: firstly, it invokes the wrath of the ›elder‹, who feels personally affronted and disrespected; and secondly, potential followers of the new argument are put off by their own focus on the messenger rather than the message.

In the original African way of doing politics, leadership was based on a desire to serve and was rewarded with honour and status in society as opposed to monetary rewards. In the national politics of state, material rewards oil the wheels of political ambition. In a system where the state is the largest dispenser of material rewards, loyalty towards the one who controls the state's purse strings is essential. Nujoma is a master of the art of manipulating political ambition and material insecurity. In SWAPO, this is manifest in the way in which he appoints, reshuffles and dismisses Ministers and top government officials. A typical example is the dismissal and demotion of several officials after the 1994 elections without any reasons being furnished, despite the proven track records of the officials concerned. Even those ambitious politicians outside of SWAPO are not immune to Nujoma's material manoeuvres. The appointment of Rukoro as Attorney General after he abandoned SWANU is a case in point. The material hold exercised by Nujoma as a head of state, is summed up in the words of a prominent Windhoek lawyer: »in the old days of apartheid, you paid with your life when you opposed the government. After independence you pay with your livelihood if you oppose the government.«

5. The future of opposition in Namibia in General

At this point in time, Namibia is a ›dominant-party state‹, slightly more democratic than a ›one-party state‹. This is not entirely SWAPO's fault. The opposition parties, who have run out of steam and are too much concerned with debating non-issues in the National Assembly, must also shoulder some of the blame.

Namibia needs real opposition to help frame an energising debate. One wishes there were more Katjiuoriguas on the floor of the National Assembly, who come prepared to take on issues and not just dabble in trivialities. Real opposition can emerge, only with the help of established special interest groups, such as labour unions, student unions and religious societies. These organisations mounted considerable pressure on the colonial administration before independence, and mobilized workers to support what is now the ruling party. Unfortunately, labour and student unions are still trapped in independence politics, instead of addressing their own issues. Labour has also been weakened by the state's co-option strategy. These organisations have yet to dissociate from the politics of independence. They must find a new language and chart a new future for themselves, and they must come to realise that SWAPO is no longer fighting for independence, but is the wielder of power.

Namibia is one of the most highly Christianised countries in Africa. One hopes that the churches or the religious communities will stand up for some of the causes the opposition has been unable to champion. After all, it is the church that stood up legitimately against apartheid. Some of the injustices and socially unacceptable conditions, which existed under the apartheid system, continue to exist in Namibia under democratic rule, while church leaders are called upon to wine and dine with the new ruling class. For example, the migrant labour system, the poor conditions of black townships and black schools, as well as the preoccupation of appeasement of white Namibians, are still the order of the day in free Namibia. Several church leaders, who were at the forefront of the liberation struggle, are either in the Government, or are now the ones opening government events with prayers. They are, therefore, unable to have a prophetic voice that could begin to look at the culture of dishonesty, greed, corruption and the lack of moral norms and values that continue to plague Namibian society.

White Namibians, who are more financially and emotionally independent, have the potential to offer effective criticism and should be encouraged to do so in the absence of their black counterparts, who at this point in time, are encumbered by history. Their failure or reluctance to exercise principled criticism of black leaders denies the black government the freedom to err.

The only real opposition in Namibia comes from the whites – who are more organised and can speak out as a cultural group, the business community with its economic muscle, and the diplomatic community, which the state has to consider for fear of losing foreign aid.

Interestingly, the Namibian political leadership suffers from the same post-colonial condition experienced by other post-colonial subjects, namely, that the black leaders feel less threatened by white opposition, which they do not see as being as dangerous as opposition emanating from their own groups. Black politicians would rather see white opposition as a temporary nuisance from which they, nevertheless, can draw logic and strength. Black politicians, in general, would hesitate to crush white opposition, for fear of losing international understanding, support and financial assistance. Similarly, whites do not have the same emotional and material relationship with those in political power in Namibia today.

As said earlier, there is no viable opposition from the grassroots in Namibia today, and it is, arguably, too early to expect it. It will grow, only after the people become disenchanted with the performance of the current leadership, which will become apparent as the country moves closer to the third general election in 1999. This is when true opposition will emerge from the ruling party itself – i.e. when the search for Nujoma's successor begins, and the real power struggle in the ruling party surfaces in earnest. There are already signs of dissatisfaction within the ruling party's rank and file about land policies and national reconciliation issues. The rising unemployment, co-existing alongside the high lifestyle of those in power, can only spark questioning that will crystallize the issues after the independence euphoria is over, and when Nujoma's tenure in office as President ends. In the context of the struggle for power after Nujoma, there might be people within SWAPO, who will be tempted to amend the Constitution in order to allow Nujoma to serve a third term, a move which will certainly not enjoy the full support of SWAPO's rank and file, and may even precipitate a split between those who would favour the sanctity of the Constitution and those who would prefer expediency.

There are other signs of struggle within the ruling party: Nujoma's appropriate rhetoric about corruption can only create enemies on the part of those exposed; the inevitable down-sizing of the bloated civil services; the top-heavy government bureaucracy which needs to be trimmed; and personality clashes, which, hitherto, have been handled very carefully. The President's penchant for making important appointments and reshuffles without prior consultation with the personalities involved will only exacerbate the situation. This, combined with a search for alternative leadership is potent raw material for opposition from within the party.

Conceivably, future opposition will come from labour and student movements. The harsh conditions of the migrant labour system and the highly inequitable distribution of wealth, to which the ruling party appear indifferent, can only give impetus to new directions of opposition. Co-option of union leaders can only proceed so far. New generations of labour leaders are beginning to rethink their role vis-à-vis the new economic realities and the place of the ruling elite therein. What happened in Zambia in 1992, when Kaunda was removed from power by the labour leader Frederick Chiluba,

is a case in point. Similarly, one should not ignore the potency of the student movement. One can already discern dissatisfaction from the ranks of students in relation to issues such as the self-congratulatory leadership style of SWAPO. Just as in the past, when the politics and the conditions of the time determined the nature and style of student politics, so it will be in the future, that the children and students, no longer agitated by old apartheid experiences, will be informed by their own experiences – not of pre-independence but of post-independence Namibia, with a different reality altogether. Their anger and energy will be directed at their leadership of their time.

6. A way forward

The politics of the nation-state, which calls for a culture of tolerance, give-and-take and compromise, is new in Namibia. The role of opposition will be in terms of not only opposing the government of the day, but of contributing to the general governance of the society, in such a way that a continual framework is developed, within which values and norms are fashioned as a basis for the continuation of a Namibian system of Government. It will take the opposition a long time to redefine and reposition itself in relation to the ruling party, and to come up with alternative programmes and strategies, which will in turn become the defining lines of differentiation between the business of governance on the one hand, and opposition on the other. The conclusion is that although opposition politics is an ideal, it will take time and experience to get to a point, where the acts of ›governing‹ and ›opposing‹ are both noble contributions to the well-being of the nation's political life. Thus, in the final analysis, culture, habits, customs and paradigms have, firstly, to change with time, and it is education, which is the most potent instrument to facilitate this change. In the meantime, the story of Africa continues. The Nigerian novelist, Chinua Achebe, wrote in the early days of Nigeria's independence:

> *»The trouble with our new nation [...] was that none of us have been indoors long enough [...] we had all been in the rain together until yesterday. They, a handful of us [...] the smart and the lucky and hardly ever the best [...] had scrambled for the one shelter our former rulers had left, and had taken it over and barricaded themselves [...] And from within they sought to persuade the rest through numerous loudspeakers [...] that all argument should cease and the whole people speak with one voice.«*
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> (Chinua Achebe, A man of the People)

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