

# **Restoring and holding on to beauty: The role of aesthetic relational values in sustainable development**

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## Declaration

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## **Abstract**

Unless Africans and their leaders make a concerted effort to rid themselves of the harmful legacy of colonial spirituality by adopting new motives for living, entering into new relationships with themselves on the plane of beneficial values, Africa will not be able to escape the social, environmental, political and economic afflictions that currently beset her. The colonial forces that burst into Africa with violence from minds bent on foreign conquest were primarily driven by an ethos of covetousness that has come to characterize the existing international order. Stealing, not only of natural resources has continued side by side with the denuding of the very souls of people – as has happened so successfully in Africa – of their humanity.

There is evidence that human existence has been beleaguered and governed by an unviable microphysical framework (mindset and spirituality). In the midst of what appears to be a bewilderingly dynamic, turbulent and complex world, this spirituality looms large, gaining a stronghold resulting in disconnectedness among self-worshipping humans and their environment. We now live in a world governed by a destructive innate iniquity that produces overwhelming inequity among humans and unprecedented damage in the natural environment that sustains us. This study draws from and connects the evidence provided by ancient history with current macro-physical endeavours to demonstrate that this micro-physicality still holds sway, albeit under various manifestations.

Having been in a state of war with itself and its living environment, humanity has reached what observers have acknowledged as a crossroads. In the violence that has engulfed all humans since time immemorial, as evidenced in the co-existence of poverty and affluence, pandemics driven by a wide variety of illnesses, huge disparities in wealth within and between national economies, energy and environmental depletion and degradation that have earned us the unprecedented crisis of global warming, this crossroads has made itself very present.

A particular kind of mentality and spirituality has taken us to this point. It is a spirituality that is obviously devoid and incapable of producing beauty of harmony and communion among us irrespective of our diversity, whether in race, culture, knowledge discipline or geographic space. The macro-physical condition we are experiencing cannot be viewed in isolation from the spirituality that produced it. We are now in an unsustainable world that must have been the fruit of an unsustainable spirituality. The answers to our global dilemma must fundamentally be sought not

in any new technologies that emanate from the same mindset, but in a renewed mind and in a different pattern of spirituality.

This study probes the dominant world mindset that directed the globally pervasive Western civilization and reviews some major historical and cultural trends that, it argues, have brought humanity to the zenith of its “world-hunt”-culture. This is a “world- hunt” of self-mutilation that manifested itself in Europe, the near-east, Asia and Africa over more than four millennia ago. The deforestation, land degradation, oppression of the poor, hunger, hatred that drives terrorist attacks, climate changes that drive natural disasters and the loss of species, are all the unmistakable bitter fruit of such a culture. It is a culture characterized and propelled by the absence of what this study coins as “aesthetic relational values”.

This dominant mindset has strewn all over our globe various rule-based governance institutions characterized by an ethos of central control, manipulating people’s lives for self-centred gain. Though many of these institutions come in various garbs of apparent benevolence, faith-based, trade-based, knowledge/science-based and political governance bodies, all are adherents of the same worldview that is firmly grounded in a merciless and destructive pantheistic, and nature-worship belief system traceable to ancient Egypt. Many of these institutions, today, publicly claim to be proponents of sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and peace among the nations of the world, yet they are still clinging, esoterically, to a cosmological perspective of nature-worship that glorifies self-worship and disregards the well-being of others.

The study contrasts this dominant spirituality with the Afrocentric one based on a knowledge system that propounds a belief in a compassionate and merciful Creator-God who is the source of all nature, including the human family, as illustrated in the daily lives of amaMbo peoples whose geographic origins are traced to ancient Ethiopia. As the former continues to make a nonentity of the Creator-God, Africans, realizing the spiritual bankruptcy of a self-glorification ethic that has polarised the people and ravaged their continent through rule-based institutions, are returning, in large numbers, to this knowledge system of their ancient fathers on which their social institutions of shared and consensus-based decision-making and governance, from the basic social unit as the family, to national political relations, were founded.

In several encounters these patterns of spiritualities have produced unsavoury outcomes. In the Cape’s more-than-a-century long, bitter and protracted encounter between a branch of amaMbo

called amaXhosa, that began with the seventeenth century arrival of the Western “world-hunt” culture through the Calvinist Dutch East India Company traders, Africa and the entire world have been provided, simultaneously, with indisputable evidence of the destructiveness of self-indulgent living on the one hand and the efficacy, on the other, of a relational aesthetic as a viable alternative out of the humanitarian and environmental crises that confront our globe.

Views and principles regarding the harmonious living of life on earth have been advocated by many a great leader since antiquity. They have been vindicated in the lives of ancient Israelite patriarchs such as Abraham and Moses, who led his kinsmen out of the Egyptian bondage that lasted over four centuries; in the life of Tolstoy, who chose to be excommunicated from a society that regarded these principles with disdain; to that of Gandhi, on whom Tolstoy was a tremendous influence, and effectively applied them to unshackle a whole nation from British subjugation; and Dostoevsky, Tolstoy’s compatriot, who first referred to these as “aesthetic views”.

These relational principles were embedded in the lifestyle of ancient Israel, lived and advocated later by the Jewish Rabbi called Jesus, whose very own people chose to shamefully murder Him rather than accept His teachings. These principles were taught, practised and handed down to His followers to influence humanity as never before. In their ancient setting these principles clashed with those of the pagan lifestyle of Egypt, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, which culturally shaped the Western civilization that pervades our globe. The results were centuries of enslavements, dispossessions and persecutions. In the course of history pagan beliefs crept in and mingled with orthodox Jewish rites and worship, producing an adulterated Christianity and a plethora of what are known today as nature-based religions, which still uphold and advocate the individual gods to whom honour and worship is due rather than the Creator in the Hebrew and Afrocentric cosmologies.

This study traces the effect of the absence of these relational values on the quality of the life of nations and their leaders. A remarkable trend and pattern characterized by self-mutilative living emerged among all such nations and people. Their efficacy and mutual beneficence, on the other hand, was unmistakable in societies such as that of amaXhosa, in their pre-colonial state in the Eastern Cape region of South Africa.

As all of nature “groans” under the human self-mutilation caused by the impoverished spirituality in aesthetic relational values, this study argues that salvation lies in *ibuyambo*, the recalling of these

under-appreciated relational values, and in ensuring the re-education of ourselves and our future leaders in them. The focus of the study is what these values are, the effect of their absence, how different they are to what are known as “social capital”, how they have been manifested and preserved in ancient African institutions such as the weekly memorial day of rest – the Sabbath in the creation narrative – in the lives of some individuals and people on our planet, particularly Africans and amaMbo, and the benefits they derived from respecting them.

A vital observation in this study is that social systems that are driven by the motive of individual, corporate or national self-exaltation are invariably rooted in strife and discention. The conclusion is drawn that these under-appreciated relational values, *aesthetic relational values*, are not only a vital ingredient to the quest for and in all known facets of sustainability in development efforts, they hold the key to unlock the door to the mystery of “harmony” that has proven so elusive to individuals, families, communities, societies, nations and their governance systems. The study concludes, with Dostoevsky, that aesthetic relational values contain “a guarantee of tranquility” for all humanity and the natural environment that sustains them. The restoration, not only by all of Africa, of the lost spirituality of aesthetic relational values cherished by their ancient forebears, is key to the renewal of our world.

## Opsomming

Tensy Afrikane en hulle leiers 'n daadwerklike poging aanwend om ontslae te raak van die nadelige erfenis van koloniale spiritualiteit deur nuwe lewensmotiewe te aanvaar en nuwe verwantskappe met mekaar aan te gaan op die vlak van heilsame waardes, sal Afrika nie aan die sosiale, omgewings-, politieke en ekonomiese beproewings wat hom tans teister kan ontsnap nie. Die koloniale magte wat Afrika met ingesteldhede op buitelandse verowering met geweld bestorm het, is primêr aangedryf deur 'n etos van hebsug wat tans die bestaande internasionale orde kenmerk. Diefstal van nie net natuurlike hulpbronne nie, het voortgeduur saam met die ontneming van die essensie en menslikheid van mense, soos met soveel welslae in Afrika plaasgevind het.

Daar is bewys dat die menslike bestaan omsluit en beheer word deur 'n nielewensvatbare mikrofisiese raamwerk (geestesingesteldheid en spiritualiteit). Te midde van wat 'n verbysterend dinamiese, onstuimige en komplekse wêreld skyn te wees, tree hierdie spiritualiteit op die voorgrond en vorm 'n bastion wat lei tot onsamehangendheid onder selfaanbiddende mense en hulle omgewing. Ons leef nou in 'n wêreld wat beheer word deur 'n vernietigende ingebore ongeregtigheid wat oorweldigende ongelykheid onder mense meebring en ongeëwenaarde skade veroorsaak aan die natuurlike omgewing wat ons onderhou. Hierdie studie steun op en verbind die bewyse wat deur die antieke geskiedenis voorsien word, met deurlopende makrofisiese pogings om te toon dat hierdie mikrofisikaliteit nog geld, hoewel onder verskillende manifestasies.

Nadat hy in 'n staat van oorlog met homself en sy lewende omgewing verkeer het, het die mensdom nou 'n kruispad bereik, soos waarnemers erken. In die geweld wat alle mense sedert die vroegste tyd omring, soos blyk uit die saambestaan van armoede en oorvloed, pandemies wat deur 'n groot verskeidenheid siektes gedryf word, reusagtige ongelykhede in rykdom binne en tussen nasionale ekonomieë, energie- en omgewingsuitputting en –agteruitgang, wat aan ons die ongekende krisis van aardverwarming besorg het, het hierdie kruispad hom duidelik aan ons opgedring.

'n Bepaalde soort mentaliteit en spiritualiteit het ons tot by hierdie punt gebring. Dit is 'n spiritualiteit wat klaarblyklik ontdaan is van en nie in staat is om skoonheid van harmonie en verbondenheid tussen ons te bewerkstellig nie, ongeag ons diversiteit ten opsigte van ras, kultuur, kennisdisipline of geografiese ruimte. Die makrofisiese toestand wat ons ondervind, kan nie in isolasie van die spiritualiteit wat dit veroorsaak het, beskou word nie. Ons is nou in 'n onvolhoubare wêreld wat die resultaat van 'n onvolhoubare spiritualiteit moes wees. Die antwoorde

op ons globale dilemma moet fundamenteel nie in enige nuwe tegnologieë gesoek word wat uit hierdie selfde geestesingesteldheid voortvloei nie, maar in 'n hernude sienswyse en in 'n ander spiritualiteitspatroon.

Hierdie studie ondersoek die dominante wêreldingesteldheid wat die globaal omvattende Westerse beskawing gerig het en hersien 'n aantal belangrike historiese en kulturele neigings wat, volgens die argument, die mensdom tot by die toppunt van sy “wêreld-jag”-kultuur gebring het. Dit is 'n “wêreld-jag” van selfverminking wat sigself meer as vier millennia gelede in Europa, die Nabye Ooste, Asië en Afrika gemanifesteer het. Die ontbossing, grondagteruitgang, onderdrukking van die armes, hongersnood, haat wat terroriste-aanvalle aangedryf het en klimaatsveranderinge, wat natuurrampe en die verlies van spesies laat toeneem het, is almal die onmiskenbare bitter vrugte van so 'n kultuur. Dit is 'n kultuur wat gekenmerk en voortgestu is deur die afwesigheid van wat hierdie studie “estetiese relasionele waardes” noem.

Hierdie dominante ingesteldheid het verskeie reëlgebaseerde regeringsinstellings wat gekenmerk word deur 'n etos van sentrale beheer en die manipulerings van mense se lewens vir selfgesentreerde gewin oor ons hele wêreld versprei. Hoewel baie van hierdie instellings in verskeie gewade van skynbare welwillendheid - geloofgebaseerde, handelsgebaseerde, kennis/wetenskapgebaseerde en politieke bestuursliggame - voordoen, is almal aanhangers van dieselfde wêreldbeskouing wat stewig in 'n genadelose en destruktiewe panteïstiese en natuuraanbidding-geloofstelsel gevestig is wat na antieke Egipte terugvoerbaar is. Baie van hierdie instellings maak vandag in die openbaar daarop aanspraak om voorstanders van volhoubare ontwikkeling, die uitwissing van armoede en vrede onder die nasies van die wêreld te wees, terwyl hulle nog, esoteries, vasklou aan 'n kosmologiese perspektief van natuuraanbidding wat selfverheerliking aanprys en die welsyn van ander verontagsaam.

Die studie kontrasteer hierdie dominante spiritualiteit met die Afrosentriese siening wat op 'n kennissistiem gebaseer is, wat 'n geloof in 'n barmhartige en genadige Skeppergod voorstel wat die bron van alle natuur, met inbegrip van die menseras, is, soos blyk uit die daaglikse lewens van amaMbo-mense wie se geografiese oorsprong na antieke Ethiopië terugvoer kan word. Terwyl die eersvermelde steeds die niebestaan van die Skeppergod voorstaan, keer Afrikane – met die besef van die spirituele bankrotskap van 'n selfverheerlikende etiek wat mense gepolariseer het en hulle kontinent deur reëlgebaseerde instellings verniel het - in groot getalle terug na hierdie kennissistiem van hul voorvaders waarop hul sosiale instellings van gedeelde en

konsensusgebaseerde besluitneming en regering, vanaf die basiese sosiale eenheid as die familie tot by nasionale politieke verhoudings, gevestig is.

Hierdie patrone van spiritualiteite het in verskeie gevalle tot onaangename uitkomst gelei. In die Kaap se meer as 'n eeu lange, bittere en langdurige botsing tussen 'n tak van amaMbo bekend as amaXhosa, wat met die 17de-eeuse aankoms van die Westerse “wêreld-jag”-kultuur deur die Calvinistiese Nederlandse Oos-Indiese Kompanjie-handelaars begin het, is Afrika en die hele wêreld terselfdertyd voorsien van onbetwisbare bewys van die vernielsug van gemaksugtige lewe aan die een kant en, aan die ander kant, die doeltreffendheid van relasionele estetika as 'n lewensvatbare alternatief uit die humanitêre en omgewingskrisisse wat ons wêreld in die gesig staar.

Sienswyses en beginsels omtrent 'n harmonieuse lewenswyse op aarde is al sedert die vroegste tyd deur vele groot leiers bepleit. Dit is gehandhaaf in die lewens van antieke Israelitiese patriage soos Abraham en Moses, wat sy stamverwante uit die Egiptiese slawerny van meer as vier eeue gelei het; in die lewe van Tolstoi, wat verkies het om verban te word uit 'n gemeenskap wat hierdie beginsels met minagting bejeën het; in dié van Gandhi, op wie Tolstoi 'n geweldige invloed gehad het, wat hierdie beginsels effektief toegepas het om 'n hele nasie van Britse onderwerping te bevry; en Dostojewski, Tolstoi se landgenoot, wat die eerste keer daarna as “estetiese sienswyses” verwys het.

Hierdie relasionele beginsels is vasgelê in die lewenstyl van antieke Israel, en later uitgeleef en verkondig deur die Joodse Rabbi genaamd Jesus, wie se eie mense verkies het om Hom skandelik te vermoor eerder as om sy leringe te aanvaar. Hierdie beginsels is onderrig, beoefen en aan Sy volgelinge oorgedra om die mensdom te beïnvloed soos nog nooit tevore nie. Hierdie beginsels het in hulle antieke opset gebots met dié van die heidense lewenstyl van Egipte, Babilon, Medo-Persië, Griekeland en Rome, wat die Westerse beskawing wat oor die wêreld versprei is kultureel gevorm het. Die resultate was eeue van slawerny, onteienings en vervolgings. Met verloop van die geskiedenis het heidense gelowe ingesypel en met die Joodse rites en aanbidding vermeng, wat gelei het tot 'n verknoeiende Christendom en 'n oorvloed van wat vandag as natuurgebaseerde gelowe bekend staan, wat steeds die individuele gode aanhang en verkondig aan wie eer en aanbidding toekom, eerder as die Skepper in die Hebreeuse en Afrosentriese kosmologieë.

Hierdie studie belig die afwesigheid van hierdie relasionele waardes in die gehalte van die lewe van nasies en hulle leiers. 'n Merkwaardige verloop en patroon wat gekenmerk word deur 'n selfverminkende lewenswyse het by al hierdie nasies en mense te voorskyn getree. Hulle

doeltreffendheid en wedersydse liefdadigheid is, aan die ander kant, onmiskenbaar in gemeenskappe soos dié van die amaXhosa, in hul voorkoloniale staat in die Oos-Kaapse streek van Suid-Afrika.

Terwyl die hele natuur “kreun” onder die menslike selfverminking wat deur die verarmde spiritualiteit in estetiese relasionele waardes veroorsaak word, argumenteer hierdie studie dat die redding lê in *ibuyambo*, die herroeping van hierdie onderwaardeerde relasionele waardes, en deur seker te maak dat ons onself en ons toekomstige leiers daarin heropvoed. Die studie konsentreer op wat hierdie waardes is, die uitwerking van die afwesigheid daarvan, hoe dit verskil van wat as “sosiale kapitaal” bekend staan, hoe dit in antieke Afrika-instellings soos die weeklikse gedenktag van rus – die Sabbat in die skeppingsverhaal - gemanifesteer en bewaar is in die lewens van party individue en mense op ons planeet, veral Afrikane en amaMbo, en die voordele wat hulle trek uit die nakoming daarvan.

’n Belangrike waarneming in hierdie studie is dat sosiale stelsels wat deur die motief van individuele, korporatiewe of nasionale selfverheffing aangedryf word, sonder uitsondering aan onenigheid en verdeeldheid gekoppel is. Die gevolgtrekking word gemaak dat hierdie onderwaardeerde relasionele waardes, *estetiese relasionele waardes*, nie slegs ’n noodsaaklike onderdeel in die soeke na en in alle bekende fasette van volhoubaarheid in ontwikkelingspogings is nie, maar dat hulle die sleutel is tot die ontsluiting van die misterie van “harmonie” wat so ontwykend vir individue, families, gemeenskappe, samelewings, nasies en hul regeringstelsels geblyk het. Die studie kom, saam met Dostojewski, tot die gevolgtrekking dat estetiese relasionele waardes ’n “waarborg van kalmte” bevat vir die hele mensdom en die natuurlike omgewing wat ons onderhou. Die herstel deur meer as net die hele Afrika van die verlore spiritualiteit van estetiese relasionele waardes wat deur hulle antieke voorgeslagte gekoester is, is die sleutel tot die vernuwing van ons wêreld.

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# Chapter One: Introduction

## 1.1 Background

African perspectives of self and of existence in general, as articulated in the concept “ntu”, the root contained in *bintu/thing* or *muntu/human-being*, animate or inanimate (Kgame, in Janheinz, 1961), maintain that all being originated in the spiritual realm of conscious thought, before being represented and crystallized in physiological design. The notion of *muntu*’s origin in the being of an unseen God, the *supreme, sovereign, yet a beneficent* and compassionate Being (Junod, 1938; Onwubiko, 1991; Mbiti, 1992) who is the source of all life, even as we enter the third millenium, continues to grow in its attraction, inflaming and permeating Africa (Mbiti, 1969; Indowu, 1973, Mancini, 2005) with delight. Indeed there is overwhelming evidence that Africa, being predicted as the new Christendom, is experiencing a revolutionary conversion and return to its Creator-centred beliefs. This, as articulated by Seme, is a return to their “original genius” (Karis & Karter, 1972: 40) through embracing a knowledge and spiritual system (Jenkins, 2002) that puts a premium on cooperation, rather than competition, with all life. Some aspects of this knowledge system, their relevance and implications for the practice of living and developing sustainably, one of the leading quests as humanity enters the twenty-first century, demand studied attention.

This study illustrates and argues that, despite centuries of exposure to a knowledge system that espoused certain life-revering spiritual values, a great opportunity was missed by Western societies – and a similar error is emerging in South Africa – that of failing to appreciate the efficacy of living and developing sustainably as made possible through these spiritual values. Under the guise of Christian civilization, Westerners crossed the length and breadth of our planet driven by a purpose that was in direct conflict to the values enjoined by the mind that originated Christendom, to enslave other nations, especially Africans, in what Anene has called “the most iniquitous transaction in human history” (1966: 92) and used the resources they coveted to enrich themselves, in the process destroying the natural environment that sustains life on the planet. The West has failed to forge a sense of global and collective destiny of all nations and peoples, owing to a spiritual inability to help the world transcend its phenotypical differences and intellectual fragmentation. The assertion of these differences as negative has driven the world, sinking it into an abyss of class and cultural struggle between so-called superior and inferior individuals and races.

The denial of African people's humanity that led to the "ferocious inhumanity" (Oguejiofor, 2007: 59) they had to endure, was engendered in the iniquitous spiritual value of prejudice against African difference which found its justification in Western thought. The "most prominent of the [Western] thinkers [who are] still counted among the giants of Western philosophy: G.W. Hegel, David Hume, John Locke, Immanuel Kant and Charles de Montesquieu", simply on the basis of African difference in race, "assigned to the African" a place "outside the realm of humanity" (Oguejiofor, 2007: 61). Though he knew little about Africa, Hegel, for example, was convinced that it could not be associated with culture and the spirit of civilization; John Locke and De Montesquieu stated in no uncertain terms that Africans were not human, basing this assertion on the "superficialities" of their physiological characteristics; David Hume "believed that different races are naturally endowed with different cognitive capacities" (Oguejiofor, 2007: 62). To Hume, in particular, the African "was, in the language common at the time, a legitimate 'article of trade'" (Eze, 2002: 67).

But there is vital reason not to expend energy attempting to explain the human cruelty of oppression and denigration of people by others in terms of aberrations such as racism and colonialism. These are symptomatic of a deeper-lying malaise that affects all humans. Right from the start of the political liberation movement in South Africa, this study argues, the founding fathers of the movement understood clearly that societal living that is not based on certain spiritual values breeds and perpetuates hardships; it cannot be sustainable. Calls such as those made by Danqua and Biko respectively (1968; 1978) for a "universe of blood" and vigilance against "poverty of spirit" have largely been ignored, and are yet to find recognition in social policies. The recent attention given by Meredith (2005) to the Liberian experience drew attention to the fact that prejudice itself and human cruelty know no colour. Here is a country that was unshackled from colonialism in 1847, but saw white cruelty replaced by black cruelty.

Indeed, the role of the spiritual in development has been recognized. Sen (1999) for example, has adequately demonstrated that phenomena such as the enjoyment of political participation or dissent, freedom from fear of punishment, uncensored speech and being literate are both "primary" and "principal means of development". Mankind's "essential properties reside, finally", noted Bracken, "in his spirit" (1973: 83). Echoing a conclusion once reached by an Israeli king, centuries ago: "the meek, ... shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Psalm 37 vs 11; KJV), Conrad noted "there is no peace and rest in the development of material interests" (in Leavis 1962: 198), "without the continuity and the force that can be found only in moral principle".

Though spirituality has been recognized as occupying what Sen (1999: 36) has called the “constitutive” position in development, the role of relational spiritual values, traceable to the teachings that were largely ignored by Christendom, has largely been ignored. Is there any evidence-based body of knowledge and experience that a lifestyle informed by acquired spiritual value endowments – such as meekness and compassion – in relating towards others, has the potential for assisting us in the realization of sustainability in the development of all life?

The words from the poem of Emma Lazarus “The New Colossus” etched at the bottom of the Statue of Liberty: “give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free”, encapsulate the principles that centuries before had illustrated the approach to living that the Author of Christendom had directed should inform mankind’s relationships to one another: “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls”. This study argues that such outcomes, as connoted by “rest”, stability, and harmonious, confident and peaceful living among people and nations, can be triggered, not by any individual or nation claiming superiority above another, but in the Pauline approach to relational living, where each, in honour, gives “preference to another” (Romans 12 vs 10) rather than to self. In the learning of and making of a conscious choice to be “yoked” or directed by relational values such as “meekness” and “lowliness”, in choosing and learning to become servants of one another rather than enslaving one another, people can transform societies into places of enchantment.

The whole notion of sustainable development is built on the assumption that the destruction of life, death, must be avoided as much as is humanly possible. The generally accepted conceptualization of sustainable development, as proposed by the Brundtland Commission, that those of us who live in the present must enjoy but leave unspoilt what sustains our lives for the enjoyment of future generations, reveals much more about us than social theorists have thus far deemed worthy of attention in the science of sustainability. There is in this assumption a tacit acknowledgement of our connectedness and relatedness to each other that transcends the present, reaching out to our human relatedness to future generations. We are, as Nietzsche observed (1964: 804) “instinctually, i.e. aesthetically” repelled by all that “is harmful [and] dangerous”, regarding death as an enemy whose power over us must be delayed and beaten back as much as is humanly possible, and we are attracted to the “useful, beneficent [and] life-enhancing”. If being, therefore, is so valuable to us, the kind of knowledge we hold dear in society about life, in all its forms, demands constant examination, especially in as far as it impacts on human capacity to relate to others.

Social theory and practice, the ideas and knowledge that people embrace about social life and the sort of life they pursue living it, have been shown to be intimately connected (Fay, 1973). Human experience attests that every age in human history has been marked by specific ways of thinking and living which were informed by certain assumptions about nature and society. (This includes the era which has been termed “Modernity”, widely believed to have come to an end as we enter the third millennium after Christ, despite the “confusion and disagreement” regarding its beginning and origin (Toulmin, 1990: 9) and as to whether it really has ended, as argued by Bauman in his perspective of “liquid modernity” (2000).) People’s beliefs not only shape their insights but their “foresights representing the horizon of expectation” which “marks limits to the field of action” in which we see possibilities for changing “human affairs, and so ... decide which of our most cherished practical goals can be realized in fact” (Toulmin, 1990: 1).

### **1.1.1 The human condition**

Leading up to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, our world became a battlefield for various cultures. These, cultures, as conceived in Clifford Geertz’s definition, are systems of “inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (1973: 89). For centuries the globe was engulfed in animosities, becoming a zone of “religious fervor and ideological denunciation” (Toulmin, 1990: 89).

Of critical significance to this study is the observation that the most prominent law-based human institutions involved in the antagonisms, whether political or cultural – monarchies, catholicism, protestantism or any eastern religious imagination – “proved nothing” about their merits in the “bloodletting” that “changed no minds and transformed no souls” (Toulmin, 1990: 90). All were governed by the ethos of “forcible conversion”, which was to be the pattern of the future (Toulmin, 1990: 91).

Even in the transition of human governance from monarchical to democratic societies that seemed premised on the “principles of equality and freedom”, the promised satisfaction has not materialised. We have come to realize that democracy, based as it is on constitutional rights, not only is still a law-based system, but has proved unable to resolve the situation of “conflicting hierarchies of values, not only between different persons but also between persons and institutions” (Anton, 2002: 4); despite the promise of constitutionally guaranteed equality for all persons,

democracies still subordinate personal freedoms to institutional hierarchies. Democracies were expected to bring about cultural pluralism and institutional balance, but have, instead, become “devoted to perpetuating the hierarchy of cultural institutions” (Anton, 2002: 9). The basic problem, as Anton articulated it, is that cultures and the institutions in which they are immortalized, unlike “free human individuals”, are not conscious organisms that can “think, desire” and “act and move” and “change”.

In the failure of democracies to become models of “equal opportunity”, not only between institutions but between people and between people and institutions, protecting freedoms from being hierarchically ordered and subordinated one under another, we have come to see “dissolutions, dissociations, divisions and fragmentations” in society. Citizens in society have been turned into “estranged and alienated beings, mainly because they are forced to use only inflated segments of themselves and of their culture to compensate for the whole that has lost its cohesion” (Anton, 2002: 9).

Not surprisingly, with Western-designed democratic governance unable to deliver a culture whose values ensure social cooperation, human individuals have become disenchanted and chosen to go each their own way. This is the dissociation and alienation that now reigns in society. Humanity is now caught in what Bauman has called “liquid modernity”, an age of “self-pleasuring”, “running” and endless “shopping”; indulging insatiable desires in myriad self-chosen forms of worship, rituals of “never-ending search” for “new improved examples and recipes for life” (2000: 72).

In the aesthetic theorization of the economics writer Virginia Postrel (2003: 56), as a consequence of this “search” by consumers, ours has become the “age of aesthetics”; “design is everywhere, and everywhere is now designed”. The marketplace has become a battlefield of aesthetic innovators, designers of new, appealing styles in everything, cars, houses, clothing-fashion, hairstyles, cellphones, the list is as long as the imagination can stretch, just to keep up with the demands of individual aesthetics, which is simply sense stimulation and gratification. The dictatorship of law-based institutions has been exchanged for that of human physio-sensual desire.

The “pathological condition” described by Nietzsche (1964: 15) of “man’s exaggerated ingeniousness to regard himself as the sense and measure of all things”, seems to have become characteristic of human living. The unfortunate thing about this “shopping” for rewarding the individual self, is that the “spiritus movens” of “desire”, this “self-begotten”, “self-propelling”

motive and purpose, “has itself for its constant object” of devotion. Like all habit-forming drugs, “it is bound to remain insatiable” (Bauman, 2000: 75) and must eventually prove destructive to humanity.

Western civilization is now in this post-modern or “liquid modernity” condition; those who are concerned by similar conditions in knowledge disciplines have called for “bridges” (Nicolescu, 2001) to transverse the divide.

The unmistakable “pathological condition” is evidenced by a world in which half of its people can hardly subsist on what they earn, having to survive on basically the same real incomes that they earned over three decades ago; where transnational corporations, often in corporatocracies of corrupt relationships between the ruling elite, their governments and their armies, “have taken control over much of the production and commerce in developing countries”, raking in record-breaking profits such as those announced by ExxonMobil –, “\$10.4 billion, in the second quarter of 2006 – the second biggest profit ever reported by a U.S company”, surpassed only by “Exxon’s \$10.7 billion” in the second quarter of 2005; where fifty-one of the world’s largest one hundred economies are corporations, of which forty-seven are U.S based”; in which wealth in the Third World “is more concentrated than it was before the 1970s era of massive infrastructure development and the 1990s privatization wave”; where the “top 1 percent of households now account for more than 90 percent of all private wealth”; where “the cost of servicing Third World debt is greater than all Third World spending on health or education and nearly two times the amount those countries receive in foreign aid” (Perkins, 2007: 293–295). What kind of development is this?

With Africa being one of the foremost victims of Western-originated cultures and its development trajectories, the question that demands the attention of every thinker, especially those in Africa, is whether – given that Africa is becoming the new “Christendom” – this continent is not bound for the same monumental failures that Western civilization was destined for when its “Christian ‘truth’”, as Nietzsche observed, became “idle falsehood and deception”, “precisely the reverse of that which was at the bottom of the first Christian movement” (1964: 133). Is there a possibility that Africa could find a way to re-interpret Christian knowledge in the salvific ways in which it originated?

## 1.2 Problem statement

The pervasive influence of Western civilization is very present in the stark reality of absolute poverty and other forms of suffering within all the nations of the world, whether “developed”, “developing” or “under-developed”. Post-colonial Africa’s societies, its governments and economic systems, are still held hostage by this influence introduced through the medium of colonialism. As described by Spivak (1999), a situation seems to have overtaken humanity, where there is the use of the needs of the needy in the interest of the greedy, wherein economic democracy evades the “subalterns” of the world. It has been described by a fugitive black leader as a “colonial mentality”, widely spread among the elite political class; as, also “a projection” “upon the people of a sense of their own inadequacy, their own inequality in the eyes of the master” (Hallward, 2007: 127).

The evidence is abundant. Over more than three million households in South Africa live in abject poverty. It is dramatically experienced by 57,2% of Africans, compared to 2,2% of Whites. There has been a steady and noticeable rise in the number of unemployed people since the dawn of a Black-led era of democracy in 1994. Unemployment stood at 20% in 1994. By March 2003, it had escalated to over 31% according to what is called the “official definition” of unemployment. Over 13 million people “live below the poverty line” in South Africa, noted the Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive System of Social Security for South Africa, led by Professor Taylor (2002: 154). The largely rural province of the Eastern Cape, where 83% of the population are isiXhosa-speaking, with its unemployment figure of 56%, is the epitome of this pathological condition (Statistics South Africa, 2001 census figures).

This post-1994 state of national development in South Africa has been the subject of several important studies and resultant policies, in the search for sustained economic growth and human development strategies. Amongst these are the 1993 World Bank-funded *Project for statistics on living standards and development* (PSLSD) study led by the South African Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) based at the University of Cape Town; the 1995 South African Participatory Poverty Assessment; and in 1998, the report on poverty and inequality in South Africa (PIR), prepared for the Office of the Executive President and the Ministerial Committee for Poverty and Inequality. These were followed by the United Nations Development Report, *South Africa: Transformation for human development* (2000), and the Taylor Report (2002) quoted from above.

The search for development solutions has become an endless chase for a mirage. “Despondency, alienation and disenchantment” has become a “significant trend” (UNDP, 2000: x). Many policies, strategies and proposals continue to be imagined and tested, yet bring no systemic “rest” or relief from poverty.

Significant material advances have indeed been achieved. Policies and legislation have transformed many processes in business, labour and government, establishing a democratic culture in these areas. The unmistakable hallmark of the gains achieved in all the transformation risks taken is the realization of rights. It had to be. The entire “struggle” was waged and led by African nationalists, on the authority of morals based on a version of Christian ethics that most of the developed world understands.

The rationale informing this study is that despite the enormous studies, risks taken and rights-based gains achieved, the macro-socio-economic policies chiefly relied upon to turn the poverty tide have left the pre-1994 “power relations intact and reinforce the subordinate position of women and poor people” (UNDP, 2000: xi).

This condition and legacy, triggered by colonialism and deepened by apartheid, has remained intact while the role of relational socio-cultural values in sustainable development continues to be under-articulated in all major studies and under-appreciated in national and provincial policy frameworks and programmes of development. Despite the plethora of pro-poor policies and programmes which do indeed “reflect a broad commitment to the reduction of poverty and inequality” (May, 1998: 1), it is this study’s main hypothesis that as long as the role of what it coins as aesthetic relational values remains under-appreciated, sustainable development will remain a pipe dream.

### **1.2.1 The response of colonial and postcolonial writing**

Colonial and post-colonial writing have demonstrated a preoccupation with the negative influence and effects of colonialism on the exploited without tracing the wellspring of the cancer of colonialism itself. This deficiency has led to the inadequacy inherent in merely ascribing underdevelopment, as found in Africa and elsewhere, to economic, social and political exploitation. As such, some of these writings are little more than the regurgitation of socialist ideologies that come from the very Western civilization most would wish to be perceived as rejecting.

Walter Rodney, for example, in his work *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*, (1981), focused on how the introduction of capitalist modes of production and distribution in Africa created dependency through the “one-armed bandit” called colonialism, which laid the basis of neocolonialism. Colonialism “blunted, halved and turned back” Africa’s development. The education to which Africans were introduced served the interests of colonialists and continues to serve neocolonialism. Through colonial education neocolonial class stratification has been produced by educated Africans, the “petty accumulators”– privileged political and economic beneficiaries – like Medza in Beti’s *Mission to Kala* (1964), who perpetuate colonialism by continuing to militate against the interests of their own people in the post-independence period.

Cabral, in his *National Liberation and culture* (1980), in defining culture as the result of economic and social relations (rather than the very opposite), also falls into Rodney’s intellectual pattern. Africans find themselves in a crisis of identity as they have adopted colonialist modes of production.

Ngugi Wa Thiong’o in *Home Coming* (1972) asserts that colonialists used Christianity and Christian education (without interrogating these) to “capture the soul and mind” of the Africans; while Okot P’Bitek’s laments that Africans’ manhood is eradicated in the classroom by having “their testicles smashed with big books” (1985: 117).

Dwelling on this trend of the generalized description of the socio-political impact of colonialism on the colonized, Anderson (1983) wrote on the criminalization of native cultural practices, asserting control over the continuity and change of traditional habits and habitats while Kristeva drew attention to the fact that colonialists deliberately “carved” colonies with “careless inattention to their cultural integrity, ... in the African context”, their humanity being “rendered incomplete [and] ambiguous” (1993: 26).

Quite a lot of effort has been expended, also, on describing the means of exploitation and the reactions of the exploited. Adedeji (1990), Mengisteab and Logan (1995), writing on the effects of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) by Western institutions, have illustrated how African poverty was externally determined, and how African social scientists were satisfied to put the blame for the continent’s development woes at the door of such economic externalities as being the root of the problem.

At the beginning of the third millennium, post-colonial writing, especially among Africans, is still vacillating between the so-called “internalists”, who view sustainable development as a matter of appropriate institutions and policies, free markets, and law and order, and the “externalists”, who maintain that the effects of centuries of colonialism cannot be ignored (Morris, 2002). This intellectual derailment among Africans can perhaps be traced to their neglect and belittlement of their precolonial spirituality. Mbembe, for example, has suggested that since “the return to pristine, unspoilt precolonial is impossible, Africans must guard against nostalgia for lost origins” (2003: 16).

This study seeks, therefore, not only to address this deficiency, arising as it does from the neglect or failure in investigating the spiritual roots of the symptoms of human weaknesses such as colonialism itself, but to demonstrate the trans-cultural nature of certain human relational values, their trans-disciplinarity, their efficacy, and the role they play in the science and practice of sustainability.

In this investigation into the spirituality of amaXhosa, Africans project being as the reflection of a design that emanates from no particular geopolitical space. Post-colonial concepts such as “border thinking” or “colonial difference” (Mignolo, 2000), which potentially betray the negation of others or self-negation in the face of what could be regarded as global designs, do not arise in such a perspective. They need not. AmaXhosa in their precolonial setting, as this study attempts to demonstrate, claim neither epistemic nor spatial particularity. In their original encounter with Christianity as it flowed from the disciples of its Author, before it re-emerged in its adulterated, subalternizing version in the seventeenth century Southern Africa, Africans perceived this epistemic view neither as oppositional nor as complementary to theirs but as confirming what they had known since time immemorial. What they seek to be in their daily lives is to be what they assumed other people in every society to be, “abantu”, beings that reflect the values of the great “Ntu” to whom they owe their origin; “Ntu” whose attributes/values are written in nature. As such they are cosmopolitan citizens that belong to a universe of blood; children of the God of all flesh. They need not plead for inclusion in any design but can only gaze in disbelief at both, those who claim a position of privilege and those who allow the subjugation of themselves in this universe.

Living as we do as humans on a single globe, we are faced with the strange phenomenon of a proliferation of knowledges, which is the current concern of transdisciplinary thinkers. These

knowledges vex and confuse rather than transform the world into a place of joy. Each seems devoted to its inward-looking identical peculiarity and focused on its own individualistic self-elevation rather serving the interests of others. The proponents of these knowledges draw contentment from being separate from others and holding unique preferences. Behind this is the fear that should they blend with others, the peculiarity will be lost.

But this is exactly the source of confusion which militates against harmony in just about every facet of our lives, in our national, economic, political, or intellectual life or in any other type of human relation. These have proved themselves to be epistemic positions of barrenness and unfruitfulness. Unfruitful and too barren to provide solutions to the heavy crises that oppress our globe, scores of thousands of supposedly educated youth leave our institutions of learning year after year to become a menace to an already ailing globe rather than a source of relief. They have imbibed a spirituality that is callous to the distressful habiliments of humanity.

The people of the Eastern Cape, of whom the vast majority are amaXhosa, therefore, have a socio-cultural heritage of human relational values that yearns for intellectual probing. This invaluable asset needs to be clearly articulated, rejuvenated and brought back to the consciousness of the region's people, especially its children and youth, to adorn their lifestyle as it did in antiquity. This cultural asset has the potential to be more believable than the clichés currently being bandied about in an effort to “brand” and market the Eastern Cape, and to be more relevant to sustainable development as being grounded not in commercialism but in a history and remnant experience of the emotion of caring and spirituality that is purged of any desire for reward.

This study is a contribution to an effort that needs to be made to purposefully erode colonial conditions and culture, not only to build a sense of collective possibility and responsibility but to demonstrate support for shared action on the basis of relational values that provide the potential for the maintainance of a circuit of beneficence within and among different communities; to motivate people in communities to become aware of relational values and pledge themselves to patterns of behaviour that bear testimony to the internalization of self-transcendent values. It is motivated by the conviction that the revival of the “circuit of beneficence”, becoming a community, can never be a passive attitude of simply belonging to a collection of self-absorbed individuals rich in social capital. It is exacting, demanding acts of self-denial and of “taking to give” from the most destitute to the most affluent in society.

I argue that interventions towards material prosperity that are not under-girded by principle-based human intercourse are bound to be frustrated. Without concerted efforts to infuse principles that build community into daily operations in the civil service, private enterprises, civic organizations, and ordinary personal relationships, especially in efforts to attain a ‘better (material) life for all’, sustainable development has a limited chance of being realized.

Two major lifestyle alternatives, whose final product is the same, alienation, face us. On the one hand is the hierarchic culturalism that only knows the language of force and on the other, individualistic shopping for self-pleasuring, a lonesome hunting that brings no life. Yet, there is another, largely ignored, which consists, as Nietzsche articulates it, “in the formal renunciation of all desire of making its right felt; of all defence; of conquest in the sense of personal triumph; ... in forgiveness and the absence of anger and contempt; in the absence of a desire to be rewarded; in the refusal to be bound by anybody” (1964: 138). The Apostle Paul expresses this alternative as that in which he is a servant of all.

### **1.3 Conceptual context of beauty and aesthetics in this thesis**

The loss by humanity of the “arts of living together in mutual respect” (Toulmin, 1990: 89), implies the disappearance of beauty in inter-human and human-nature relationships. The harmony that is in nature has always fascinated mankind to the extent of wanting to imitate it. In the mind of ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, therefore, art was conceptualized as “representational and expressive skills” (Blocker & Jeffers, 1999: 2). Art is not the actual, but points us to the actual. As such it can be deceptive or honest. Good art, therefore, according to Plato, must not merely appeal to emotions but also encourage people “toward disciplined behaviour and proper habits of social harmony”.

Beauty in this thesis is conceptualized from a Platonic philosophic point of view. The conventional approach to the beautiful, even as it pertains to sustainability studies, put in Nietzschean terms, focuses on the “biological value of what is useful, beneficent, life-enhancing” in as far as it translates to gain and pleasure for humanity. Plato lived in a society in which the pursuit of unrestricted pleasure was uppermost in every field of human existence and expression. It was an era of highly sensualized idealization of beauty in just about every human endeavour, in art and in religion, all “grounded in physiological necessities” (Faas, 2002: 5). In its various practices,

sculpture, painting, speech, music and poetry, art was exaggerated in order to excite pleasure. They put into the images they made proportions that were not found in reality, simply to make their art beautiful, “leaving the truth”, Plato said, “to take care of itself”.

Artists and poets of the Greek world, such as Hesoid, Homer and Simonides, who were regarded as wise and knowledgeable educators of the young and the entire society in their imaginative formulations in religion, became influential in society with this sort of artistry. “Homer”, observes Faas, “clearly meant his listeners to enjoy his poetry in much the same way in which they relished their banquets. In the face of this reliance on deceit for the sake of pleasuring while corrupting, Plato sought to change society, like Socrates before him, who was killed because he dared to oppose the imaginative works of Greek religion, by reformulating aesthetics.

His reformulation of aesthetic concepts “involved a complete recasting of society and its laws ...”, so that society was no longer “gulled by fiction”. Aware that poets like “Hesoid and Homer, far from being educators of mankind, misrepresented facts, heroes, and the gods”, Plato became vehemently opposed to their trade, since “they corrupted their listeners’ minds, frequently by inciting wrong emotions” (Faas, 2002: 18). Such creeds taught, among others, “the non-existence of gods; that matter is prior to mind ... thus reducing the cosmos to a conglomerate of earth and stones”. Behind these creeds looms the whole range of “pre-Socratic philosophy”, which included “Heraclitus, Empedocles, Democritus, Anaxagoras, Anaximander and Archelaus, as well as those Sophists who proclaim man to be the measure of all things” (Faas, 2002: 21).

Plato’s aim was the transformation of a society that was, as admitted by poets like Hesoid himself, charmed by “fables embellished with colourful fiction”, and which, in the words of the Sophist Gorgias, created “a deception in which the deceiver is more honest than the non-deceiver, and the deceived is wiser than the non-deceived” (Faas, 2002: 17). His programme entailed, in Faas’s terms, the “transvaluation of aesthetic values” that were limited to giving sensuous pleasure to people. He sought to produce a “counter-charm to this spell” on society, by presenting a religion in which “the gods neither plot nor war against each other, ... changing identity and deceiving others, ... dispensers of good and evil to mortals”; in other words, Plato wanted to present social knowledge that does not blame the “evil of this world” on God, but on “other things” (Faas, 2002: 19). His social project aimed at the establishment of a society governed by three doctrines: 1) that gods exist; 2) that they care for humanity; and 3) that they cannot be bribed.

Beyond the instinctual beauty that, in Nietzsche's view, is merely "grounded in the general category of the biological values of what is useful, beneficent and life-enhancing", which "*depend upon* our most fundamental *values of self-preservation*" (in Faas, 2002: 6; italics supplied), Plato believed, was another, the "beautiful itself which cannot be accessed through human senses", the "unknowable beauty". This spiritual beauty, that is not detectable through the human senses, is in the ultimate "nothingness"; it "subsists" and demonstrates its reality "in an eternal oneness" and in humans attaining "self-mastery" over their senses to whose pleasuring they are prone to succumb, thereby inciting great evils among themselves (Faas, 2002: 26).

According to Plato, art was beneficial when it "emphasize[d] balance and proportion", when the 'good' and the 'beautiful' were interpreted in terms of the harmonious balance of different, often opposing forces, [and] the notion of beauty [was] 'a kind of harmonious inter-relationship of parts within an organic whole'" (Blocker and Jeffers, 1999: 5–6). Herein lies this study's central thrust: rediscovering "harmonious balance" in a world torn apart by opposition and alienation, what it is that constitutes this art and how humanity came to lose the art of living with difference – whether it is with peculiar or opposed difference – in harmony. This harmony cannot be attained through creeds that "propagate what they call the 'really and naturally right life', that is, the life of real domination over others" (Faas, 2002: 21) rather than that of service to them. This is the beauty of "nothingness".

This beauty of self-renunciation rather than that of self-glorification and pleasuring has several illustrations. John the Baptist's preaching attracted crowds. When Jesus Christ started his work, and came to John for baptism like the multitudes, John and his disciples "saw the tide of popularity turning away from himself" (White, 1898: 178). When his disciples one day came to him with the grievance: "Rabbi, He that was with thee, ... all men come to Him", John's response gives evidence of a man who had come to understand the beauty of "nothingness". Rather than express "disappointment at being superseded", John's answer was: "This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3 vs 22–26). Christ Himself repeated this lesson among His own followers after there had been a dispute among them regarding the question of who was the greatest among them. He taught them: "If any man desires to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all" (Mark 9 vs 35), "he who governs as he who serves" (Luke 22 vs 26).

### 1.3.1 Nothingness in contrast

The “decrease” in self-importance and the “nothingness” referred to by Plato, it must be pointed out, stands in contrast to the view of Jacob Boehme. Jacob Boehme (1575–1624) grew and matured in a world that grappled with existential issues of fragmentation in society and the role of God in an evil world. He developed the theosophy of emergence that taught that Deity emerged “out of pure Oneness into differentiated actuality”, in order to apprehend itself (self-conscious), it developed into something experienceable, that is, became embodied, so as to be sensible. It is in the finite creatures that God then found himself revealed. This development originated in an undifferentiated *non-being*, also called the “primordial Abyss” or “*Ungrund*” of eternal purity and freedom (Beach, 1995).

A similar notion of self-consciousness is characteristic of what Jennifer Gidley calls the “integrative theoretic narratives”. Its main proponents, Rudolf Steiner, Jean Gebser and Ken Wilber, believe that the critical challenges that our planet faces can only be solved by the “planetary imperative” of integration (Gidley, 2007:5). In Wilber’s thought, in particular, it is worth noting that the primal “undifferentiated state”, where mankind did not have consciousness, is the state of ignorance or the “*Uroboros*”; this is a concept Wilber borrowed from Erich Neumann, who said it stood for the “Heavenly Serpent ... in ancient Babylon, ... the Primal Being: that says ... I am the Alpha and the Omega” (in Gidley, 2007:5). What we see here is not simply a contra-biblical notion of ascribing powers of creation to the serpent – which according to the book of Revelation (12 vs 7–9) is “the dragon that was cast out” when war broke out in heaven, “called the Devil and Satan which deceives the whole world”: we are expected to believe quite a few things. Among these: 1) Evil/Chaos created our planet; 2) with all the deepening suffering that surrounds humanity and the environmental degradation that accompanies this condition, humanity is evolving from ignorance to a state of perfection; and 3) as Wilber claims, “man is God-in-the-making” (in Gidley, 2007:5).

In Jacob Boehme’s theosophy, however, all of nature, including man, developed from a different kind of “chaos”. It all originated in the “free-will”, “the chaos”, “fire”, the freedom which is the “nothingness” in the “*Ungrund*” (Berdyayev, 1941:13). Though fairly obvious, it is important to emphasize that for the purposes of this thesis – which acknowledges and appreciates the existence of different cosmological perspectives regarding nature and society – the “fire” and “chaos” that Boehme refers to are only symbolic, as Berdyayev notes. The fire is different, for example, from that which the ancient Egyptians and even Herackletus refer to, the sun. It is not the chaos that Edgar

Morin refers to either, as we shall consider later, whose source is the sun. In Boehme's thought, God Himself originated as an eternal "nothingness", through His own free will, a powerful passion, and made Himself manifest, comprehensible in the visible life we see in nature.

This thinking, "which locates freedom in the primary foundation of being, at a greater and more original depth than any being, deeper and more primary than God Himself", was never heard of before Boehme, notes Berdyaev (1941: 13). This freedom that is before nature and outside of it, "explains the genesis of being", grounding it in spirituality. The primal importance of freedom, concluded Berdyaev, can be clearly understood in its implication for the "world harmony" that we all seek. Freedom and love, are eternal principles that give value to personality. The achievement of world harmony depends on the creative use of this unique, human spiritual endowment.

In Western Christendom, it is to the "enduring influence" (Gallagher, 2006) of Dionysius, one of the Athenian philosophers, that the roots of aesthetics can be ascribed, long before Thomas Aquinas – under his inspiration – deepened systematic attention to the subject. Dionysius is believed (White, 1911; Gallagher, 2006) to have been among "the philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics [that] encountered him [Paul]" (Acts 17 vs 18) and who, after listening to Paul of Tarsus drawing his countrymen's attention to the "Unknown God" among the Greeks, accepted the gospel and teaching of Jesus. According to Dionysius, all the beauty we observe in nature is symbolic of the absolute transcendent Beauty of God who created it all. Beauty itself, which is God, allows each and every creature of His to "directly participate" in Him, because "God is directly responsible for the being of each thing" (in Nielsen, 2007: 4). This is why God has an infinite number of names. To each one of His innumerable creatures, He is what each needs Him to be in their own plural particularities. The solutions to their innumerable needs are God's divine names, which "do in fact refer to God in a non-exhaustive, yet meaningful manner" (Nielsen, 2007: 5).

This God who, according to Dionysius's work *The Celestial Hierarchy*, is "beyond being", reveals Himself through hierarchical levels of illumination. In other words, humans grow into discovering the manifold powers of God as they experience Him in their individual lives. In the book of Genesis (6 vs 3) God spoke to Moses on this very issue: "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name Lord I was not known to them". In other words God revealed Himself, provided "illumination" about Himself, to those that lived before Moses, only in some aspects.

Often, the concept of “levels of illumination” is used in transconvergence writing characteristic of Catholic and transdisciplinarity programmes of UNESCO and the International Centre for Transdisciplinary Research CIRET (Marion, 1991; Nicolescu, 1998, 2000; 2002; Ecumenical Encounter, 2007), to justify the notions of “levels of Reality”, in which each receives illumination from that which is above it and each passes what it knows to those below. Such an interpretation of Dionysius has the potential danger of the justification of certain knowledges held by humans and human institutions as being more illumined than others, and by implication, superior.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> Stage Ecumenical Encounter (EEA3) in Lutherstadt in 2007, for example, a paper was read making the claim that the “reality and enlightenment of Christ’s light which shines upon the whole world and at the same time is the Church, offers the ultimate meaning of the whole creation and of all the human being’s history”. The Moderator of the World Council of Churches, Aram I, in an event marking the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Joint Working Group (JWG) of the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC, bemoaned the fact that even in the post-Vatican II era, the Catholic Church “refuses to ‘drop’ the concept of ‘return’ (by other churches) to the ‘fullness of truth and unity that subsists in the Roman Catholic Church’” (2005:4).

Also, it is well known that transdisciplinarity, at least the version advocated by UNESCO and CIRET, through its president Basarab Nicolescu, is a quest for “a new Principle of Relativity [which] emerges from the coexistence between complex plurality and open unity”, and he emphasizes that “no one level of Reality constitutes a privileged place from which one is able to understand all the other levels of Reality” (1998). Nevertheless, transdisciplinarity as articulated by Nicolescu is an ideology. As such, it also has the potential to alienate those that do not believe in it. The Charter on Transdisciplinarity adopted in Portugal, 1994, bears testimony to this in the opening line in its preamble. It expresses discomfort regarding the “exponential increase of knowledge”. Why? Because this will make a “*global view* of the human being impossible” (italics mine). In other words there is a conviction that this “global view” exists, and it will be found by those who come to its “collective” and “unification of the meanings” that lie beyond the plurality of different disciplines.

While the Charter of Transdisciplinarity expresses the general hope for finding the “global view” and the “unification of meanings”, Nicolescu, one of its editorial committee members, has refined this belief. In the notion of the “included middle” contradictories (A; non-A) are unified in this T-state in an “iterative process that continues indefinitely until all levels of Reality known, or

conceivable” “are exhausted” (Nicolescu, 2002). In other words there will be a final T-state of the “unification of meanings”, where the “global view” is arrived at. The contradiction raises its head when he equally makes the claim that the “action of the logic of the included middle on the different levels of Reality induces an open structure ... [which] implies the impossibility of a self-enclosed theory”. Nevertheless, the final T-state, “the middle way” which “leads to the *summit* of the mountain” (Nicolescu, 2002) (*italics mine*), remains the ultimate goal.

The chances are that, when that “global view” and/or “unification” have been found, any opponent thereto will be rejected, just as the charter rejects “any attitude that refuses dialogue and discussion” and those who elect to be outside the “shared knowledge” (Article 14; Freitas, Morin & Nicolescu). This, therefore, is an ideology that holds a specific view, that rejects those who reject it; simply put, it opposes, despite the claim to tolerance as one of its “fundamental characteristics”, those who do not hold the attitudes it holds. As Janz (undated) argues, “it seems that in giving a description of the attitude of transdisciplinarity before the fact, the writers have tried to circumscribe and, ironically, distance the program from any discussion”. As such it qualifies as one of those “global designs”, which according to Mignolo (2000), are intolerant to particularity and have a disdain, ultimately, for “border thinking”. This also strongly suggests a thinly veiled primal fear of uncertainty and unpredictability. It is even a reminder and a longing for certainty (Toulmin, 2000), such as that which turned institutions of modernity into instruments of terror.

Yet Dionysius, as did Paul who drew him to the teachings of Jesus, affirms “one truth”, that it is characteristic of God, the “universal Cause”, “to summon everything to communion with Him” in its own way (in Nielsen, 2007: 3). Transcendent as God is (beyond being), He is also “excessively present, immanent”, in Dionysian thought “God is ... known in all things and as distinct from all things” (in Nielsen, 2007: 9). He [God] has, according to Paul in the Second Letter to the Corinthians (4 vs 6) directly, not through anything else, “shone in our hearts, to give light of the knowledge of” His own glory, “in the face of Jesus”, who “being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person” (Hebrews 1 vs 3) is, Himself “God made flesh” (John 1 vs 1). “In everything [we] are enriched by Him (Christ), in all utterance, and in all knowledge” (1 Corinthians 1 vs 5). For this reason, each person, in their own knowledge received from God, can “come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 5 vs 16), directly, in our particularity, through no “global view”, “collective” or unification of meanings at any level of Reality. Though apparently opposed to any meta-narratives, transdisciplinarity is still an “attempt to find a grand unity to knowledge”, and “while there may not

be a vision of a specific future (the hallmark of most utopias), there may be an intuited vision of a future based on dialogue that might serve to justify potentially repressive measures” (Janz, undated).

God, according to Dionysius, reveals Himself “to each mind in proportion to its capacities; and the divine goodness is such that, out of concern for our salvation, it deals out the immeasurable and infinite in limited measures” (in Nielsen, 2007: 6). This Beauty of God draws us all, together, to its “divine splendor” and is the “cause of consonance and luster in all that exists”. In this consonance, each being, as he/she is drawn toward God, “bears (tolerates) all things (all other creatures), ... endures all things”, notes Paul in the First Letter to the Corinthians (13 vs 7). We have no option but to be humble – nothingness – and not puffed up; to endure each other and everything because we are only able to “know in part”, says Paul in verse 12. No one among us has all the requisite knowledge, about any of us, to be qualified to pass judgement; hence the paralogical existence recommended by Jesus in the parable of the wheat and the tares. In our limited knowledge about one another we may be grieved and look at some in “the field”, society, as worthy of being uprooted as tares. But Jesus’ instruction is a clear and definite “Nay”, (i.e. No!), let it all, the wheat and the tares, “grow together”; “lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them” (Matthew 13 vs 29).

For centuries, as this study will point out, churches, many times in collusion with the state, under the guise of Christianity, have spilt a lot of blood. “Those who differed from the established doctrines have been imprisoned, put to torture and to death, at the instigation of men who claimed to be acting under the sanction of Christ. ... God has been misrepresented through the church by this way way of dealing with those supposed to be heretics” (White, 2000: 74). As we develop forbearance toward one another in society, each one’s character gets to be fully developed, whether good or evil. Thus, harmonious coexistence, among beings with finite knowledge, becomes possible, not because of any particular knowledge, global view or meanings about God that they have agreed to share; the harmony is with reference to God its Source and Author of beauty.

The idea of a multiplicity of things bound by the principle of referring, while in their particularities, to one common identity in which they find their unity and harmony has also been articulated by Plotinus (204/5–270 A.D.). Everything and nature itself has dimensionality. Each form has multiple dimensions and without one of its dimension a body cannot exist. The same is true “for all necessary truths, e.g.  $3 + 5 = 8$ , express a virtual identity, as indicated by the ‘=’ sign” (Gerson,

2003: 5). Yet each number in the mathematical example, united as it is with others in their relation and reference to a common identity, while in harmony, retains its own identity; each is important in the relationship and retains its difference.

In the analogy of the human body, the Apostle Paul in the letter to the Romans (12 vs 3–5) expressed this philosophy: “I say, ... to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, ... for as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we being many are one body in Christ”. Therefore, concluded Erigena (quoted in Wegge, undated) “beauty ... is not defined by the conditions of materiality. It attains its highest degree of perfection in the world of indivisible ideas, which are harmonized in the simplicity of God. Beauty is harmony.

In Hegelian aesthetics, “beauty ... is born of the mind or spirit, ... everything that is beautiful is only really beautiful as partaking in something higher [namely mind] and being produced thereby. In this sense, natural beauty manifests itself as only a reflection of the beauty which belongs to the mind” (Blocker & Jeffers, 1999: 90). From the perspective of a Hegel who believed in the “Godhead”, it is “Reason”, “pure and exceeding all limits”, which “ordered” “the plan of the world in general”, according to the explanation given by the scriptures in the first chapter of John (Williamson, 1984: 24). In such a context God became “flesh and dwelt” among His creation, becoming relevant to their day-to-day needs. It is such a religion, a “subjective religion”, with the potency to transform society, that Hegel believed in, not one imposed from an authority, external to people’s suffering; such a religion “is alive”, “effective in the inwardness of our being, and active in our outward behaviour” (Williamson, 1984).

In the “order of living nature” “every creature lives its own life and has its own purposes, but they all, nevertheless, depend on one another” (Williamson, 1984: 16). What is universal about people is that each person is a “thinking consciousness”. Each person “makes explicit to himself, by means of his own nature, *what he is*, and *what the world is*”; it is this that makes mankind, “mind”, the ability to realize himself, to “think himself” (Blocker & Jeffers, 1999: 90). In society each person, therefore, as an individual, needs not be oppressed by or surrender his/her mind to the thinking of others.

By implication therefore, a human being, unlike natural things which are “simply there”, has the capacity to adorn himself with beauty through taking a conscious decision to be “what he is” and by

allowing others, in that same spirit, to be who they prefer to be. This beauty in the mind of an individual manifests itself, according to Hegel, when it lets objects “alone in their independence”; it is when man seeks to adapt others, reducing them to his own mind, that the harmony among independent minds is disrupted. In our desire to “adapt” others, “we destroy them” (Blocker & Jeffers, 1999: 91).

In addition, the implication of this human ability for sustainable development is that “since he has the impulse to express himself, and so again to recognize himself, in things that are at first simply presented to him as externally existent” a human being can also “impress on them the stamp of his own inner nature”. It is this very philosophy that we find expressed by the Psalmist King David when he notes (Psalm 19 vs 1) “The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament His handywork”. He continues in vs 2: “There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.” This implies that nature speaks to all humanity, irrespective of their different languages, about the character of God. Paul of Tarsus also expressed this Hegelian thought when he noted “For in the invisible things of Him [God] from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made” (Romans, 1 vs 20). Nature, in Hegel’s reason, is the art that reveals God’s Mind, the Absolute Idea (Bosanquet, 1993: xiv) hence mankind’s ability to understand God through His created works, as the Psalmist suggests. In the creation of man on earth, Hegel says, the absolute God gave His “highest manifestation” (Bosanquet, 1993: xviii), a thought we shall come across as we deal with the creation narrative below. This Absolute, God, also, according to Hegel, manifested “itself in the finite” when God, through His Son Jesus, became human/flesh; and was “symbolically reflected in the incarnation” (Politics Professor, undated).

Interestingly, from Paul’s view, when mankind chooses to ignore the language of nature as it reveals God’s glory, he tends to reflect characteristics that are in conflict with what nature says to him. The nature of His character is expressed as “riches of His goodness and forbearance and long suffering” (Romans 2 vs 4). More directly, Micah (6 vs 8) spells out what this goodness implies for humanity: “He [God] has shown you, O man, what is good, ... to do *justly*, to love *mercy*, and to *walk humbly* with your God”. Zecharia (7 vs 9); he qualifies “true justice” as being accompanied by a “show [of] mercy and compassion”.

The absence of this glory, as reflected in inter-human relationships, expresses itself among the various kinds of wickedness, as being without “natural affection” and being “unmerciful”. When humanity lives in a condition without art, reasons Hegel, “man perceives external objects and has

desires for them, desires which he satisfies by consuming” ( [we will be dealing with this condition of desire-driven living, when we deal with Bauman’s concept of liquid modernity (2000)]. In this condition, the world is nothing more than “a collection of individual entities to be perceived and consumed” (translated by Bosanquet, 1993: xiv).

The focus on beauty, clearly, implies the rejection of what postmodernists call “privileged paradigms” and the logic of “domination, mastery and authority” (Harris, 1999: 154–155) deemed characteristic of modernity. Amongst its variety of intellectual strands, postmodernism rejects method, broad generalizations, theories or metanarratives, advocating polyvocality, locality, indefinitiveness and interpretiveness of truth, represents life as a text, regards every field of knowledge as constituting power relations (Harris, 1999: 155) and harbours a disdain for any “rule-based symbol systems” of “centralised control” (Cilliers, 1998: 13–14).

But there is also another implication held by this beauty for postmodernism itself. While postmodernism presumably stands for the end of dehumanizing control and the totalitarianism of rule-based systems, it “replaces this dilemma ... with a new one”, according to Jameson. Postmodernism, he observes, “means the end of much more, ... the end of the unique and the personal, the end of the distinctive individual brush stroke” (in Blocker and Jeffers, 1999: 328).

This thesis proposes that the oppression and suffering that is endemic in inter-human relationships and in human institutions, is not necessarily due to the fact that humans and their institutions are law-based or rule-based as claimed by postmodernists; it has even been suggested that “we need to *disperse authority* and adapt it more discerningly and precisely: on the one hand, to the needs of local areas and communities, and on the other hand, to wider transnational functions” (Toulmin, 1990: 206) (emphasis mine), to find the answers to many of our relational dilemmas. But how thinly can we “disperse authority” and what are the acceptable limits of locality in “networks” (Cilliers, 1998)? These relations involve various levels; they are in the intranational, multinational, international, transnational as well as subnational; there are relations at such levels as the labour union, corporation/firm, the human family, friendships and in the inter-disciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary knowledge spheres. As a “thinking consciousness”, man exists in all of these spheres or levels of relationships. Freedom of individual thought and being, in Hegelian terms, is still under threat when subjected to any kind of transvergence project that seeks to attain harmony by requiring individuals or their groups to surrender difference/peculiarity, their capacity to think and act for themselves.

Edmund Burke, before Hegel, made the observation, while considering how mankind perceives the world that contains us, that though we may differ in the degree in which we sense it, we still encounter it through the same five basic senses, which are universal. It is this that makes it possible for all humans to “correspond”. Indeed, in many ways, we correspond: sugar and honey are sweet, aloes and vinegar are bitter, for just about all of us, and the passions evoked by this are either pain or pleasure, differing only in degree. If anyone cannot “distinguish between milk and vinegar; or that tobacco and vinegar are sour, milk and sugar sweet, we immediately conclude that the organs of this man are out of order, ... we do not call a man of this kind wrong in his notions but absolutely mad. Exceptions of this sort in either way do not at all impeach our general rule, nor make us conclude that men have various principles concerning the relations of quantity, or Taste of things” (Blocker & Jeffers, 1999: 67). In this very word “correspond” lies the possibility that we do have the capacity to share the same responses in how we imagine the world and ourselves. Burke and I, umXhosa, writing in differing times and countries, indeed, co-respond with pleasure to light; I have some experience of the world and agree with him that light is more pleasing than darkness. Summer, when the earth is clad in green, when the heavens are serene and bright, is more agreeable than winter.

In the way we encounter each other as humans, we either recoil in displeasure or are attracted to one another. Whatever we respond to with “astonishment”, Burke, suggested, is “sublime”. According to Burke, “admiration, reverence and respect”, though inferior to astonishment, belong to the same class of responses. The sublime may include those encounters that evoke in humans fear and terror, causing us to apprehend pain or death. Common to everything sublime, notes Burke, is “some modification of power” (Blocker & Jeffers, 1999: 72). In contrast to the sublime is “beauty”. By beauty, Burkes means “that quality or those qualities in bodies by which they cause love, or some passion similar to it”. We encounter beauty “whenever we take in those various causes of sympathy which attach us to any person or thing ...; beauty strikes us without any reference to use”. This quality is not the “creature of our reason” but that of “bodies”, which causes an effect on our minds by the intervention of our human senses.

Living as we are in an era that Bauman (2000) calls “liquid modernity”, in which humans, while intending to escape from the “sublime”, the power and compulsion of law and rule-based relationships, are driven only by desire and lust. This is a consumer culture of endless “shopping”; using and disposing of objects of desire and lust, the love which is the response to beauty, which,

Burke warns, must be distinguished from “desire or lust” which is an attraction that seeks to consume that which is being encountered; to “possess” and to “use”. It is to this desiring and lusting that “we must attribute those violent and tempestuous passions” (Blocker & Jeffers, 1999: 73) that end in pain and even death among us. The Apostle Jude warned on this very point (Jude vs 1–20), regarding the governance of lust over “certain men who crept in unnoticed” among his community. These men “run greedily” for “profit”, “serving only themselves”, “walking according to their own lusts”, “mouth(ing) great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage” and control over their lives. Such people “cause divisions”. The beauty in Jude’s own character is demonstrated by the fact that he did not recommend cruelty or harm against such men but “mercy” and “compassion” as transformative interventions and restorers of harmony.

Worthy of note are the types of reactions which are evoked, according to Burke, by the encounters with the sublime and the beautiful. “There is difference between admiration [the astonishment category] and love”, he notes. “The sublime which is the cause of the former, always dwells on great objects, and terrible; the latter on small ones, and pleasing; we submit to what we admire, but we love what submits to us; in one case we are forced, in the other we are flattered into compliance” (Blocker & Jeffers, 1999: 74).

It is in the narrative of creation and in the science of salvation through Jesus Christ, **“the lamb of God”** (John 1 vs 29) that we shall, hopefully, see how this notion and imagery of the smallness of a great God - who “made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in likeness of men, ... humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phillipians 2 vs 7, 8) and through incarnation came to minister to human needs – “I came to minister not to be ministered to”; “I am among you as the One who serves” (Luke 22 vs 27), - made the whole enterprise of Christianity attractive throughout the world and still gives the potency for harmonizing relationships and making possible coexistence, even among opposed human factions. The “kingdom”, which is representative of a state of harmony, according to Christ, cannot be entered “except (we) be converted, and become as little children”; He emphasized “He who is least among you all will be great” (Luke 9 vs 48). It is, therefore, in our self-perceived “nothingness” that beauty is preserved among us.

It should, therefore not be surprising that bodies which encounter us in relationships of force and fear will get our submission and compliance; but it is only those bodies which encounter us in humility (smallness/nothingness) which will enjoy human love. This formula in human relationships is what

Peter (1, 3 vs 4–5 vs 1 - 5) recommended as the “incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, ...[and] compassion for one another”. “Be hospitable to one another, ... as each one has received a gift, minister it to one another”; “Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility”. He exhorted “elders” to “serve as overseers not by compulsion”, nor as lords but by being examples of serving with humility those “entrusted to you”.

This thesis proposes the possibility of restoring the lost “harmonious balance” in interhuman and human-to-nature relationship not so much in refuting or contending with any authority as in each authority learning to balance itself through living mercifully with difference/diversity/peculiarity. The imbalance that is manifest at the human level is mirrored at the human-to-nature level by the decline of balance in ecosystems in virtually all known natural domains: celestial, aquatic and terrestrial, owing to human domination (Geisinger, 1999); the new attitudes and new institutions that need to emerge in this “third phase of Modernity” (Toulmin, 1999) or “liquid modernity” (Bauman, 2000), are those that are prepared to balance law/rules with mercy.

### **1.3.2 Schopenhauer’s Sabbath beauty: Will-less perception of others**

In the quest for transforming society through the restoration of the art of “harmonious balance”, Schopenhauer, after Hegel and Burke, while acknowledging the value of knowledge in the world, draws our attention to the realization that knowledge is not the entire story. When in observing others we contemplate them “no longer conscious of ourselves as individuals”, in other words, not in relation to ourselves but as products of an Idea, the eternal limitless and timeless God, only then do they become beautiful; we behold others not as we would want them to be but as they are from the Idea. Our will is set aside.

Such a knowledge about others – “will-less” observation – “freed, and delivered from all will, is in the highest degree pleasant, and of itself constitutes a large part of aesthetic enjoyment”, notes Schopenhauer (Blocker & Jeffers, 1999: 100). This means that it is people’s will about themselves, freed from what we would want to “will” them, that makes life in society beautiful, a joy. In this mode of living we become “true artists” of harmonious living in society.

Each individual, through his/her own will, objectifies him/herself. Persons or things in nature, in their multiple forms, that become the objects of contemplation, become deeply significant phenomena that are comprehended as they are outside of our wills; they reveal themselves as willed

by the Idea that gave them form. The will inside the observed object gives significance to each phenomenon, whether in its violence, its terribleness, its satisfaction or its aberration (the latter in tragic situations), or finally in its change and self-surrender, which is the peculiar theme of Christian painting. This thought then reveals something about how true change comes about in society; not through coercion or compulsion but through each thinking individual exercising his/her will, freely.

This is the point regarding the human will that is often forgotten or taken for granted when considering change. Knowledge on its own is not the entire story: it is insufficient on its own to bring about transformation. Each individual has to exercise the will, described by White as “the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, the power of choice”; and she emphasizes “everything depends on the right action of the will” (1940: 47). “We ourselves”, notes Schopenhauer, “are the will” to be “discovered”; “the will that constitutes our being”. It is crucial to realise the importance of this in sustainability studies. When thinking individuals are allowed to change through their own volition, harmony may be achieved. When they are “free from their relation to the will” of the observer, when we observe them “without personal interest, without subjectivity”, the harmony we all need, “the peace which we were always seeking, but which always fled from us on the former path of desires, comes to us of its own accord, and it is well with us” (Blocker & Jeffers, 1999: 99). It is then that we are able to live in a “painless state” – one could add, oppressionless, fearless, free of compulsion.

In such a state of relationship with others and nature, notes Schopenhauer, “we keep the Sabbath”, a symbolic phenomenon of rest that we shall come across as we consider the creation narrative. The Sabbath frees us from the “penal servitude of willing” others, notes Schopenhauer (Blocker & Jeffers, 1999: 99). As we “remember the Sabbath to keep it holy” (Genesis 20 vs 8) and “call the Sabbath a delight” and “we turn away” from seeking our “own pleasure” (Isaiah 58 vs 13), what Schopenhauer calls the path of desires, we pause to remember that each person or thing in nature is the product of the will of God who embodies nothingness, that is, humility. It is when we are ready to decrease in our own sense of self-importance, in the readiness to be nothing, in the “blessedness of will-less perception” of others, that “an enchanting glamour” is cast over the “distant past” in which we lived in “incurable sorrows”, but which are “forgotten, because since then [we] have often given place to others” (Blocker & Jeffers, 1999: 99).

## 1.4 Focus of this thesis

This thesis is concerned with those human capacities that could make possible what could be considered as a paralogical existence of humanity in society and with the natural world that sustains us, in seeking to achieve sustainable development on a basis which appreciates difference.

### 1.4.1 On grand narratives

The imperative to explain human actions and patterns of human behaviour has influenced the search for answers in understanding human values (Schwartz, 1992) and culture (Hofstede, 1995). People in every society look at life through particular windows that are unique to themselves; these are patterns of thinking, feeling and potential acting. These “mental programs” provide humans with what Hofstede metaphorically refers to as “software of the mind”, illustrating reactions that can be expected and are likely, given a person’s particular past.

Similarly, narratives have generally been considered as theoretical concepts for modeling reality. They function as “cognitive maps” and “mental models” for organizing human experiences, according to Herman (2003). In the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative* Ryan (2005) proposes that the narrative is a “mirror” that helps humans to understand what it means to be human, providing models for shaping and preserving memories.

In the African worldview, narratives have this very function: of being the media for carrying the models of what it means to be a person in relation to others and the world he/she lives in. The value of a story lies more in the lessons it conveys than in the narrative itself.

The use of the concept of “grand narratives” is attributed to Lyotard (1984). Opposition to “logocentrism”, universal truth claims, before Lyotard, was articulated by Derrida (1978). In his works Lyotard is similarly opposed to broad claims and generalizations, which he also calls meta-narratives and “universals”. Reasoning that society contains a multiplicity of community of meanings, large-scale theories and philosophies have no room in such settings, therefore emphasis must be put on particular explanations for specific situations.

Cultural relativism as advocated in the rejection of grand narratives, as in postmodernism, serves as a critical stance to claims of superiority and importance by one culture – particularly Western

culture – over others. Ernest Gellner’s claim that cultural relativism amounts to disrespect for those cultures that it claims to respect does not have much weight if equality is of any value. On the other hand, to claim that cultures are unique, and have no commonalities, is in itself a “truth claim” that goes against the very principles of postmodernism; indeed, it is a blatant disregard for the possibilities of commonality – that commonality can never exist, or at least not among apparently distant cultures. The sensitivity to other cultural perspectives that postmodernity is calling for is noble, but there should be openness to similarities of meanings among cultures. Indeed if cultures were totally closed from being understood from the perspective of others, no conversation among them would be possible.

### **1.4.2 The African worldview**

The African worldview on cosmology is CreatorGod-centric. It resonates sympathetically with the belief contained in the creation narrative of the Garden of Eden as held in the Judeo-Christian culture. Whereas pharaonic cosmological thought is solarcentric, with Ra, the Sun, as the central ruler, black Africa, from southern Egypt southwards, held a line of thought common to that of the biblical narrative. It is on the basis of this narrative that Africans relate to other beings and their environment. Indeed narratives play an important role in sense-making. They “help people to make sense of their practice and allow the development of a shared identity” (Moss, 2001, unpaginated).

Throughout Africa, God is a pre-existent, supreme Being, which is in contrast to pharaonic thought where “Matter” pre-existed Ra. He is a self-made God, the “Nu ne ma hu” as He is known among the people of Benin; the “Unsurpassed One” (Obenga, 2004: 543).

According to the Garden of Eden creation narrative provided in the Scriptures, God the Creator of the heavens and the earth “spoke”, (Psalm 33 vs 9) and “it was done, He commanded and it stood fast”. Through “the Word” of God, who “was God” (John 1 vs 1), “the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person” (Hebrew 1 vs 3) “became flesh and dwelt among us” humans. He is also described as “the image of the invisible God; (who) is before all things and in whom “all things visible and invisible” were created, ... by Him and for Him”, and “in Him all things consist” (Colossians 1 vs 15–17).

The last creatures to be created, “in the image of God”, and placed in the Garden of Eden, were the humans. According to the narrative, God said: “Let us make man in our image, according to our

likeness”. The first humans were represented by Adam and Eve, as companions. In His mind the “Lord God” reasoned, “it is not good for man to be alone; I will make him a help meet for him” (Genesis 2 vs 18). The sense, according to this narrative, is that humans were created not only to be social, in community, but to be “help meet” to each other; that is, to need each other in a relationship marked by interdependence.

According to this narrative in the book of Genesis, “the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them”. “God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good”, then God “rested on the seventh day from all His works which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because in it he had rested from all His work which God created and made” (Genesis 2 vs 2–3). [It is this seventh day that God reminded the people of Israel to “remember” as the Sabbath (rest) day, after the four centuries of their enslavement in ancient Egypt under the oppression of the pagan Egyptians. It was to serve as a perpetual reminder that nobody other than God created all nature, and therefore God alone is worthy of worship.]

A direct *word* was given to the humans in the “very good” earth that came from the hand of its Maker. God asked them “to keep it”. They were thus made stewards: to take care of, and not abuse earth, their home. The Genesis creation narrative then goes on to give the history of the co-existence of good and evil.

### **1.4.3 Violation of the word/thought as violation of being**

Genesis 2 vs 9 notes: “And out of the ground made the Lord to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”. They were encouraged to “eat of the fruit of the tree of the garden; but of the tree which is in the midst of the garden”. God’s word, His *thought made audible* to them, was: “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Genesis 2 vs 16–17).

This was a test of loyalty to their Creator which the first human pair did not pass. The problem revolved around two critical human endowments: the aspect of the power of choice, free will and *individuality* on the one hand, and the aspect of *desire*, on the other. When Moses, close to three millennia before the birth of Jesus Christ, wrote this story of creation, it is clear, even back then,

that the biblical record was aware of and acknowledged the importance and power of both free will and individual desire, in the governance of the human self. (And this was way before we started talking about classical, modern or postmodern times.) Eve, to use Bauman's metaphor, "went shopping", "scanning the assortment of possibilities" (2000: 73), not out of need, but out of desire (Bauman 2000: 75). Right from the start, it can be argued, there was "consumerism".

This point is worth making here because Western writing has tended to periodicise, subalternize and territorialize the basic challenges faced by humans, ascribing them to particular peoples in particular places and periods. This is evidenced in works such as Toulmin's (1990), dealing with issues of "certainty", the pursuit of modernity and "uncertainty", that of postmodernity, including "border writing" (Mignolo, 2000) and postcolonial writing (Mbembe, 2002).

The trouble started when the "serpent, more cunning than any beast that the Lord God had made" (Genesis 3 vs 1) influenced the first human pair to disregard God's instruction. They listened to the serpent, who suggested to them that "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3 vs 4-5). (Interestingly, it is a common message among many nature worshipping religions that each human being is "a god" who must decide for him/herself what is good or evil – and, according to Luciferian doctrine propounded by Blavatsky, noted above, good and evil are complementary notions). According to the story, the disobedience led to the pair hiding from God. The harmony was broken and they were no longer comfortable in His company and were driven out from paradise. A state of disharmony, evil, as it were, emerged when humans desired an increase in the importance of self. But this was not done without a plan for the restoration of harmony between human beings and God.

#### **1.4.4 The way out**

The plan for the restoration of harmony between humans and God, and among humans themselves, is summarized in Genesis 3 vs 14-15: "And the Lord God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, ... I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel". This was a promise by God to the serpent: that it and all of its seed will finally be destroyed by the seed of the woman, in a controversy in which the seed of the woman would be wounded, but not fatally. The woman's "Seed", whose "heel" the

serpent would “bruise”, in terms of the Biblical narrative, is Jesus Christ, by whom and for whom all things were created (Colossians 1 vs 16).

This aspect of the creation narrative has captured the imagination of, and given a sense of purposeful living to, Africans, and to millions of other peoples around the world: the self-sacrificial/self-abnegative character of the Creator, His self-denial; the deliberate choice He made to pursue His own creatures – who had decided to abandon Him – to put aside His own comfortable position and assume their status of lowliness and misery in order to restore them to their former position. Cushites, as ancient historians referred to Africans, perceived themselves to have descended from the Adamic line through Ham and Noah. They were the very first people, apart from the Israelites, to be reached with the news of the actual fulfilment of the promisory part of the creation narrative: the self-sacrificial death of Christ at the hands of His own people. As we examine the lives of several African leaders, such as Nxele ka Makanda and Tiyo ka Soga, we shall see the extent to which the power of self-sacrificial living is able to bear testimony to the efficacy of relational values embedded in a lifestyle of self denial, self-nothingness. It may seem far fetched, but historical evidence points to the fact that the lives of these leaders were strongly influenced by the creation narrative. Bantu ka Biko himself, in the downtrodden Ginsberg township near King William’s Town, spent a substantial part of his formative years being educated in the protestant Seventh Day Adventist Church, wherein the creation narrative is, to this day, the core tenet of child education and development.

Moss (2001) observes, as noted above, that “narratives help people to make sense of their practice and allow them to develop a shared identity”; sensemaking itself is commonly associated, by its leading theorists Weick (1995) and Dervin (1998), with the way people make meaning out of what is happening in their environment, thus becoming a tool assisting them to manage uncertainty therein. Thus, the creation narrative becomes not just a powerful instrument for living interdependently with other humans and the environment, but a story of hope in the final destruction of evil and the restoration of harmony in the universe.

In the following chapters we shall delve into the lives of individuals, amaXhosa and non-amaXhosa, whose daily practices and lives were guided by this narrative. The thought of a Creator who gave up His exalted position and status to die for creatures that chose to abandon Him, thus plunging themselves into a complex world of suffering and uncertainty, has spurred millions to aspire to be of the “same mind” as Him. These people live by certain relational values; values that seek to

benefit everybody they come into contact with, irrespective of their own needs or desires. The Apostle Paul emphasizes the point this way: “When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son” (Romans, 5 vs 10); and the Apostle John paints this picture: “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not His son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3 vs 16–17). We shall be focusing on the sort of relational values that Jesus Himself propounded in many of His teachings, such as those in the “Sermon on the Mount”, where He taught: “I say to you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, ... that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5 vs 44–45). These relational values themselves, according to the teachings of Jesus, are practiced by His own Father who “maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust”.

Such beneficial relational values among humans are transformative. They provide the foundation of the sort of behaviours – self-sacrifice, mutual assistance – which not only affirm the lives of others but go the ‘extra mile’, seeking to benefit and to enhance them. Such behaviours were once given the collective reference “civility” by Edward Shils (1997). He defined civility as an attitude and a pattern of conduct that respects the dignity of others.

This study proposes that relational outcomes, exemplified by notions such as “intimate association”, “unity”, “community”, “interdependence”, “complementarity” and “cooperation”, are made possible by the effective working of aesthetic socio-cultural values, the central subject of this investigation. The study makes use, therefore, of a “constructed definition” (Hyland, 1995: 47) of those relational, aesthetics values that enable such conditions conducive to harmonious coexistence. A constructed definition is “stipulative”; “does not claim to be the one unique meaning as it has been used in the past” (Rott & Muller-Planternberg, 1997: 11), but “a clear conceptualization of the whole area of concern in such a way that the central problems and questions about the area can be clearly formulated and fruitfully dealt with” (Hyland, 1995: 49).

This constructed definition of aesthetic relational values is embedded in Shalom Schwartz’ viewpoint of values as “desirable trans-situational goals”, “that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity” (1992: 194).

Every aspect of the daily life of a group of people is touched by their cultural values, whether it be in their economic, social or political relationships, or their form of religious worship, or artistic or linguistic expressions; all these categories of behaviour tend to be influenced by certain “default values” (Gharajedaghi, 2000) or reflect the “dominant mental software” (Hofstede, 1995) that defines a group of people.

The importance of contextualizing this work cannot be over-emphasized. As Morin (1999) argues, working in context is vital in that it determines the conditions of applicability and limits of knowledge. The call has been made that development be “embedded within a particular vision of political and societal processes” (Craye, 2001: 189). Many countries and regions have responded to this challenge, China, Norway, Latin America and Southeast Asia among them. The research work of Inglehart (1990), Dunlap (1991) and Stern *et al* (1995) in America and of Shalom Schwartz (1992) in Israel, for example, produced typologies of values that influence relationships among people and their environment. Schwartz categorized values that people hold into *self-enhancement* and *self-transcendent* clusters.

The qualifying notion of the “aesthetic” is purposefully employed to distinguish between the various types of relational values that apply to human relations. On the one hand are self-enhancement values, which manifest themselves in egocentric behaviours such as the cherishing of notions of power and control. On the other hand are self-transcendent values, which include the cherishing of notions such as unity or harmony with nature, “a world of beauty”, and “protecting the environment” (Gardner & Stern, 1996: 64); in other words, being an agent for the enhancement of all life in one’s environment. These last socio-cultural factors are manifested in selfless behaviour that affirms, as opposed to diminishes, the lives of other people and the environment; relational values that make harmonious coexistence possible.

Anton (2000:9), as we have seen above, has drawn attention to one of the critical weaknesses in the democracies of contemporary times: the inability to “effect mutual enhancement” among plural institutions in society, thus failing to provide “cultural justice”. Each institution has to be able to “issue an invitation for cooperative sustenance and support” to others for harmony to reign in society. When this prevails, democracy succeeds in being an “opportunity for all citizens and an open frontier for approximating the ideal of social conduct”, notes Anton (2000: 9). This is not possible in hierarchical orders, as observed above. Social cooperation and coexistence are only possible when institutions are equipped with values that make these social conditions possible.

The ability to “invite” other cultures to coexist demands values like humility and tolerance. It is this study’s hypothesis that, without such a capacity in any society’s citizenry and their various cultures and institutions, no peaceful coexistence is possible. Referring to the virtue of one such value, mercy, in an alienated world, Carol Steiker has observed in her experience in the law/rule-directed public justice sector how important this value has become for rule-based institutions. Given the predictability of our institutions, be it churches, universities, labour unions, firms/corporations, state or government bodies such as courts of law, to punish those who do not comply with what they stand for - and the complicating factor noted by (Anton, 2000: 5) of the “vertical ordering of institutions” and individual values in democratic societies – Carol Steiker concludes, “we need some counter-ratchet”. She suggests that “mercy [is] the necessary counter-balance in a world that is swamped by confusion” (2008, unpaginated). This, she argues, is because of centuries of being governed purely through the rigid legalistic notions of law, rights and justice.

Steiker’s view helps us begin to see more clearly why justice on its own, as it was prioritized in modern institutions, is inadequate. From Edmund Burke’s thought and analysis regarding the “sublime” and the “beautiful” we can see justice instilling awe and fear while mercy offers forgiveness, even to the most undeserving enemy, or opponent of all we stand for. As Burke put it, the sublime is always characterized by “some modification of power” (Blocker & Jeffers, 1999: 72), while through beauty “we take in those various causes of sympathy which attach us to any person or thing”. Without such “beautiful” relational capacities, such as mercy and compassion, human interaction, therefore, must result in the widespread alienation that prevails today.

Glenn Blank (1999), a Jewish Rabbi, points to a creator-God in whom justice and mercy coincide. Referring to the utterances of King David in Psalm 9 vs 7–9 he notes: “He shall minister judgement to the people in uprightness”, yet the same God and Judge, “will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble”. Indeed, when God rises to judge He does so to show mercy (Psalm 76 vs 9). And according to the disciple James’ analysis, mercy is the stronger of the two: “Mercy triumphs over judgement” (James 2 vs 13). That is the beauty of God’s application of justice – it is never administered in His government without mercy, and whenever the two meet mercy is the more powerful.

This reasoning has profound implications for human interaction. We need not trouble ourselves about the existence of any “truth” or culture. No “truth” need compete with any other in society.

What we need to be concerned about is whenever any “truth” is being brandished, whether it is held in the grip of something more powerful: mercy. Without this counter-balance, “truth” can become a force for destruction.

Blank (2005) gives a thirteen-point analysis of mercy as it exists side by side with God’s justice. These dimensions of mercy, they are reflected in God the creator, are:

1. **YHVH** (many Bibles translate this as the LORD, Jewish Bibles as Adonai or HaShem, in reverence to His name). His very Name denotes mercy. For G-d is merciful before a person sins, even though He knows the evil lies dormant in the person.
2. The **LORD** (again, a second time). For G-d is merciful after the sinner has gone astray.
3. **E-L** (God). This Name denotes power. For G-d is merciful even with his awesome power.
4. **Rachum**. Compassionate. For G-d eases the punishment of the guilty.
5. **Ve-Chanun**. And Gracious; even to the undeserving.
6. **Erech Apayim**. Slow to Anger; so that the sinner can reconsider long before it is too late.
7. **Ve-Rav Chesed** And Abundant in Kindness; even towards those who lack merit.
8. **Ve-Emet**. And Truth; G-d never reneges on His word.
9. **Notzer Chesed La-Alafim**. Preserver of Kindness for thousands of generations; For his mercy endures forever! Much, much longer than his judgment!
10. **Nose Avon** Forgiver of iniquity; G-d forgives the intentional sinner, if he or she repents.
11. **Va-Fesha** and willful, rebellious sin; Even those who purposely anger G-d may repent.
12. **VeChataah**.and error; Even sins committed out of carelessness or apathy he forgives.
13. **VeNake**. And Who cleanses; for He wipes away the sins of those who repent.

It is, therefore, through the ability to transcend the natural tendency for self-enhancement that harmony becomes possible. Being trans-situational in nature, relational values like mercy enable us in our different situations to reach out to one another in mutual enhancement.

This work excavates the precolonial and colonial experiences of amaXhosa of the Eastern Cape to provide illustrations and lessons regarding the impact of relational values in society. This study will

investigate, within the Eastern Cape socio-cultural context, the aesthetic values cherished by this African people, as exhibited in the lives of certain individuals, going back to the colonial encounter between amaXhosa of the Eastern Cape and Europeans. Particular emphasis will be devoted to the life of individuals such as Tiyo Soga, whose life and times have been extensively documented. The investigation will also test the existence and the potential efficacy of these aesthetic socio-cultural values among amaXhosa in the post-apartheid era.

This thesis, hopefully, will lay the groundwork for a model of thinking about society based on the matrix of aesthetic socio-cultural values, including *inceba*/mercy, *imfobe*/forgiveness, *imfesane*/compassion, *ukululama*/humility and *ukuzeyisa*/self-control, as cherished by the indigenous people of the Eastern Cape – by the examination of textual evidence and by ethnographic research among the author’s contemporaries.

## **1.5 The theoretical frame of this thesis**

The African conceptualization of being, as Penoukou observes: “simultaneously proposes” the fact of being within a “network of consultative relations”, defining it “first and foremost in terms of fundamental relationships” (in Schreiter, 1991: 25). In the African worldview, reasons Manci (2005: 35), being is not thought of in “essences” but in “relationships”. God as the generative source of being is life-giving and also “life-preserving”. God as the generative life-giving and life-sustaining intelligence has shared these qualities with *abantu*/human beings, “mercifully”, reasons Twesigye (1987: 107), so that they, like Him, can be “intelligent and responsible representatives in the world”.

It is within this philosophy regarding life that all wickedness or evil, as a concept, arises in African thought, as a notion of witchcraft and life obstruction (Manci, 2005). Poverty, as an example of such concepts is itself, as Wilson and Ramphela (1989: 4) suggest, “an assault on people’s humanity”. Within the language of amaXhosa this thought finds expression in sayings such as: “*ukwanda kwaliwa ngumthakathi*” (it is the evil of witchcraft that obstructs the perpetuation or sustenance of life).

This orientation in thought towards life and existence is the “common ground” between the African worldview and Christianity, observed Twesigye (1987). It finds expression in the creation narrative.

It was after President Mbeki of South Africa had, in 2006, called for the incorporation of “matters of the soul” in the national development policies of the South African state and its government that a “curiosity” emerged among social theorists in the country regarding whether the possibility exists for a social theory based on African knowledge about social life, that can permeate national development policies and practices. Specifically, President Mbeki referred to and singled out the possibility of bringing what is popularly known in South Africa as “ubuntu principles into the soul of national reconstruction and development policies” (Nkondo, 2007: 88).

There is no doubt among African theorists that “ubuntu as a philosophy and a way of life is associated with many African societies”, (Nkondo, 2007: 89). As Khoza confirms, “Ubuntu has its origins in the African conception of being, ... the conventional conception of the genesis of life [being] that ... Umvelinqangi (isiZulu), ... Uqamatha (isiXhosa)... Nkhubanyi (Xitsonga), created humankind from need” (2006: xx – xxi). Khoza then draws the conclusion from this notion of “a common origin”, which “creates a common bond and destiny for humanity. The individual is absorbed into the collective. ... hence I am because you are. And the common idiom umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu (a person is a person because of others)”.

This theoretical framework concerning being and living in society, however, has grave implications. Though acknowledging the origins of being from the Creator, it fails to make God the reference point of life and assigns this to “others”.

Life on planet Earth has, since the three millennia before Christ to the present, third millennium after Christ, gone through a number of identifiable periods in which humans have produced various descriptions and explanations about nature, self and society. Archeological evidence has provided us with the knowledge we have regarding the so-called “prehistoric era” of Neolithic Egypt (Woldering, 1967) and access to ancient pharaonic texts, from at least, 2700 B.C., that reveal an existential philosophy that sought to understand the social order, being human, the “intelligence of the cosmos in its entirety, and of happiness – real, lasting, imperishable, eternal” (Obenga, 2004: 13). This attests to the universal human predisposition, through all ages and civilizations, to avoid extinction, to preserve and live life in perpetuity and in comfort, in whatever sense of the word, whether in the sense of peace, satisfaction, harmony or in the present quest for sustainable development.

Humanity has been on this search since time immemorial, producing theories about origins, nature, self and society, whether grounded in or vascillating among various grand narratives. These narratives serve humanity as what Toulmin has referred to as “horizons of expectation” (1990: 2). We live the present and face the future (unknown) through them. Almost every knowledge tradition in every culture, whether in the name of science or religion, and the policies and plans we produce through them, can be traced back to some major narratives in the known world civilizations. This includes the current proposals about the “new logic” and “new type of knowledge” (Nicolescu, 2005) transdisciplinarity, whose stated goal is the age-old quest: “the understanding of the present world” (Nicolescu, 2007).

It is being realized that ours, irrespective of how it is confronted through the various narratives, is a complex world of difference and diversity that is “impossible to avoid” (D’Ambrosio, 1997). Depending on how the differences and diversities are perceived within each narrative, reactions reflect either desires for convergence (Burnett, 2001) so as to circumscribe difference, or simply appreciation thereof, from an awareness that it is difference and diversity that constitute our humanity (Arendt, 1970).

This study distinguishes between those trends and attempts that have sought, and continue to advocate, convergence in society and culture, in contrast to those that advocate paralogy, appreciating and giving space to difference, making no effort at circumscribing individuality so as to reach transvergence. It traces the origins of these two trends in antiquity and suggests their implications in our quest, at the present stage of human history, for sustainable development. Its hypothesis is that it is in the latter, in its endowment with the enabling capacity of aesthetic relational values, that life is more likely to be stimulated.

Living in a complex multicultural world in which difference is often experienced as a problem, solutions have been sought in either denying the phenomenon, (Visker, 2004) or ordering it against others. This study approaches the phenomenon of difference from the perspective of Martin Heidegger’s piece of work entitled “The principle of identity” (1969). Western thought has been guided by the principle:  $A = A$ ; that every A is the same with itself, which amounts to the unification of identity. According to Heidegger, sameness does not necessarily mean identical. In the identical, difference disappears while it appears in sameness. Through thinking comes the gift of what he calls the “unthought”. This is that which is yet to be thought about, which thinking gives to us as a gift that endows us with difference. The essence of thought is thinking with difference.

Being, itself, is difference. By implication, nobody can think, imagine or even speak any other into being what he/she wishes. This power only belongs to the self. This is what King Solomon suggests in the words: “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23 vs 7).

According to Jean-Luc Marion (1991; 1998), we can encounter others in their “givenness” or encounter them with “intentionality”. When meeting others in their givenness we allow them to present themselves to us on their own terms, freely, with no pre-conditions and without signification. In their givenness we can only receive others in their difference. All we can do is to gaze and wonder at their difference, allowing discourse to be “reborn” in “enjoyment” and “jubilation” (Marion, 1991).

While givenness “broadens presence ... freeing it from the limitations of the faculties, as far as to let beings play freely” (Marion, 1998: 37), intention follows. Through intention we can make the mistake of categorizing people to fit into our own ideas regarding being. Meeting people with particular attitudes is subjecting them to our particular desires; wishing them as objects to conform to what we desire.

By implication, therefore, difference, as being, can only be interpreted into dissension and opposition through the exercise of choice by individuals and/or groups thereof, based on the quality of the adjudicator/s meta/grand narrative. Buber (1970) has suggested that as individuals we may choose to meet in “I-It” encounters of detachment, as subjects and objects, or in “I-Thou”, subject-to-subject encounters of mutuality. The conditions under which difference turns into dissension is a phenomenon that has hardly received adequate attention, owing to the perceived urgency given to convergence. Theories of society put more energy in describing, rather than in explaining why, humans, who have the power of choice, are so inclined to permit difference to turn into dissension and opposition, which reduces and shifts cooperative, collaborative interdependent living in preference to strife, war, suffering and willed death.

This study seeks to address this deficiency. It focuses on patterns of thought and living among humans; it traces their origins in antiquity through to what is now referred to as postmodernity (Lyotard, 1984; Toulmin, 1990) or “liquid modernity” (Bauman, 2000). In particular, the study highlights the degrees to which these patterns of living, grounded as they are in their meta/grand narratives, contribute to the perpetuation of life in nature and society, or the inclination to turn difference into dissension.

### **1.5.1 A periodic sketch of intolerance of difference**

The kingdom of Medo-Persia which covered, according to biblical record, “over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, from India to Ethiopia” (Esther 1 vs 1), attests to a colonial period in human history when “each man” was encouraged to be “master in his own house, and speak in the language of his own people” (Esther 1 vs 22). The kingdom was, nevertheless, a divided one. In particular there lived a people, Jews, dispersed throughout the 127 provinces, “whose laws [were] different from all other people’s, and [did not keep] the king’s laws” (Esther 3 vs 8), who it was suggested need not be tolerated but exterminated, so that uniformity could prevail.

The classical antiquity of Greece a period in which were produced standards by which “subsequent achievements can be measured” (Roberts, 1996: 22) was followed by that of Rome, which carried forward the Hellenic culture and influence. Rome’s influence so predominated that it established a political unity and a “world-order in western Asia, the Mediterranean, western Europe, and North Africa” (Roberts, 1996: 21) and became a vehicle to scatter future ideas of Europe which were based on two distinct philosophies about nature and human society.

The Greek cosmological view led by “Epicurean and Stoic philosophers” (Acts 17 vs 18) collided with and competed against the “barbaric” Judeo-Christian perspective, which, according to Saul of Tarsus, was “foolishness”. To Stoics, philosophy was not just a body of knowledge but a practical way of life (Blatzly,(2008). As such, their philosophy became popular, in Blatzly’s account, in a way that neither Platonism nor Aristotelianism ever did. They directed people in their response to practical day-to-day challenges. According to their ontology, the only distinguishing criterion of existence and reality is the capacity to act or be acted upon. Only such bodies exist. In addition to this, everything that exists is particular to Stoics. Anything that is regarded as universal is simply a figment of the imagination. Within this ontology God is matter; an intelligent designing fire which structures matter according to its plan. According to this plan everything originated in fire, including our physical world and is destined, in an endless cycle of recurrence to become fire. To them, therefore, Paul who spoke of an unseen God, Jesus was a “babbling” (Acts 17 vs 18).

While the goal or end of life, to both philosophers, is happiness or to flourish, Stoics clarified the point that this happiness comes through living according to what happens by nature. The “rational selection of the things according to nature” is the end of life. That which brings happiness is that which benefits the possessor, aiding in his “self-preservation”. Epicurean philosophers, on the other

hand, contended that that which brings happiness is that which brings pleasure. Sharples (1998) in his work on Epicureans emphasizes the point that to Epicureans, the end of life is to amass external goods that heighten personal satisfaction and pleasure to the individual. To both these influential schools of thought, therefore, satisfaction and happiness consist in living by the law of self-serving.

Rome carried these perspectives on nature and humanity in classical antiquity through to the beginning of the period known as the Dark Ages, which marked the accession of the Roman Church to power throughout this period, from the sixth up to the eighteenth century “religious truth” dictated by the Roman Catholic Church provided the basis for and “content of European cohesion” (Roberts, 1996: 239). During this period “the pope and the Holy Roman Empire” were “major concerns in the calculations of diplomacy” (Roberts, 1996: 240). The period was politically marked by the pope having had “rights of lordship, jurisdiction and dependency” in many countries.

Hundreds of self-sufficient national economies were in place by 1500; “a worldwide network” of global economic exchange sanctioned by the church–state collaboration gave rise to the “ruthless exploitation of indigenous people” (Roberts, 1996: 240) through the institution of slavery, which reflected the “*leitmotiv* of subjection and domination” of both the state and the Roman Catholic Church. This continued through to the seventeenth century, through what was to be referred to as the “project of Modernity” (Toulmin, 1990) having not taken humanity closer to the achievement of the lofty goals of “harmony” among nations and their peoples.

Modernity was a period marked by optimism; a time promising to ground both science and culture (particularly religion), in certainty in the belief that the period of speculative myth and superstition was over.

If the “twin founding pillars of modern thought” in science and philosophy can be traced back to “the darker-souled geniuses”, Isaac Newton and Rene Descartes, as Toulmin (1990: ix & xii) suggests, then the 17<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of “new ways of thinking about nature and society” (Toulmin, 1990: 12).

As humanity approaches the end of the first decade of the third millennium after Christ, the search for certainty seems to be re-emerging, through various convergence projects. Humanity has reason for caution. Uniformity of thought has never, in the past, brought any harmony, and there is no basis for hoping that it will in the future.

### **1.5.2 Aesthetic values in sustainable development: State of the discussion**

Western civilization has undoubtedly become pervasive on a planetary scale (Nicolescu, 2001). From the testimony of the holocaust experience, Hannah Arendt has proposed that Western civilization has exported and globalized its inherent “processes of disintegration” (1970). While knowledge increases, the natural world of plants and animals “groans”, and uncertainty and fear grips humanity. In its global expansion – as history testifies to a so-called “modernity grid” (Bauman & Yakimova, 2002) that was never characterized by a single description of our world – it has, unavoidably, come into contact with other influences such as African and Eastern civilizations, coercively leading to a blurring of distinctions between them. The global extent and intensity of its influence have reached such levels that some, like Basarab Nicolescu, have imagined that “its downfall would be the equivalent of a planetary conflagration” (Nicolescu, 2007: 1).

The mingling of civilizations has been accompanied by an explosive increase in knowledge that has made the globe a bewilderingly complex place to inhabit. The problem faced by social theory now is the fact that the contacts and interpenetrations of the various world influences have not produced an integral culture and knowledge, but have led to the proliferation of information, discourses and meanings that have made it virtually impossible to speak of a “unifying, coherent description of our world” (Cilliers, 1998: 113). We have now reached an “era of the disciplinary big bang” (Nicolescu, 2005: 2): a state of confusion. A “Babelization”, (Nicolescu, 2007: 2), is no longer just a possibility, we are in its midst.

The absence of unity, peace and harmony is not manifesting itself only in the struggle among disciplines to dialogue; it is characteristic of just about every facet of existence in human societies: in politics, institutions, economics and the environment. It has been within this context, while the world was steeped in the influence of this civilization, that the quest for sustainability in development emerged. It is an agonizing search for an “ecologically sound, economically prosperous and equitable society for present and future generations” (President’s Council on Sustainable Development, 1996).

The global situation, nevertheless, continues to be marked by stark, relentless contrasts and contradictions. While economic output has, between 1900 and 2000, multiplied over 18 times and life expectancies have dramatically improved, more and more people live in poverty (2.5 billion), global ecosystems are in decline and over two million people die prematurely each year owing to

unclean air (Worldwatch, 2008). There are huge “persistent” inequalities within, between and across countries and these “are truly staggering on a global scale” (World Bank, 2006: 6).

A wide variety of thinkers today, in a spectrum that includes cosmologist, mystic, transdisciplinary and postmodern thought, are consumed by the urge to find a way out of the mess of maladies that beset humanity. In his work *Manifesto for Transdisciplinarity*, Nicolescu (2007) confidently asserts that the fall of civilizations has always been preceded by “unbalance” between “mentalities of the actors” and the “inner needs of the development of a particular society”. Totman (1980) would see the situation we are in as a “systemic crisis”, where “society’s key values and key institutions are inadequate to the problems that beset it. Among the variety of suggested solutions to this crisis have been calls for new institutions, some kind of integration in spirituality and the building of new networks to address the prevailing uncertainty. Underlying all the proposals is the urge to circumscribe differences among the plethora of cultures that exist in the world. We see this both in the world of religion through the ecumenical movement and in knowledge disciplines as championed by the transdisciplinarity trend.

Realizing this same dilemma, theorists like Wilber and Rotberg (1977; 1995; 1996) from the Integral school of thought started asking questions like: “Why has modern civilization, despite its great wealth and power, been unable to remove the injustices that are tearing its fibers” (Araya, undated). They suggest together with academics (as this study will show) and mystics that an “integral religion” will give us an “integral civilization”, where there is “unity of interdependent dimensions of an integral Reality (inward and outward, feminine and masculine, yin and yang)” (Arayan, undated).

There is reason, therefore, to pause and consider our relationships with one another and with the natural world that houses us; to rethink, particularly, the spirituality, nature and principles on which the globally pervasive influences of world civilizations have been founded. From a systems point of view it seems prudent that we probe these civilizations in an attempt, as Ackoff (1974) suggests, to find the system in the mess we are in before we are able to deal with it effectively; otherwise we will be caught in an unending round of solving difficulties in an isolated fashion: handling economic, social, political and environmental problems as isolated categories.

The vision for sustainable development has been driven within a framework of a kind of spirituality that has been taking the human family on a downward, declining global spiral. The earnest search

and increasingly conspicuous articulation for sustainability in development, within this framework of decline, started evolving in the 1950s (Kidd, 1992). Through the sixties, seventies and eighties, debates about development were dominated by theories such as modernization, underdevelopment and dependency, to the point where the very concept was confronted with cynicism and rejection. A growing number of development theorists identified it with concepts such as failure and delusion (Sachs, 1992); it is a “profound intellectual dishonesty” and a “monstrosity” that rolls over the earth, laying waste not merely the face of the planet but all human societies and relationships that stand in its way” (Seabrook, 1993: 10–18); that it does not work (Kothari, 1998); that it is nothing more than a mere “religion for the West” (Rist, 1990) and should be regarded as a cultural instrument and means to homogenize along western standards (Constantino, 1985); that the idea “stinks” as it has been experienced as a reckless experiment on the poor (Esteva, 1985). Parallel with “anti-development” thinking, the debate saw the rise of theories of “post-development”, which were nothing more than a more radical rejection of the idea as articulated conventionally from the Western perspective. Pieterse (2000: 182) articulated this perspective as follows:

*Development thinking is steeped in social engineering and the ambition to shape economies and societies, which makes it an interventionist and managerialist discipline. It involves telling people what to do – in the name of modernization, nation building, progress, mobilization, sustainable development, human rights, poverty and even empowerment and participation (participatory management).*

As far back as the 1940s, noted John Passmore (1974: 3), ecologists such as Aldo Leopold had started to sound the alarm around ecological disturbance, with the blame squarely put on man as “the despot” in nature.

According to Kidd (1992), the term “sustainable development” started to be used in an integrative fashion from the 1950s. It broadly included environmental, economic and social concerns of development. The term eschewed the narrow ecological concept.

In 1972 when the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm was staged, it was in response to the realization that the environment was deteriorating. This major ecological problem tilted sustainability slightly in favour of environmentalism. The reality of the problem had been evidenced by various large-scale industrial crises in the 1980s and the tragic effects they have had on the environment, notably the explosion at Union Carbide’s chemical plant in Bhopal, in which

more than 3 000 people were killed and 200 000 injured; Exxon's oil spill in Alaska; and the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

The term sustainable development appears to have been highlighted when the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) presented the World Conservation Strategy in 1980, stating its aim as "achieving sustainable development". The concept was pushed further to global prominence when it was given definition by the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) in 1987, as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro affirmed this conceptualization, emphasizing that development "should be sustainable" (UNDP & OECD, 2002).

It was the Brussels workshop of November 2001 that brought to the fore the issue of "antagonistic approaches" with respect to sustainable development. One important fact was highlighted in the fourth session dealing with "*Synthesis, conclusions and reactions*": "Development ... is always – be it implicit – embedded within a particular vision of political and societal processes" (Craye, 2001: 189). This realization in sustainable development discussion was an awakening to advice sounded back in the mid-1980s by systemic thinkers: "Each nation should select a path to development that takes into account the current condition and all its unique characteristics" (Gharajedaghi & Ackoff, 1986).

Such a conviction about development has found articulation in the search for development solutions through the avenue of human values and culture within specific socio-cultural contexts. Culture has been defined as including every dimension of human living; economic transactions, social relationships, political practices, artistic expression, religious practices, all reflecting cultural behaviours and values held in a society (Spalling & Dekker, 1996).

The focus on values and culture is a trend sweeping through many countries. In Latin America it has been highlighted in the work of Crocker (in Engel & Engel, 1990); in south-east Asia by Clammer (1996); in Western Europe by Sterling (in Engel & Engel, 1990). In China, Chau and Kam-Kong are suggesting that the search for "a new development path" has to go back to history "to learn", "digging up ideas that are eternal, so as to reconstruct the world of values for the modern man" (in Engel & Engel, 1990: 223–231).

Naes, in Norway (1990: 94), has argued that “there can be no general blueprint for development. ... Any general view inspired by ecology includes reverence for the richness and diversity of human cultures”. He is echoed by Skolimowski in North America who argues that:

*the resolution of our environmental dilemmas lies in the matrix of our values. Unless we are able to see in depth what values we hold and how they control our behaviour, unless we are able to establish a new, sound, sane and sustainable value basis, all the dazzling expertise, ... all the technology fixes will be acts full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.* (in Engel & Engel, 1990: 97)

Environmental pragmatists like Bryan Norton have acknowledged the existence of this matrix of values, the plurality of environmental values. Often the ways in which the environment is valued has revealed oppositional standpoints such as those between the economists and intrinsic value theorists, who respectively advocate and distinguish between the “instrumental”, which focuses on monetary value, and the “intrinsic”, which is concerned with ecosystems and species (Norton, 2005: 182). Indeed this simply perpetuates the controversy regarding how best to relate towards the environment, hence Norton’s advocacy of the inclusive approach of considering, within given contexts, both the intrinsic and the instrumental in policy decision-making processes. It is the community in which the choices have to be made, the context, that becomes the leading factor of determination.

The point that this study draws attention to is that in a world that has gone out of harmony within, a world with contending knowledges, contexts and communities of interests, the need for the capacity that enables those contexts to find it in themselves to agree on an acceptable combination of instrumental and/or intrinsic values, has become very apparent, hence the attention to aesthetic values.

Sustainability studies currently continue to couch the concept of aesthetic value within the notion of “benefits” and “services” that mankind enjoys from nature. This conceptualization hardly helps to free sustainable development from being associated with Western control and domination; in its global stride nature and the human family are nothing more than objects for subjugation, use, gain and self-gratification. It has been suggested that sustainable development is a vehicle for the export of a harmful ideology of nature (Geisinger, 1999).

Western institutions like the World Bank reason that “economies depend heavily on their capital of natural resources” (1996: ix); that “natural beauty” is “a public good”; “natural beauty is an asset to be exploited” (Camargo, 1993: 35). Factual as these statements may be, beauty is primarily conceived in parasitic and economic terms of benefits, “assets” and “goods” to be gained from and consumed by mankind.

Even the highly regarded and best known Brundtland definition, that “sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations to meet their own needs”, portrays this logic. Heal (2006: 1) in asking: “What does it tell us?”, notes that “at the heart of discussions of sustainability” lies “a concern for the interests of those who will live in the distant future”.

Environmental studies, particularly ecosystem studies in the field of sustainable development, are also traversing this path of “goods and services to people”. A recent study on the value of wetlands in Australia has focused on providing an “account for the sociocultural importance of wetlands”, the aim being “to understand its desirability and usefulness in relation to human well being” (Verschuuren, 2007). It is within this ethos of human gain that in the typology of “sociocultural function and values” of wetlands, the “aesthetic” as adapted from several research projects (Stuip et al., 2002; Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, MEA, 2005; De Groot & Stuip, 2005) has been identified. Specifically, Verschuuren refers to the testimony of these studies that “as one of earth’s most productive ecosystems, wetlands directly and indirectly support millions of people in providing goods (such as food and raw materials) and services (such as flood control, water filtration, aesthetic beauty and recreational benefits)” (2007: 4).

This study hopes to transcend such inward-looking conceptualization and theoretical application of the notion of aesthetic value.

### **1.5.3 The Afrocentric source frame of sustainability in contrast**

This study excavates history in order to learn how to deal with the challenges facing the present. It seeks to highlight a transformation-based route to development rather than an adaptation-based one, as a solution that can help humans cross the gulf between alienation from each other and the physical world, to identification with them, which allows for unity and harmony. While the search is empirically grounded in a certain reference - the African perspective -, the perspective itself is not

exclusivist. It is undertaken under the conviction that the African is a link in the global human chain; it has shown, as this study will confirm, that it is not a closed territory in any respect, but a welcoming place that Mbembe (2000: 78) rightly insists should be defined as “an open space”. History attests to Africa having been a place of forced “departure”, nevertheless, it has proven itself to be a place of welcomed “arrival”.

The creation-centred Afrocentric perspective to living is in stark contrast, rather than in contradiction, to the evolution perspective that now pervades Western thinking. The evolution perspective – as it departs from the principle of “natural selection”, according to which each form of life must fend for itself in a hostile, competitive environment in which those who do not have the capacity to be, are vanquished, or eliminated – was born in an ancient imagination, as this work will show, governed by a multiplicity of highly competitive and controvertive gods. The Afrocentric viewpoint is driven by an identity with a singular point of reference; conscious of the attributes of the Creator-God who fashioned all life, humans thrive because of, rather than despite, all other forms of life, and relate towards them driven by the attributes of Qamata, the Source and Giver of life (*uMniki-bomi*).

This African cosmological perspective has been painted in various colours and imageries by the various African families of religious thought indigenous to the continent. But, as this work will show, it claims no peculiarity, nor is it couched in exclusivity. This realization and acknowledgement is of enormous importance. For too long African culture has been represented from a territorialized, racial perspective, in exclusivist terms, thus limiting its space of applicability and influence to a particular geography and era. Yet, as this work will argue, African cosmology and identity were, and continue to be grounded in a reference point that transcends their being. This is why exclusivist and dichotomistic cultural perspectives, such as nationalism, are notions that go against the African ethos and worldview. Classical discourses such as Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth* have opposed defining colonial culture in dualist terms, such as the “colonizer” and the “colonized”, setting a basis for a wide variety of post-colonial writing interpretations. It is possible to interpret these in such a way as to see that culture is not a zone of exclusivity but, as it were, a doorway for even “others” to enter into association; into relationships of mutual development and enhancement.

The adaptation route, grounded in evolutionist thought, essentially means that the “historical function” of each form of life that has to exist through the imagined phenomenon of natural

selection, is entrenched and stays intact only through a constant struggle of continuous adaptation in a hostile environment. When an entity such as the “historical function” and form is not abandoned, it is likely to return, as in the cyclic patterns of rise and decline imagined by Capra, below, interpreting the fact of adaptation as a perpetual, vicious, cyclical pattern of suffering, rather than hope in transformation. The dominant Western civilization theories of modern ecology and cosmological perspectives grounded in this evolution belief, leave no room for exercising the power of choice and, therefore, have no basis for a radical departure from the cyclical and continuous return of pain and suffering on Earth. At best, they simply raise doubts about the feasibility of sustainable development within this framework. Suggestions such as those articulated by Nicolescu, above, for the preservation of such a framework, that the “downfall” thereof would be tantamount to a disastrous “conflagration” of the globe, cannot be taken at face value. Evidence abounds that it is this very framework that has taken our world on a downward spiral of continuous suffering, as it does not facilitate mutual enhancement.

There is a realization that in the African colonial experience, through which this framework was introduced, both the indigenous people and the foreigners were transformed (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991; Elphick, 1992). The meta-structural and micro-context focus of the encounter have been mainly on “identity politics” from the basis of moral values and concomitant reactions (Greenstein, 1994; De Kock, 1996). The two sides met and reacted towards each other from the particular cosmological perspective each believed in.

The narrative forms (i.e. books, newspapers, the Bible, classroom lessons, lectures and informal teaching) within which the encounter took place was dominated by and derived from the “master narrative of Protestant conformity” (De Kock, 1996: 2) a “culturally exclusive” (De Kock, 1996: 68) version of Christian ideology and religion that centred around moral (that is, rulebased) values with little emphasis on aesthetic, relational values, for the convenience, and to serve the fundamental motive, of Europeans: to subjugate, dominate and control the other side, for self-centred gain.

In this manipulative relationship, the African *subaltern*, using the Gramscian imagery adapted by Spivak, could not speak. Gramsci had used the term in his encrypted writing from prison (Crehan, 2002) to get his letters to pass through the censure of authorities, to refer to the proletariat, whose voice, within the dominant capitalist narrative in society, had no room. The “truth” about being was

presented to Africans in essentialist terms as couched in the Western version of Christianity. The African *subaltern* was an outsider in his/her singularity and individual identity, had no access but was forced to be subjugated to the imperial culturalism of the state and the missionaries.

The “master narrative” seemed highly effective, as De Kock (1996: 4) tried to demonstrate in his work *Civilizing barbarians*. Missionary education was the only means to advance in a “colonial economy”, and was provided only by Christian “training institutions” (De Kock, 1996: 68). African leaders who came through the civilizing machinery, for example, displayed an African nationalism that fought for African rights, such as the vote, on the authority of Christian ethics only, in total negligence of their traditional, age-old values. Even when it came to “the struggle for selfhood”, so effective had the “master narrative” and the “re-making” of the African “barbarian” been, that for the educated elite who came through this machinery, it was to be an effort embedded with seeds of its own defeat as the “struggle” was “conducted on borrowed terms, in a borrowed discourse” (De Kock, 1996: 63).

In their responses, perhaps because most were removed from their “heathen mode of life” as children (De Kock, 1996: 66), the African elite were nurtured in Christian training institutions where the efficacy of aesthetic relational values was the least understood dimension of human development. In Abraham Maslow’s (1954) well-known hierarchy of human needs, aesthetic needs occupy the second position from the top. This entails the need to appreciate beauty in human relationships, living in symmetry, balance, harmony, and meaningfully (Jordaan & Jordaan, 2000: 581). From an Aristotelian perspective, art in living is cathartic and palliative. It produces contentment.

There has been a realization within systems thinking that the neglect of aesthetics in national development considerations, in both more and less developed nations, is due to the fact that its relevance to development is not well understood (Gharajedaghi & Ackoff, 1986). The mutual relationship between all known dimensions of human development has generally been denied, hence the tendency to prioritize the known ones in their order of “importance”.

Even a careless glance at the quality of life in developed nations shows that despite significant scientific and economic progress, not only is there deficiency in ethical-moral progress, there has been retrogression in development owing to the under-appreciation of aesthetic relational values in human relations. Ideals such as peace of mind, community among people in the same locality, equal

opportunity, all such meta-structures for a contented lifestyle, seem to be fading farther and farther out of reach. In their absence, development can, and indeed has been, seriously obstructed.

Internationally, there seems to be a yearning for an appreciation of aesthetic values in human development. There is, for example, currently a nationwide initiative in the United States of America known as “community building”. This initiative seeks to “develop a sense of mutual obligation and reciprocity” between poor people and the better-off (Walsh, 1997: 291). It continues today through a variety of institutions such as the Tamarack and Margaret Wheatley’s Berkana Institute.

Aesthetic values, as demonstrated in the socio-cultural life style of amaXhosa, constitute more than a “science of sensation or feeling” (Hegel, 1993); they are the bedrock and bond that hold together the entire business of life.

The arch-motivation behind this study is the realization that the negligence of aesthetic values that characterized the colonial masters’ culture has “entered the reality” of millions (Said, 1993: 11) in contemporary African society.

Now that development theorists have embraced the multidimensional nature of sustainable development, a concept that has not only popular but conceptual appeal (Spaling & Dekker, 1996), there is some hope for the realization of the dream. Even the tendency to confine the concept to ecological concerns – wherein people used the phrase, sustainable development interchangeably with sound ecologic or environmental development (Lele, 1991: 608) – has shifted, thus raising the promise of an intellectual space for taking a different look at, and searching from a different source-frame for, sustainability.

#### **1.5.4 Acknowledged mutual dependence in difference**

The system of the natural world, including that of plants and animals, has been observed to exist in what has been described as “intimate association” (Lauwerys, 1969). Ecology focuses on the relation organisms have with their environment. Plant ecologists observed that in a particular habitat flora consist of a mixture of species that use the habitat *complementarily* (Hawley, 1986). Even from a macroscopic perspective, the relationship among the constituent parts of nature seems marked by interdependence. Alexander von Humboldt, as far back as 1807, studied this relationship

and concluded that it is “mutual dependence” (Keulartz, 1998: 36). It can only be deduced that each part in the natural system observes or is governed by what could be called a *relational value*.

This mutual dependence, which as Kropotkin (1902) has demonstrated leads to *cooperation*, is not limited to the natural world of plants and animals. It extends to the human system, which includes individuals, human societies and organizations, governments, and human engineered systems such as the economy and infrastructure (Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems [EOLSS], 2001). Reflecting on the interaction among what the EOLSS calls the “total system (the human system embedded in the natural system )”, White observed that each “ministers” to the other within a relationship called the “circuit of beneficence”, penning it as follows:

*No bird that cleaves the air, no animal that moves upon the ground, but ministers to some other life. There is no leaf of the forest, or lowly blade of grass, but has its ministry. Every tree and shrub and leaf pours forth that element of life without which neither man nor animal could live; and man and animal in turn, minister to the life of tree and shrub and leaf* (White, 1898: 20).

White’s theory points to a world constituted in difference. Yet this is a difference not of dissension, but of collaboration. Various parts in nature coexist in a community of difference rather than of competition. It is a difference that allows for mutual beneficence. Within this community of mutual beneficence members maintain a compassionate lifestyle. They do not “act only in reference to self”, she points out; “time is of value to them” not only “as they can gather for themselves” (White, 1898: 584).

The importance of difference in a complex pluralist condition of the human world has been reflected upon by the political theorist Hannah Arendt in her thoughts about the theoretical insights of Gotthold Lessing. Her appreciation of Lessing was in his realization and “gladness” that “there cannot be one single truth within the human world”; indeed no such truth exists. As long “as there are men” the “unending discourse among men will never cease”. Arendt then comes to the conclusion that “A single absolute truth [...] would have been [...] the end of humanity” (1970: 26–7).

This then brings into sharp focus the importance of difference in all nature and in the human world. Of critical importance is the point that difference and disagreement in the interpretation of the human condition do not necessarily mean opposition to the “truths” held by others. It is not the fact

that others do not agree with us, “do not hold dear what we do but instead hold dear what we don’t; ... doubt our claim of access to a hotline to absolute truth ...” that constitutes “an obstacle on the road to human community” but the “conviction that our opinions are the whole truth and above all the sole truth”, that has the right to exist on its own (Bauman & Yakamova, 2002). It is to the extent that we are able, when we encounter each other, to have the contact “permeated by pleasure in the other person and what he says” (Bauman & Yakimova, 2002) that complexity could begin to be less daunting than it is made out to be in some theoretical persuasions.

This very understanding about difference, and its difference from opposition, has important implications for those social theorists who seem to accept, as do some transdisciplinary, cosmologists and postmodernists, that complexity is necessarily characterized by competition and dissension, as we shall consider below. Complex systems such as the human body attest to a collaboration of difference by a wide variety of subsystems that maintain a bigger system functioning in harmony; when one subsystem has an ailment the whole suffers in sympathy.

From the field of molecular biology we now know that the collaboration we observe in living systems is written in the very constitutive element thereof. The make-up of the cell, the simplest living system known to humanity, is an object lesson in thorough organization, order and interdependent collaboration. One molecular biologist has described it as follows:

*The protein synthetic system of all modern cells requires the integrated activities of nearly one hundred different proteins, all carrying out different, very specific steps in the assembly of a new protein molecule (Denton, 1985: 265).*

White also draws attention to what she calls the “law of the vegetable kingdom” (1898: 623). In this phenomenon, graphically illustrated in the field of agriculture, the choicest grain is thrown away to be hidden in the soil. Momentarily, that is, “for a time” it gets “hidden under the furrow”. Later, however, what is destined to be corn develops; and she points to the profound lesson:

*This development cannot take place unless the grain is buried out of sight, hidden, and to all appearance, lost.*

*The seed buried in the ground produces fruit, and in turn this is planted. Thus the harvest is multiplied.*

Compassionate living, therefore, also involves self-denial. Living by the principles of ministering to the needs of others is a self-transcendent ministry that facilitates community. This stands in contrast

to self-centred ministry and the adherence to a life of self-gratification advocated by a variety of social theories and world belief systems, as we will observe in this study.

Cosmologists, inter- and transdisciplinary writers such as Edgar Morin, on the other hand, through what is called the “genesis analogue”, believe in a different conceptual and spiritual framework of an eco-organization defined by a different mutuality: a “circular relationship of mutual dependence” which is also “an uninterrupted rotative circuit of antagonism and complementarity, ... built and maintained, not only in and through association and cooperation, but in and through struggle, devouring, and predation” (1992: xxx). It is an analogous relationship and a “formidable complexity” in which “degenerescence/regeneration, life/death” are “intimately” “linked and blended” (Morin, 1992: 302).

It is no longer a matter of speculation, or conjecture, that as a direct consequence of human behaviour, there has been a rapid degeneration, not only of the biosphere, the strip of soil, air and water in which we live and move and have our being (Passmore, 1974: 3), but also of the quality of human life. With our skins in their different hues, with our noses and ears and eyes in their different shapes, we can sense the reality of the degradation and deprivation. It is attested to both by scientific observation and by daily dramatic accounts in our media.

The observable changes have challenged development practitioners to take cognizance of the possible role played by socio-cultural factors in the sustainable development of communities as Harvard University’s Robert Putnam has done in his work *Bowling alone*. This American political scientist is deeply concerned about society and traces the decline in the civic bonds that sustain communities. It has become important to reflect and ask if it is possible, for example, “that a group of people might have cherished, over time, life-denying ‘patterns of thinking’; or they have for one reason or the other experienced changes that have caused cultural disintegration”. This broadened focus, which includes culture, has been necessitated by the shortcomings of past development models (Spaling & Dekker, 1996).

Since the call by the ecologist Aldo Leopold in the late 1940s for “a new ethic” by man in his relation with land, plants and animals, and the emergence of the roots of sustainability in the 1950s (Kidd, 1992), a consensus emerged in development thinking about the importance of the “triple bottom line” namely, the ecological, economic and social dimensions of sustainability (Elkington, 1998), which has now been broadened to: the natural, the economic, the social and the institutional

dimensions (EOLLS, 2001). The main issue regarding sustainability is no longer about what it should include; the challenge that is emerging focuses on how best to approach and implement sustainability (Munslow & Fitzgerald, 1994; Fitzgerald, McLennan & Munslow, 1995; Schriberg, 2002). As articulated by Orr (in Stone & Barlow, 2005: xi), “In our time the greatest question is ‘how we will live in the light of the ecological fact that we are bound together in the community of life, one and indivisible?’”.

As evidence of the quest to find systemic solutions to the root of the problems of environmental and human degradation, a debate has emerged between two contending sides as to how to implement sustainability. One school, though acknowledging the importance of the main pillars for practical policy and organizational purposes, questions lumping these together (Lele, 1991; Esty, 2001); research has shown, for example, that some US universities “lag in linking environmental and social issues to strive for sustainability in a meaningful sense” (Schriberg, 2002). The other side advocates implementing sustainability holistically, in an integrated approach (Kidd, 1992).

After the 1992 conference on sustainable conference in Rio, the main challenge was how to find harmony among the prevailing “antagonistic approaches” to sustainable development (Craye, 2001). This study moves from the premise that of the four main ‘pillars’ of sustainability defined by the EOLLS, environmental, economic, institutional and social sustainability (which includes human relationality), it is social sustainability which has proved most intractable. Scientists have become more and more aware that until our knowledge of human behaviour, both individual and collective, helps us to explain human patterns of action, our knowledge of physical processes will be incomplete (Gardner & Stern, 1996).

For the total system – the human embedded in the natural – to work to the benefit of all its parts, the qualities of the parts that constitute all living systems and their subsystems, in as much as they are affected by cherished values, need as much attention as the observed interconnections that characterize their relationships. Relationships occur in various spiritual systems of belief or perspectives about the world. These spiritual perspectives (belief systems) and the quality of the relationships they produce have to be recognized, and their sociological impact on human systems probed. People have unquestioningly welcomed policies in the name of development for much too long, without probing the spiritual frameworks or wellsprings of those policies.

Within the circles of the sociology of religion it is acknowledged that, as a source of culture and differences among people, affecting behaviour, religion is still effective. There may have been, in the famous phrase of Max Weber, a “disenchantment of the world” with religion, and as Parsons has noted, a very clearly pronounced separation between church and state; but nevertheless the world, is not only as religious as it has always been, as Peter Berger (2001) recognizes, but religious fundamentalism has become a source of fear, religion has, and continues to play a major role in political and in economic relations. In Africa, particularly in the East and West African experiences, it has been a leading source of pain and exploitation. In South Africa, as De Kock has well articulated, protestantism was a “master narrative” in the colonial encounter and in shaping the educated elite among Blacks.

There is no argument that Catholicism and Islam have played and continue to play a major role in world developments. This study will highlight this fact by demonstrating the role that the papacy continues to play in American society. It has been acknowledged that there is a global resurgence of religion (Robertson and Chirigo, 1985), and a recognition that the current upsurge in religious pluralism will have a certain impact in politics (Peter Berger, 2001). While according to Beyer (1994:71) the “globalization of society” has favoured the plurality in religiosity, and it is suspected that this “also provides fertile ground for the renewed public influence of religion” Hanna Herzog (2006) has observed that this has become a fact; religion has, again, become an important factor in “collective identity” and in “political mobilization”. Of significance to this study is her realization that religion is – still – a factor of repression, indeed the wellspring of the intolerance that once turned Africa into a bloodbath. It is this realization that should concern sustainable development studies. Politics is about choices across a very wide range of, if not all, human development issues.

There may be noticeable religious pluralism, but this study will argue that the major religions of the world are esoterically the same, and still steeped in ancient pagan worship characterized by its ethos of intolerance, bankrupt of relational values, a fact which should be a cause for concern in sustainable development studies.

## **1.6 Motivation for the study**

Within the author’s immediate society, South Africa, a country that has been shaped in and with violence since the time that colonialism took hold of the sub-continent, the majority of its citizens are still trapped in macrophysical frameworks: settlements, villages and townships planned and

constructed by the violence of separate development or “apartheid”. As the country supposedly experiences a rebirth, seeking to construct a new identity, it does so in a global setting characterized by inequalities within and between nations and their peoples. “The interaction of political, economic and socio-cultural inequalities shapes the institutions and rules in all societies” (World Bank, 2006: 20). This places the country in the midst of a “polycrisis” (Morin, 1999), a complex web of problems facing all humanity on a planet that has apparently committed itself to the vision of sustainable development.

If institutions, the State, the government and the churches, centers of learning and large multinational corporations, characterised as they are by hierachical structures of centralized control, are proving inadequate to respond appropriately to our “polycrisis”, then there is logic in looking elsewhere for answers. Indeed, as observed by some, “traditional rule-based and analytical approaches to complex systems” such as human societies and nations “are flawed” (Cilliers, 1998: 25).

On the other hand, there appears not much hope, either, for sustainable answers from post-modernist or post-structural approaches. The notion that there can be ready interconnectedness or “connectionism” such as is observed in neurons in cognitive science, among purposeful individuals that are each governed by the dictates of their own desires, simply goes against evidence of history. Indeed the thought emerges from a fascination for, and desire to emulate, the inanimate world of purposeless elements, even that of “neural networks” in the human brain. The desirable “distributed representation” which is a product of dialoguing among the system’s elements, is a phenomenon in local neural networks that are only capable of “self-organizing their internal structure”, as Cilliers recognizes (1998: 25). There is interconnectedness among the neurons because they are all members of a local, individual neural network. This local interconnectedness has not been shown to necessarily result in trans-local network connectedness. Each neuron may be connected to every other neuron in an individual brain, but how this translates to a connectedness with another of a different mind and purpose is not clear.

The study of neurons in cognitive science, as a model for understanding complexity, is useful as far as it draws attention to object lessons in “connectionism”. The fact that “the activity of any neuron is influenced by many others, and it in turn has an effect on many others” (Cilliers, 2000: 27) elegantly illustrates the desirable interdependence that is so characteristic of natural elements. Unfortunately, though, this interdependence, to be realised by purposeful humans, has to be a

conscious choice; a decision taken by each participant in the complex social systems in and between any nations or countries. The human brain is indeed “an obviously relational structure” (Cilliers, 1998: 35). But for independently thinking individuals and sovereign nations to display the interconnectedness that we so admire in the design of natural human elements and our human bodies, it would seem that the power of choice that characterizes our individuality has to be put to work, for the mutual benefit of ourselves and our natural environment. This power of individual choice requires that each should have the capacity to voluntarily choose, and to cherish principles of relating, that will make the interdependence, rather than self-dependence, possible.

A voluntary adherence to certain relational standards and patterns of behaviour, free from any institutional coercion has been judged by the harsh court of history as nothing less than admirable. Notions such as community, connectedness or unity cannot be implanted in complex human systems through institutional rules or laws. These are matters of will and purpose. Purposeful elements must, on the basis of their individuality, choose freely to relate to others and the environment that sustains them, in ways based and agreed upon by others as admirable patterns of thinking and living. It is through these patterns that trans-elemental distributed representation in a shared environment has a chance.

Development thinking, including national policy-making, is heavily influenced by global thinking and trends within which the emphasis is skewed toward broad social, economic, and environmental issues of particular interests (with some attention being given to moral values as manifested in the emerging “moral regeneration” movement). It is founded on the global trend of setting the frame of reference for conceiving sustainable development within social, economic and environmental conditions nationally, broadening to institutional and governance issues, such as styles of democracy requiring popular participation or civic involvement and, lately, shifting attention to international relations aspects such as “international rules” for trade, aid, investment, intellectual property and the environment that are designed to serve certain interests.

A more critical concern, for this study, is the fact that the major emphasis in development thinking, particularly among eco-thinkers, is on the observed phenomenon of “essential interrelatedness and interdependence” (Capra, 1982: 285) without sufficient concern for the identity of the participant parts, or probing the type of values that influence the quality of these relationships. The reality of the South African situation is that the country is still mired in violence and intolerance, structurally and behaviourally, as, it can be argued, is the rest of the world. The well documented economic and

social inequalities, the daily accounts of racial intolerance, crime and suffering, attest to this fact. International surveys such as the Seventh United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (2004) rated South Africa second only to Columbia in the number of murders per annum. On 18 January 2006 the country woke up to a shocking headline in the Afrikaans newspaper *Beeld*: “*n Dag oud. Weggegooi. Verkrag. In die Reën gelos*” (A day-old [baby girl]. Abandoned. Raped. Left in the rain). Elsewhere in the world are similar accounts, and acts of religious fundamentalism and “ethnic cleansing” are common evidence of rising intolerance. All of this bears testimony to a place with a callous disregard for life. If, according to a University of South Africa psychologist, Victor Nel (Health Psychology Unit), “values are the most fundamental determinants of behaviour” (in Burger, 1996: 16), then it is cause for concern that sustainability studies have not brought the phenomena of relational values and relationships into prominent mainstream research.

### **1.6.1 African mode of representation**

As observed by Cilliers (1998: 11), complex systems have “two indispensable capabilities”, one of which is the ability of their elements to collect and store information which each system uses to represent itself within its environment. The other is the capacity to adapt when the need arises, “without the *a priori* necessity” of an external agent. Not only is this a limited reading and understanding of complex systems, as this study will demonstrate; it reduces complexity to what is observable in a particular locality.

This study will argue that African societies, as open systems that influence and are influenced by their environment, as stewards and, simultaneously, beneficiaries of the sustenance they receive from their environment, live within it in a relationship based on *a priori* explanations regarding their existence. Their capacity for “openness to others”, to welcome entrants from outside, as the study will demonstrate, was based on the belief that all humans, in the final analysis, belong to a family designed by the same Mind.

Identity, from an Afrocentric worldview, is primary; it plays a critical role in relationships. It is similarly appreciated among the First Nations of Canada, as attested to by Jeannette Armstrong who notes that “through each person flows the powerful lifeblood of cultural transference designed to secure the highest probability of well-being for each generation” (in Stone & Barlow, 2005: 11–17). On meeting for the first time, for example, amaXhosa are prone to inquire about each other’s identities by directly asking: “*Ungumni?*” or “*Zithuthe*” – that is, “What people are you descended

from?”, or “Declare who you are”. The identity gives clues as to patterns of being and therefore the type of behaviour that is likely to flow from a person.

According to Papineau (undated), humans have “mental states” within which they may hold particular “propositional attitudes”, such as beliefs, desires, hopes and fears. It is in these “propositional attitudes” that a basis is provided for representing themselves and the world/environment they exist in, as being of a certain way. It is on this basis that their relationship with the environment is defined.

For reasons not hard to grasp, the quality of being in inter-human relationships does not enjoy much attention among systems thinkers and eco-thinkers. Influential theorists such as Morin and Capra, whose thoughts we shall pay some attention to below, are nature worshippers. Nature, in their reasoning, produced communities. Nature itself is not a product of purposeful design but of the chance of evolutionary or thermodynamic processes. In such a setting, the identity of a part – which is in a continuous or cyclical process of evolution – is not as important as the fact of its relationship with other parts. From the evolutionary or emergence viewpoint the observed interaction of “levels of Reality” (Nicolescu, 2000) in which parts exist, is more important than the parts’ state of being and descent, in as far as it has a bearing on the quality of the relationship within whatever “level of Reality” – the object of relational-aesthetic-value thinking in this study.

The role in sustainable community development of aesthetic relational values (as proposed in this study), within a particular national experience – in the construction and sustenance of community – has, as the result of certain theoretical approaches to society, been under-articulated and under-appreciated. It is not an accident that some social studies and analyses of the human condition have advocated the building of bridges so as to blur the perceived contradictions and dissensions in human discourses, rather than focus on the acknowledgement and acceptance of difference and the equipping of humans to master the art of “openness to others” (Arendt, 1970). It does seem quite logical to prioritize the development of this “bridge-building” capacity in humans as it is becoming clear that even in this “postmodern” era totalitarianism has not disappeared. There is as much intolerance for the voices of others as there has been in ancient “pre-modern times” and in the modern times that some theorists would have us believe we have moved from.

This study seeks, therefore, to highlight the systemic weakness in some of these approaches by drawing attention to the importance and quality of interaction within the shared reality of

humanness, and to test, as it were, the intra-reality, or cross-disciplinary nature, of aesthetic relational values, and affirm the role they can play in sustainable development. This is especially important as what “distinguishes the times we are living in from any other in human history” is the fact that we face “polycrises [that] are human-made” (Van Breda, 2007: 1).

## **1.7 Cosmological perspectives on life, society and responses to its challenges**

Nature in the world we live in has been recognized as existing in a complexity of various realities on different scales. It is a world of diversity and also of rapid change, increasing poverty and inequality, disintegrating communities and societies. It is one of ever-increasing knowledge disciplines and specialization areas within them, multiple religions and cultures. In such a world, communication and mutual understanding have become a rarity. This situation is leading more and more groups to lock themselves up in search of stability and certainty, in water-tight ideological positions of exclusivity, tolerating no opposition or dissenting voices. Individuals have isolated themselves thus in callous indifference, distancing themselves from, and often instrumental in the suffering of, their fellow humans around them.

This situation has been of concern to many who have been watching world trends and people’s behaviour characterized by mutual exclusivity and antagonism. Cosmologists have turned to nature for answers, because from the “abundant and fascinating diversity” in nature can be learnt the “magical thought” of “universal interdependence” (Nicolescu, 2000: 8), and have called for a transdisciplinary approach to living; the realization that life is constituted of multiple levels of reality. What has been proposed by these transdisciplinarians are various ways of bringing about unity among these “levels of reality”. Some of these proposals are briefly looked at below.

Before considering the various cosmological frameworks, many of which are grounded in Greek mythology and belief systems (which are in themselves “restatements of Egyptian concepts, nothing more”, according to the Egyptologist Obenga (2004: 145)), it is useful to get an overview of the ancient Egyptian cosmological perspective.

From the Egyptian spiritual perspective, humans live in a god-universe whose soul and consciousness is Ra, “eternal, infinite, active as a universal force represented more or less

feliculously by various images: Amon, the solar ram, Khepri the sacred scarab, Ra the sun, Atum, and so forth” (Obenga, 2004: 145). Information contained in the Book of the Dead, “the oldest illustrated book in the world” written on papyrus, the “beginning of beginnings is Nwn, ... the home of all creative potential, ... the raw material of creation in a latent state, the ‘chaotic’ medium of incipient forms” (Obenga, 2004: 45). From the Egyptian perspective, therefore, matter is “uncreated”. In the very beginning are primal waters, though “inchoate”, are “powerful, dynamic, creative, innovative, the generative source of the divinities themselves” (Obenga, 2004: 33). The universe, Obenga reasons, was at that point “dominated by radiation”. Strictly speaking, notes Obenga, “there never was any “primal water” but conditions of extreme heat in which “only free atoms, or even smaller particles, like electrons can exist in a free state” (Obenga, 2004: 34). The cosmic Whole, therefore, was shaped out of this extremely hot, uncreated, chaotic matter.

The very first creature to be formed was the Sun (Ra). All other beings are “born, exist, live because of it” (p.110). It is not surprising that all ancient Egyptian kings were known as the sons of Ra as the sun was worshipped as the creating god. Various hymns that they wrote in worship of the sun express this veneration:

“Living sun disk, you who brought life into being ...

What a multitude of things you have made, ...

All beings that walk on their legs on earth, ...

In the highlands, Khor and Kush,

And the land of Egypt – ...

The universe was born in your hand ...” (in Obenga, 2004: 98–106).

“You create millions of forms from yourself” (in Obenga, 2004: 111).

“The visible world results from the invisible organization of energy” (in Obenga, 2004: 116)

“Hail disk of the day

Who created humanity, and gives them life

Great falcon of the speckled feathers,

Who came into being rising on his own, unborn, ...

Oh you shaper of the earth’s fruit, ...

Expert maker, painstaking, prolific, shepherd sheltering your flock, ...

He who rises in the sky to become Ra, ...

Every land rejoices at his rising, every day, in his praise” (in Obenga, 2004: 136–140).

Thus, it can be seen that the sun was the basis of all ancient Egyptian mythology, philosophy, science and belief systems.

Humans in Egyptian cosmology were “precisely god(s)” (Obenga, 2004: 125), perennial like the sun and inseparable from their destiny. In Pierre Rousseau’s words: “The Sun’s destiny is Humanity’s destiny” (in Obenga, 2004: 117). In this thought is embedded the belief of the immortality of humans. Morin’s “genesis analogue” together with his ideas of the “circular relationship of mutual dependence” and “uninterrupted rotative circuit of antagonism and complementarity ... devouring and predation”, have their roots in this ancient Egyptian cosmology enshrined in the Book of the Dead that Budge (1960) further expounds below. Just as the sun is considered perennial, having a rhythmic periodicity, that is, “periodically coming and going” (Obenga, 2004: 132), so are humans. “Human divinities” in pharaonic thought and Egyptian cosmic imagination, are “constantly re-enacting the creative process in their own right” (Obenga, 2004: 124). The end and the beginning, birth and death are regarded as “transitional phases” from one form of life to another. The king who dies returns to the “Father”, the sun-god Ra. When he arrives in the sky, he continues to rule. Those who farmed continued to farm in the afterlife.

Egyptians, according to the Book of the Dead (Budge, 1960: 82), believed that man is both “material and spiritual” when he dies, and goes to heaven to rule like Ra as a god. When he enters heaven “he becomes ‘God, the son of God’ and all the gods of heaven become his brethren” (Budge, 1960: 83). This belief translated to certain ways of behaviour while living on earth and had serious sociological implications. The life lived in heaven becomes a continuation of the life lived on earth. The more people he has conquered and devoured on earth the greater the power to be enjoyed in heaven; “by eating the flesh, or particularly by drinking the blood of another living being, a man absorbs his nature or life into his own” (Budge, 1960: 95). We shall see as we take a closer look at the governance of various Egyptian monarchs – and all subsequent cultures they influenced – how this translated into relationships with other people. What is being described here is not simply cannibalism, but the basis of self-enrichment through the impoverishment of others; people who live like “gods who eateth men, and who feedeth upon the gods” (Budge, 1960: 543). All of this was part of the distinct sun-worship, the worship of Ra, which, in the final analysis, is nothing short of self-worship.

This pharaonic belief system, as we shall see, remained intact and penetrated into almost all Christian beliefs despite contrary biblical teachings, when Christianity embraced pagan Rome’s

systems of worship. In recent times it has been exhumed and restated in contemporary religious systems and within academic circles, as will be seen in the next section.

### **1.7.1 Capra's theory of "rhythmic recurrences and patterns of rise and decline of value systems"**

The physicist, systems theorist and eco-thinker Fritjof Capra (1982: 9) has attempted to provide an explanation for what he called a "disintegrating society", one that is "accompanied by a general loss of harmony among its elements, which inevitably leads to the outbreak of social discord and disruption". Capra bases his reasoning on what he calls the "conjectural studies of patterns in the rise and fall of civilizations" such as those of Arnold Toynbee's *A Study of History* and as mapped out by the sociologist Pitirim Sorokin between 1937 and 1941.

According to Capra, social structures disintegrate when they can no longer adapt to change, owing to behaviour patterns that have become rigid. "The process of disintegration shows uniformity and lack of inventiveness" (1982: 9). On the other hand Capra attributes social decline to the cyclical "rhythmic recurrences and patterns of rise and decline" of various value systems identified by Pitirim. These are the sensate, ideational and idealistic value systems. The first is based on the belief that "matter alone is the ultimate reality"; the second (ideational) holds that "true reality lies beyond the material world, in the spiritual realm and [that] knowledge can be obtained through inner experience". The system subscribes to "ethical values and superhuman standards of justice, truth and beauty". Examples of the ideational value systems, according to him, are the Platonic ideas, Judeo-Christian images of God, and other similar ideas such as Taoism, Islam and Buddhism.

The third value system, the idealistic culture, is a "harmonious blending" or mixture of the first two; "true reality" Capra suggests, "has both sensory and super-sensory aspects which coexist within an all-embracing unity". On their own, the sensate and the ideational pose a danger to living and eventually, disintegration; put together they produce "balance, integration and esthetic fulfillment" (1982: 13).

The analysis by Sorokin, on which Capra builds his work, provides as examples of the idealistic periods in history the Greek-dominated periods of the 5th and 4th centuries BC and the European Renaissance that came after the period called the Dark Ages. As attested to by history, both these

idealistic periods, like the others (the sensate and ideational value system periods) eventually disintegrated.

Sadly, Sorokin's analysis fails to provide an explanation as to why the "esthetic fulfilment" and "integration" which is the "harmonious balance" also comes to a decline. Besides this, the so-called ideational value system, Judaism, already existed from the Akkadian civilization and survived through the cycles of civilizations identified by Arnold Toynbee (in Capra, 1982: 8): the Aegean, Syrian, Hellenic, Roman and Islamic periods, to the present. Christianity, as an ideational value system, arose during and not "at the fall of the Roman Empire", as Sorokin claims, and survived it. Christ, the author of Christianity, spread its teachings from 27 AD and this value system has not declined since, despite several attempts to crush it by other ideational systems such as Islam and Catholicism, as this study will demonstrate; but has grown, and continues to grow, from strength to strength.

The above is pointed out to demonstrate that the claimed cyclical and linear "rhythmic recurrences and patterns of rise and decline" of value systems is not supported by historical fact. Many of these systems have co-existed. Even during the ideational Greek period referred to, the violence of Alexander the Great and his generals after his death do not bear testimony to the "harmony" that supposedly characterized the period.

We must, therefore, seek answers to explain the numerous crises of our time, the various, continuing manifestations of poverty in violence, unemployment, crime, economic and social inequalities, outside of Capra's cyclical, "rhythmic recurrences and patterns of rise and decline of cultural systems" and "cultural transformations", but in the intrinsic nature of the cultures themselves. What is it about the various cultures and the values they subscribe to that contribute or obstruct harmony on our planet, leading to episodes characterized by agony and collapse in the "web of social and ecological relations" (Capra, 1982: 6)?

### **1.7.2 Morin's theory of generic disorder**

The inter- and transdisciplinary charterist, Edgar Morin, in his general systems view on society, claims to "reject in its very principle every unitary theory, every totalizing synthesis, every rationalizing/ordering system" (1992: 17).

Basing his thought on the Greek myth of Heraclitus, Hubris and Chaos, Morin imagines that our cosmos was formed in disorder. The imagery he uses for his thermogenetic cosmos is that of Heraclitus belching fire, “rumbling” and “destructive”. This “originary fire, in its explosive delirium, can construct with neither engineer nor plan”. Morin’s assertion is that “cosmogogenesis is a thermogenesis” (1992: 44), more explicitly, as he emphasizes, is based on the belief that our cosmos is the product of the “Arcke-Machine”, the “most grandiose of all known machines”, the “fabulous machine which made itself, in and by fire”, the “Sun” (1992: 160). Without hesitation, Morin stresses that all of creation is due to:

*Our Hermaphroditic progenitor [which] has generated and generates unceasingly all physical, chemical, thermodynamic, organizational conditions, all the materials, all the energies, all the processes necessary to the formation, perpetuation, replacement, development of zoological, anthropological, sociological life. It is, therefore, starting from him, under his sovereignty and under his manna, that are born all the active organizations of the planet Earth, including humans.*

Then, adds Morin, as if quoting from the Book of the Dead touched on above, “We are children of the Sun” (1992: 173), having noted, earlier, that “the Sun made us”.

Morin leaves no doubt in the reader’s mind that he worships the “Sun” (as did the Greeks, and the Egyptians from whom the Greeks’ system of worship was learnt). In a language that betrays this worship and adoration of the sun, he exclaims:

*Therefore, our Sun deserves much more, much better than the hymns to Ra and the homage to Zeus, devoted to energy power and sovereign order. We must above all devote our praises to its matrix truth, which Zeus had hidden by swallowing his wife, the great Metis. (1992: 160)*

Whereas White (1898) draws from nature the phenomenon of life yielding life to produce and sustain more life, as illustrated in the “law of the vegetable kingdom”, Morin deals with the issue of the development of life and organization by, seemingly, borrowing from the “new developments of thermodynamics” by Prigogine (1972) and the work of Thom (1972) in mathematics, which argue that “disorder” and “catastrophe”, “deviance, perturbation, and dissipation can provoke ‘structure’, that is to say, both organization and order” (Morin, 1992: 38).

The foundational position of his reasoning, however, has its origin in Greek mythology. According to him it is the Greek god “Heraclitus who expressed the most intense sense of complexity, the complementary/antagonistic bond between ‘what is complete and what is not, what accords and what discords, what is in harmony and what is in disharmony’” (1992: 145). In Morin’s mind, therefore, “there is no organization without anti-organization. There is no function without dysfunction” (1992: 146); by implication disorder gives rise to order. We must therefore accept that life, “and most particularly human life, anthro-social life, oscillates between turbulence and order” (1992: 228); cosmogenesis and human life “are effected through the unruly deployment of deviances”.

Fighting, therefore, is necessary for peace to prevail as disorder gives birth to order. Our “being, existence, organization are born ... from what we must again call chaos, ... activities in disorder, agitations, oppositions, contrary movements, bumps, shocks” (Morin, 1992: 223). We must therefore not be surprised at wars, acts of genocide, murders and rapes as these turbulences are necessary to our lives. The ancient Chinese magic and its “primordial figure of the I Ching” in the nature-based Taoist religion illustrate this phenomenon. The *S* “which separates and unites the *yin* and *yang*” illustrates the weddedness of harmony and antagonism in each other. Opposites are fused and accepted to constitute the whole. The intermingling of this duality, productive of the phenomenon of indeterminacy, is considered to be the only constant in an everchanging, unstable world. The *yin* and the *yang* contain each other; the passive and more destructive *yin* and the more active and constructive *yang* contain each other, giving birth to each other. They do not represent opposites; they are in no binary opposition; there is no such thing as good and evil; no truth or falsehood. These are complementary phenomena.

In this thinking, anyone familiar with the works of Derrida, the post-structural philosopher, can immediately recognize the roots of post-modernist thought. It is Derrida who has suggested that ambiguity can never be removed in human intercourse; that humans must be resigned to the fact of indeterminacy (Cooper, 1989).

According to the founder of the Theosophical Society, H.P. Blavatsky, this is an ancient pagan philosophy. She observes: “Antiquity knew of no isolated, thoroughly and absolutely bad ‘god of evil’. Pagan thought represented good and evil as twin brothers, born from the same mother – Nature”. Good and evil, she reasons, must be regarded “as offshoots from the same trunk of the Tree of Being” (from *The Secret Doctrine*, undated: 412). “If evil disappeared, good would

disappear along with it” reasons Blavatsky (p. 413); “what is evil to some” is “good for others”. “Evil as a Force” is “essential to Good” because it gives it “vitality and existence”; “there would be no life possible without Death” [and this is the central theme in Edgar Morin’s thermogenesis theory], “nor regeneration and reconstruction without destruction”.

The logical outcomes of such thinking must have serious implications for sustainable development. For example, there is no reason for humanity to panic about the polycrises we face. Environmental degradation and the resultant climate change should not make us panic. The next chapter will clearly show how worshippers of ancient pagan gods, informed by this belief, inflicted pain and caused others to suffer substantial losses and then regarded all the loot profited through such oppression as offerings to the deities, amongst which the sun, in a variety of graven images and national names, was the most prominent.

Morin correctly states that humanity comprehends through the help of analogous thinking (1992: xlii). What he ignores, however, is that analogy itself “is a language of ordered relationships”, as David Tracy reminds us (in Morin, 1992: xlii). Tracy points out the logic in an analogy as follows: “The order among the relationships is constituted by the distinct but similar relationships of each analogue to some primary focal meaning, some prime analogue.” This prime analogue is the reference point for the meaningfulness of the language of analogy. We do know that in Morin’s perspective the sun is the “prime analogue”, but since this object provides no “primary focal meaning”, like any part of nature, except what each individual can imagine, it cannot serve a reference point for meaning. If any living being can use it as a “primary analogue” then anybody else can use any other part of nature, the wind, trees, water, animal or any planet in the heavens as some “primary focal meaning”, which must eventually lead to confusion.

The thought that order was given birth by chaos is, indeed made quite improbable by what is observed in the cell, the smallest living system known to us, which is also the same in any type of biological living system. As understood in molecular biology, we have already noted above that cells are constituted of “integrated activities of nearly one hundred different proteins, all carrying out different specific steps”. The improbability of chaos giving rise to order is made real by the fact that:

*“If only a small proportion of these (protein molecules) were ‘crudely made’ or ‘statistical’ it is practically impossible to accept that protein would ever be manufactured, let alone one*

*with a specific molecular configuration capable of performing a specific function in the cell” (Denton, 1985: 265).*

Living systems appear to be fundamentally constituted through meticulous design rather than through chaos:

*“Everything we have learned about protein structure and function over the past thirty years implies that the function of a protein depends on its being very accurately manufactured and possessing exact highly specific configurations.” (Denton, 1985: 265)*

In the Afrocentric and Christian perspective the Creator-God who purposefully designed the heavens and the earth, the sea and “all that is in them” (Exodus 20: 8), including the sun, is the “prime analogue” or “primary focal meaning” to which all purposeful living entities can relate. The most important “primary focal meaning” in “Christian systematics”, notes Tracy, is “the event of Jesus Christ” (whose historicity will be considered in this work) in voluntarily yielding His life to redeem what He created in order to restore harmonious relating between Himself and all creation, and reconciliation among all creatures, so as to move out of all forms of antagonistic relationships. To Morin “genesis”, through the thermal disorder in the sun, is the “primary event”. Little wonder, therefore, that turbulent disorder is the hallmark of all nature-based worship cultures, as will be shown in this work.

White is a creation theorist who believes in the intelligent design of the universe by the “Word” of God, the Creator, while Morin (though, like all emergent nature theorists and transdisciplinary, he would not want his to be considered a reductionist explanation) seems to advocate, from insights gained in physics and mathematics, that “it is by disintegrating that the cosmos organizes itself”, and that “this unbelievable idea is the only one which can furnish today the texture of a plausible theory on the formation of the physical world” (1992: 41–42). But it can be deduced from his sun praises that he is little more than a devoted disciple of the disorder that characterized the imaginary world of Greek deities.

### **1.7.3 The constructivity of negativity and the negativity of constructivity**

It is an idea steeped in the mythology of warring Greek gods, whose roots, as we shall observe, are traceable to the world of conflict-prone Egyptian gods, that advocated the “unbelievable idea” now propounded by Morin and other systems thinkers in his fold of thought, as did Bertalanffy: that “every

totality is based on competition between its elements and presupposes struggle between its parts” (in Morin, 1992: 119). This is in direct contrast to the systems thinking based on the interdependence observable in the cooperation of the elements in nature. To imagine and propose that “deterioration, ruin, disintegration ... come from the inside” and that “every system is from birth condemned to death” and that “constructivity” is “negativity” must amount to judging any attempt at alleviating social, political, economic and environmental ills not only as negative but futile. That all social aberrations such as rape, theft and murder, negative as they are, are constructive, must indeed be regarded, as suggests Morin, as “unbelievable”.

What is of significance for this study, irrespective of the divergent views on the origins of our universe, is the notion that life has to be disturbed to produce its own expanded measures. Interestingly, Morin, like White, seems to observe that nature has an emergence about it; but White shares the vital insight of this study that it is not in the catastrophic point of yielding of life, but in a voluntary, uncoerced yielding, that new growth is possible, as already noted above, regarding the “law of the vegetable kingdom” (1998: 623).

#### **1.7.4 Nicolescu’s quest for a “new art of living”, “transdisciplinarity”**

The Romanian theoretical physicist, Basarab Nicolescu, in his theory of transdisciplinarity, seems to hold a proposition by which humanity can overcome the problems we have encountered in Morin, above. In his book, *Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity*, he grapples with the problem of the lack of harmony between mentalities and knowledge in a complex age of bewildering specialization. This is a problem of cosmic proportion as the various disciplines touch just about every aspect of human existence. The concern is that this multiplicity of disciplines and specialization areas do not dialogue with each other. His quest therefore is “the unity of knowledge, and the creation of a new art of living” (1997). He sees this as being possible through the building of bridges across disciplines and centres of learning, universities being open to their environment (including civil society) and becoming places for “transdisciplinarity”, a “privileged place of apprenticeship in the transcultural, transreligious, transpolitical and transnational attitude, of the dialogue between art and science, which is the axis of a reunification between scientific culture and artistic culture”. A renewed university would, according to Nicolescu, become the place for a new kind of humanism.

In a “rapidly changing world”, noted Seb Henagulph in his essay *Three Pillars of Transdisciplinarity*, people are looking for “firm ground [on which] to stand”, a situation that has led to a rise in “fundamentalist movements and increasingly punitive laws”, in “reaction to increasing complexification of societies all over the planet” (2000: 11). This “complexification” is the context which led Edgar Morin and all adherents to the Transdisciplinarity Charter (Article 2), to reject all forms of “simplification”, and “every totalizing synthesis” (1997: 17), and to recognize that we live in a world of multiple, different levels of Reality, rather than “uni-dimensional reality” (Henagulph, 2000: 11).

Universities, therefore, suggested Nicolescu, would be places for learning to live together, as suggested by their very name (*universitas*, meaning openness); the various, ever-increasing disciplines and specialization areas would learn to communicate by means of what was imagined by Stephan Lupasco as the “logic of the included middle” (also known as the “third included”), symbolized by the “T-state”. This “included middle” would help the multiple “Realities”, whether they be religions, cultures or disciplines, to commune, bringing the prospect of “peace” nearer to our troubled world (Nicolescu, 2001: 140).

To the extent that Nicolescu appreciates the importance of a “multicultural” and “intercultural” dialogue among people, which could produce a “language founded on shared values,” he begins to hint at the worthiness of undertaking a study such as this, which focuses on relational values. Cultural interactivity by itself, he acknowledges, does “not assure the kind of communication between all cultures that presupposes a universal language founded on shared values” (2001: 104). But this is precisely the point of this study: to argue and draw attention to an existing “universal language” and proven “shared values” that have demonstrated an enormous potential, throughout human history, in a variety of cultural settings, to be a means for humanity to transcend a variety of intra and inter-cultural divides.

Admittedly, the transdisciplinary approach to living is based on, and focuses on, “the geometry of relational” perception (Henagulph, 2000: 1) between rather than within levels of Reality. It is true that according to this model numerous, different levels constitute “Reality”. But the answer to the interpersonal, familial, communal, societal, national and international political and economic conflicts, poverty and inequality among people, and the pollution against the environment cannot be resolved only by bridging “conflicting logics of contradictions”. Indeed this is an important avenue. Our experiences as humans do teach us that poverty, cruelty and indifference exist within and

between “levels of Reality”. This suffering is found even among those who belong to the same political, religious, knowledge and cultural affiliations. The caste-based conflicts that ravage billions of adherents of Hinduism in India, the socio-political and economic inequity that splits adherents of Buddhism in China and Christians in the western world, attest to this fact. This very first pillar of transdisciplinarity, the “level of Reality”, as conceptualized by Nicolescu, is defined as “an ensemble of systems” which is “invariant under the action of certain general laws” (Henagulph, 2000: 9). But the primary focus of this study is not on “ensembles” as they are driven by “certain general laws”, but, as it were, on the intra-level Reality of relationships, that of individuals as members of the particular “Reality” of humanity, with their microphysical constituent part, values, before they become part of other collectives governed or regulated by general laws.

In his theory on transdisciplinarity Basarab Nicolescu recognizes and credits Stephan Lupasco – whose philosophy of the “logic of the included middle”, based on quantum physics, has been “marginalized by physicists and philosophers” as having allowed us to transcend the barriers of “classical logic”, in which the validity of something cannot be affirmed at the same time as that of its opposite. But this is not the problem: the fact of the simultaneous existence of A and non-A is undeniable. The introduction of the imagined “T-state” does not change this fact either.

If, as Nicolescu (2000: 3) reasons, it is the “projection of T on one and the same level of Reality which produces the appearance” of mutual exclusivity and antagonism (A and non-A), then he is throwing us back to the suggestion by Morin that we should accept and live with the “yin” and the “yang”, comfort and discomfort, war and peace, as necessary contradictions. The sociological implications of such contradictions are the very motivation for the search for sustainable peace and development.

The next problematic thought about the function of “T-state”, is how, if “a single level of Reality” is “inherently self-destructive” (2000: 4) when “separated from other levels”, does the “T-state” resolve the intra-level antagonism when its function is that of facilitating “reconciliation” between and not within levels? Being situated at different, inherently antagonistic levels, the “T-state” simply connects war zones. The tension and dissension between Nazis and Semitic people did not produce any unity; the tension between the amaHutu and amaTutsi in Ruwanda and Burundi has left our world aghast; inequality in South Africa, India, China and the rest of the world is worsening.

What we will be delving into in the next chapter is how societies have come to this point of disciplinary complexity; where knowledge and mentalities in society fail to dialogue, as desired by Nicolsecu. We shall see that this is not a new but an ancient socio-cultural problem whose roots are grounded in a polytheistic mindset. The sociological pathologies related to the polytheistic worship system of the Egyptians, which included colonialistic tendencies, “Othering” and constituentilizing of society, the plundering of livelihoods for selfish gain; the polarization and dissection of various dimensions of human endeavour in terms of a multiplicity of unrelated professions and intellectual activities (disciplines), clearly suggests that disciplinarity (or knowledge division) is itself a social pathology within Western civilization whose origin is traceable to a religio-cultural system that upheld social scaling and class division.

We are seeing a proliferation of very powerful interests among humans. Each is vying for unrestrained freedom to do as it pleases, irrespective of its effects on others. Since the seventies, for example, large corporations have perceived their profits to be in decline as governments and environmentalists blame them for environmental degradation. As governments responded with new laws and regulations corporate leaders began to cry out against their declining influence. “We’re losing the war against government usurpation of our economic freedom,” moaned Wilson Johnson, president of the National Federation of Independent Business in the United States in 1978 (in Beder, 2006: 3). From then, notes Beder (2006: 3) “business began to cooperate in a way that was unprecedented”, building coalitions and alliances, and putting aside competitive rivalries. It is a trend that began in South Africa with the Dutch East India Company, which controlled a whole colony and its governors for over four decades in the Cape, purely for economic profit, inflicting damage on both the environment and the indigenous people. The trend has found its zenith in the World Economic Forum (WEF), whose purpose is “to ensure that corporate interests are advanced over other interests, and to undermine the democratic process for deciding government priorities and policies” (Beder, 2006: 3). The WEF is very clear about “its agenda-setting role” in today’s world, notes Beder. The claim made by this powerful, “exclusive private club for the chief executives of the world’s largest corporations who meet annually at the Swiss ski resort of Davos to set the ‘political, economic and business agenda’ for the rest of the world”, is that one of its initiatives, the Centre for the Global Agenda (CGA), “will serve as a catalyst in defining, monitoring and driving the global agenda. It will act as a hub of networks and alliances on important global issues and will play a key role in the world’s international system” (2006: 1).

The reality in which this study is rooted, and from which it takes as its departure, is the “micro event”, or individual, embedded as each may be in any “macro event”, group or society regulated by any laws and interests. The focus is on the individual’s “deep structure” or “fundamental capacities”, whether of “self-preservation” or “self-transcendence”, as identified by Ken Wilber in his 1995 work, *Sex, ecology and spirituality* (in Henagulph, 2000: 7).

This study, hopefully, will take forward the search into this relational dimension, by drawing attention to and proposing those relational values that can “assure the kind of communication” that would help humanity to realize the sought-after peace among cultures, people and their knowledge disciplines.

Transdisciplinarity, as Mircea Berteau (2005: 2) notes, “concerns that which is at once between, across and beyond all disciplines”. This study concerns that which is *within*, governing that which occurs “between, across and beyond” all people and their various engagements.

### **1.7.5 The relevance of aesthetics in the sustainable development equation**

To be drawn by whatever is life-affirming, useful and beneficial and be repulsed by whatever is life-denying, “instinctually harmful and dangerous”, “must be the oldest intelligent human experience” (Nietzsche, 1968: 804). Longinus, another philosopher who concerned himself with the sublime and beautiful in life, asserted: “It is a unique capacity of our human nature ‘to yearn for all that is great, all that is diviner than ourselves’ ” (in Blocker & Jeffers, 1999: 11).

The study of aesthetics has often been thought of as dealing with issues of taste and preferences. It would appear that its advocates are groping for empirical criteria for what is good on the basis of the “likes and dislikes of our five senses” (Blocker & Jeffer, 1999). Aesthetics has also been defined as the “science of sensation or feeling” (Hegel, 1993: 3). As such, it seems both superficial and pedantic to deal with aesthetics in discussions about human development when there are fundamentally graver issues such as poverty and environmental degradation at stake.

In this study, however, aesthetics is treated as the dimension of human development that focuses on the importance of self-transcendent relational values. As such, it is multi-disciplinary in its reach. Its neglect, in all the known and necessary dimensions of sustainable development, can be ascribed

to the monomaniac tendency to focus and ‘prioritize’ some development issues above others, denying their interdependent nature.

The treatment of aesthetics in this study has already been set out against the perspective and philosophy dealing with issues of art and its appreciation, as influenced by Plato, amongst other thinkers, going much deeper than the modern focus of this philosophy which holds that:

*Aesthetic appreciation of nature is not confined to the sense of sight. Our appreciation of a country scene may include listening to the sound of a waterfall or to the song of birds as well as looking at the landscape; we may also take pleasure in the smell of grass after rain or the scent of pine-trees and relish the texture of soft grass, springy heather, or dry autumn leaves as we touch them. Tastes can be appreciated in the same way. (Sheppard, 1987: 56)*

Umberto Eco’s argument that “beauty does not [only] have art as its object”, the fact that beauty is not ascribed “just to poems and paintings but also to horses, sunsets, and women” (1988: 3), betrays the perceptive limits to the concept as it is still being used. It is limited to the appearance, the feeling or the sight of that which is perceived. Aesthetic values call attention to the spiritual realm of beauty. These values are connected with the notion of “beauty” in as far as they refer to a “harmonious inter-relationship of parts within an organic whole” (Blocker & Jeffers, 1999: 23), which in the context of this study is ecology – that “triangular relation between a species (and individuals of this species), its activity, and its environment” (Lipietz, 1996: 12).

Used in this context, therefore, aesthetic values give support, on the one side, to what Lipietz (1996) has called the “synchrotic” dimension of the adjective “sustainable”, which qualifies a model of development that is “agreeable to everyone” (and everything within the triangular relation humans are a part of, in their environment), and on the other hand to the “diachronic” dimension, in as far as this connotes endurance, over time.

This study’s engagement with aesthetic values includes the testing of the “law-like generalization” or theory held by several observers, regarding the existence of *relational characteristics* that govern the constituent parts of our world, including mankind: “complementarity” (Hawley, 1981); “intimate association” (Lauwery, 1969); “mutual dependence” (Alexander von Humboldt in Keulartz, 1998); “cooperation” (Kropotkin, 1902) and the concept of “the circuit of mutual beneficence” manifested in “self-sacrificial living”; “taking to give”(White, 1898).

The expression “aesthetic relational values” is used to mean those qualities of the human spirit which, when they are possessed by an individual or society, others find admirable or beautiful; these values are inherent in people, not in objects such as images or pictures. They can be appropriately described as *jewels of the human spirit*. They have a well-articulated impact or effect on those people with whom the possessor comes into contact. The most common manifestation is that people like to be around those who possess such values.

A person or a community may be morally unquestionable; but without aesthetic relational values, people are dull, rigid, cold and lack attractiveness. Aesthetic relational values are defined in this work as acquired spiritual endowments through which an individual wills and expends the mental and physical capacities to invest all life outside the immediate self with value; they constitute, direct and govern a person’s being. From them spring an individual’s attitudes and actions that purposefully seek to transform others, despite themselves – humans and non-humans – and perpetuate a mutually beneficial relationship between the object, the individual agent/benefactor and others/beneficiaries in the living environment. The benefactor seeks to endow the beneficiary with the same worth. Aesthetic relational values, then, refer to the beautiful qualities residing in individuals that translate into community among them.

Put another way, aesthetic relational values, which can easily be mistaken and misconceptualized as social capital, are conceptualized in this work as those human relational traits through which individuals give testimony to a self-sacrificial lifestyle, through which they are able to extend themselves in ways that benefit others. These traits are graces that lend admirability to an individual’s character.

### **1.7.6 Aesthetic relational values and the postmodernism project**

Modernity was chartered on the basis of the promise that enlightenment and science would, through knowledge, make the world a better place, as science is based on better epistemological foundations than any other belief system (Durkheim, 1964; Marx, 1992). After centuries, despite some spectacular achievements of comfort by a few, the world, for the majority of its inhabitants, has not become a better place.

Postmodernist explanations for the pathological social situation our world is in, have ascribed it to the false claims made by science that it would ultimately lead to truth (Lyotard, 1984; Kincheloe &

McLaren; 1994; Tiernery, 1997). Any claim to truth, in the postmodernist epistemology, is an act of violence and a lie. Only when all forms of standardized control are abandoned and all voices in society are allowed to emerge can the violence of modernity be eliminated.

The conventional understanding of postmodernism is that “no objective framework exists to decide normative and factual judgements. All such judgements are said to reflect the political, cultural, and socio-economic imperatives of the particular time and place in which they are made” (Bragues, 2006: 159). The conclusion is that all grand narratives, therefore, have to be treated with incredulity.

In the postmodernist perspective, the human mind cannot access the world as it is. This is the tradition of ancient skeptics that nothing proposed cannot be counter-proposed; for every position there is a counter-position. There is a total rejection of any kind of “foundationalism”. There is nothing like an “eternal standard – such as God, reason, or nature”. Despite the rejection of any claim as “truth”, what cannot be denied is the fact that postmodernism advocates a definite “truth”, in being anti-truth, as does Rorty when he suggests “that there is no truth” (in Brague, 2006: 164 - 167).

The human condition, however, attests to the historicity of phenomena like cruelty and other forms of moral degradation. Even Rorty himself is known to have been incensed by and “indignant about the extent of greed in society” (Bragues, 2006: 163). Clearly there are phenomena that, by consensus of those in society, need to be avoided. Cilliers asserts that to accept “universal principles” can “never be just”, that it is just “too rigid”. In his use of the neural model of interconnectivity in demonstrating how complex systems solve problems, he argues that such systems are “self-organizing”, solving problems by the “self-adjustments the system undertakes in order to improve its performance” (1998: 116). This, he reasons, takes place “without the *a priori* necessity of an external designer” (1998: 10).

It is such an understanding of the workings of complex systems, particularly as generalized from the perceived understanding of communication among neurons in the brain, that causes Cilliers to come to the justification of “fierce competition” and “of paralogy and dissension” as the “driving force in a social system”, as do evolutionary cosmologists like Capra and Morin, above, who believe in the “constructivity of negativity”. Molecular biology is unambiguous in demonstrating, for example in the Laminin model, that when faced with a challenge, parts that make up a complex system do not

“evolve” “in the direction of a solution”, as Cilliers (1998: 28) claims, but through the intervention of an agent that works from within and between the parts a specific solution is arrived at. The Laminin model illustrates how an external agency enables complex systems to find solutions to challenges without the need for competition and dissension. This is why when one part in the human body has an ailment every other part sympathises, yet without losing its identity and function; it is why, when one part of nature is destroyed, all of nature groans in sympathy – the connectivity of subsystems in nature, well beyond their immediate localities, allows for this *compassionate existence* among them.

### **Laminin: An object lesson from molecular biology**

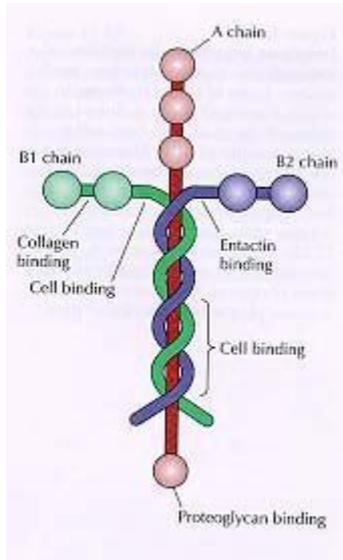
The complex situation we are in, of cultural disunity, growing economic and political inequity, knowledge differentiation, rapid growth and disciplinary complexity, does seem to point to the need for discovering something that is more than just “across”, “between” and “above” levels of Realities” as suggested in Nicolescu’s theory of transdisciplinarity, but something that is simultaneously within and between every individual or nation of people despite their being different.

Molecular biology introduces us, through the help of the AFM (atomic force microscope), to an amazing intra- and inter-cellular communication protein called the Lamina. Its function helps to illustrate the potential that aesthetic relational values have for facilitating intra- and inter-cultural communication and reconciliation.

According to Hansma (1998) there is an important extracellular matrix (ECM) of molecules that were “long ignored” in biology. This basement membrane of molecules binds cells, but at the same time sends messages into them, directing intracellular function by regulating the genes inside each. Hansma observes that one of the molecules of the ECM is Laminin, “a large cross-shaped protein”. Among its known numerous functions, Laminin promotes cell adhesion, migration, growth and differentiation, including the neurite outgrowth, a fact that begins to explain role agency even in the interconnectivity of the brain neurons and information flows in Paul Cilliers’ model of a “self-organising system” (1998: 17). Put simply, Laminin directs, instructs and differentiates cells but binds them together to work in harmony within and between subsystems. As attested to by the research conducted by Weeks, DiSalvo and Kleinman (1990), “Laminin mediates neural adhesion and process formation”. This fact demonstrates that even in what are considered complex self-

organising network processes, an agent that is both inside and outside can organize harmonious functioning among differentiated entities.

Laminin has an interesting structural function which has been represented as follows:



*“It has four arms that can bind to four other molecules. The three shorter arms are particularly good at binding to other laminin molecules”.* (Wikipedia)

The consequences of the body’s failure to produce Laminin are quite drastic. William Carter (2008), a pathobiologist in the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Centre in Washington State University, has concluded, significantly, that our wounds would not heal were it not for Laminin 5, since there would be neither coordinated cell function nor communication between cells.

Human elements are able to relate because there are “principles” that are “universal rules”; each rule, however, has to be subjected to the rigours of any particular moment. Whatever the narrative that humans may subscribe to and source their identity from, it contains these “universal rules” and principles that inform practice and development. It is these that must be continuously subjected to tests of efficacy; to challenges in the environment.

There is no prudence in the simplistic rejection of narratives without the evidence of their impact on human development. To adopt a blanket dismissal of central control and institutions as depriving humans of liberty and justice without interrogating the nature of the governing laws and principles, is a questionable rigidity and fundamentalism on its own. Indeed, it amounts to the negation of the

very tenets of post-structuralism. It does not set post-structuralism apart from those very institutions it attacks.

The complexity we find ourselves in demands organization, which is essentially laying down agreed-upon rules among the elements of the system, as terms of engagement in the business of living together, and being relied upon to act in certain ways, as humans, in society. This then becomes the “point of reference” for those who have entered that social covenant. It does not necessarily “constitute”, as Cilliers reasons, “an avoidance of complexity” (1998: 112). Indeed complexity is “relational” (1998: 112), as Cilliers recognizes, and the relationships in complexity may be displaying what he calls “continuous shifting” (2000: 112). But if there is an object lesson that we can learn from cells and their constitutive elements of the human body, including neurons in the human brain that Cilliers draws his own lessons from, it is the fact that the proteins in each cell (and all cells have the same constitution in every biological system) are endowed with one vital characteristic according to Emile Zuckerkandl, and that is the “property of specificity of interaction”, and that “progress in functional efficiency in proteins” is the direct result of “progress in fidelity of translation”, as it takes place in cells (in Denton, 1985: 266). We, therefore, need not confuse complexity with haphazardness and chaotic interaction. Specific interacting, and fidelity, qualify the connectivity in living systems.

It is the core argument of this study that complexity can be navigated without the cruelty of competition and dissension in complex systems such as human societies. What is particularly wicked about some institutions - and these are not limited to modernity, even in pre-modern times this weakness existed – is the absence of aesthetic relational values; in this particular, institutional context, the absence of tolerance for diversity. Institutions that have, in Cilliers’ words, an “obsession to find one essential truth” but are “blind”, in our mind, intolerant, of the reality of other truths, may even be “connectionist”, in Cilliers’ sense of understanding neural activity in the brain (1998). But without relating towards others through the aesthetic values advocated herein, interconnectionism, as modeled by Cilliers (as well as distributionism) must in the final analysis be found wanting.

Every command, every law, every rule and every organization’s regulatory instruments seek to accomplish certain purposes and serve specific interests. The purposes can be put into two major categories: on the one hand rules, regulations and organizations can be informed by devotion to an intention to amass gain and wellness at the expense of the well-being of others. On the other,

organizations and rules may emanate and be purposefully driven by an intention to serve and benefit, primarily, not the rule designers but others. It then becomes possible to speak of a self-transcendent organization, where the well-being of others is as important as the well-being of self. It is this microphysicality in being, this spirituality in the rules and principles adopted by humans, that needs on-going interrogation. Our survival demands good governance and organization; governance and organization is impossible without some kind of ordering through some agreed-upon regulatory framework or principles.

Humans have to continuously make “responsible judgement” (Cilliers, 1998: 139) of situations, and any judgement has to be changed “as soon as it becomes clear that it has flaws, whether it be under specific circumstances, or in general”. It is this flexible post-modernism that rejects inflexible rule-based and compassion-bankrupt institutions but recognizes that there indeed are universal principles that hold humans responsible for their mutual beneficence.

Daily evidence and analyses of human nature point to human beings as self-interested. As long as the spirit of individual or national ambition, rivalry and desire for prominence, to come first, continues to hold sway in human systems and institutions, national or global communing will remain a vexing mirage. Human history, thus far, has been the by-product of fear. Individuals, organizations and nations have operated on the basis of predatory self-preservation and self-enhancement. The polycrises we are in is the direct result of such an ethos of living. Our times call for a new form of being in the world, a new form of organization and labour. In “our association with every member of the human family, our relationships will need to give studied attention to relationships perfuming standards such as “kindness, gentleness, forbearance, and long-suffering” (White, 2000: 103). These relational principles might just have the potential to endow humans with the capacity to commune.

The creation narrative from which Africa obtained its identity, on closer scrutiny – and as will be argued in following chapters that take a close look at the lifestyle of amaXhosa – advocates an epistemology that is founded on a mode of relating framed by values such as “long-suffering”, “free will” and “choice”, and provides ample space for achieving even more than what postmodernism dreams of: letting a multiplicity of voices be heard. It must be borne in mind, however, that each voice, as an individual difference, is a potential claimant, even at the individual level, for a particular truth. As such, it faces the risk of rejection in the postmodernist epistemology. Each voice, therefore, has a better refuge in a kraal founded and framed by a relational aesthetic value

ethos that allows for transsituational and associational living in which the principle of mutual enhancement, rather than self-enhancement, makes harmony possible among the different voices.

### **1.7.7 Relational aesthetic value relevance to governance and service provision**

If governance and organization are essential in society, as argued above, then for these to be freed from the accusations made by post-modernism and become justifiable, a redefinition and reconstitution is required. To an extent we have started to answer this vital question. Governance does not have to be violence-oriented, or based on coercion. It does not have to suppress certain voices or interests and allow others.

Governance involves decision-making and the giving of direction to the process of decision-execution. When aesthetic relational values come into governance, the quality, substance and processes of a political system become fundamentally reconstituted. Aesthetic relational values demand that space be given to each and every voice; there is no room for the marginalization of any, no matter how insignificant it may seem in the eyes of others. This is one of the most important characteristics and responsibilities of a truly legitimate agent in society, tasked with governance and the regulation of social relations. All political associations or interest groups in society, with their multiplicity of voices, are to be given space, protected by the responsible social apparatus or group of apparatuses in conventional terms, the state apparatuses endowed with these aesthetic relational values. One of the self-inflicted weaknesses of authoritarian political systems observed by Swilling is “the absence of the kind of spontaneous consent in civil society that states require to maintain their legitimacy” (in Cloete *et al*, 1991: 89).

Kwasi Wiredu (2000), in his plea for non-party-based politics in Africa, against the colonial legacy, reasons that post-colonial political organization and governance was never exercised to suppress some voices in society as is the majoritarian tendency in Western democracy. Consensus was a central principle. Be it among the Ashanti in Ghana; Bangwato and amaZulu of South Africa, the Bemba of Zambia, the Nuer of Sudan or Banyakole of Uganda, the majority opinion that suppressed the position of the minorities, was never the basis for decision-making. Consensus was the product of dialogue; In this preferred rendition of African governance decisions reached by consensus became the law that was upheld by the leaders of society (chiefs), who represented unity in society, not division, as in the voice of the more powerful.

Giving space to a multiplicity of voices in society allows for the broadening of access to decision making. This is the phenomenon of *distributed decision making in governance* (participative governance). In governance that is driven by aesthetic relational values, each voice is allowed to rise or fall by the quality of its own decision, free from interference by others. In this mode of governance there is no room for the tyranny of might or that of the majority.

What is envisioned here is a vision of the state that goes much further than that conceptualized by Chalmers Johnson (1999) as a “developmental state”, in terms of an entity that simply mobilizes certain parts of the citizenry around economic development, prioritizing industrialization, relying more on the market and the elite, and directing this particular activity in certain ways. What may even be a weakness in such a state is what Kim Eun Mee (1998) observes in the developmental South Korean experience, where the state was perceived to be colluding with big business and marginalizing unions and other civil society voices. What is intended here may even be seen as antithetical to the “developmental state”.

The political system of governance observed among amaXhosa by the shipwrecked travellers, translated itself in practice as illustrated by the following picture (Carter and Van Reenen, 1927: 77–84):

- *[They] practise agriculture, ...*
- *Industry is a leading trait ...*
- *[They] believe in a future state where the good will be rewarded ...*
- *[They] are governed by a chief or king whose power is very limited, ...*
- *Each (household) gather(s) (its) own grain.*
- *[Each household lives] separately, each surrounded by his own plantation ...*

The communal development governance suggested in this study does not merely “define problems”. This is a co-responsibility of the various voices in society and the state as co-directors of development. The government plays more of a “steering than rowing” role (Osborne & Gaebler, 1993: 25). If public management, like all other sorts, “involves *decision making* and decision making involves *problem solving*” (Ackoff, 1974: 20), then it should be accepted that a political system that does not facilitate effective citizen involvement in all facets of national development

planning, including policy decision making processes, deprives people of a critical opportunity in civic education, as learning resides in the process of problem solving.

Service provision in society becomes equally participative in a political system driven by aesthetic relational values. When the execution of services is allowed to be the duty of those who benefit from what is provided, people are allowed to become participant decision-makers in the quality and cost of the service. They become responsible for effectiveness, efficiency and whatever savings are made in service provision. Secondly, when civil society, with all represented political associations and entities (be it churches, private/business organizations, cultural groups, media groups, etc.) has embraced the spirituality of aesthetic relational values, we shall see the institutionalization of *restitutive* modes of social development, environmental resource use and economic growth in society, a concept that will be dealt with later in this work. In restitutive development every beneficiary of development embraces the duty of being the proverbial “brother’s keeper”.

### **1.7.8 Setting aesthetic relational values apart from social capital**

Such a conceptualization of aesthetic values sets them apart from what has come to be referred to as social capital, closely related as they may seem. The conventional definition that has come to enjoy consensus among scholars theorizes and specifies social capital as “features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam, 1995: 67); “a resource to collective action”; “networks of social relations characterized by norms of trust and reciprocity” (Stone, 2001: 33). The emphasis is on networking and collaboration for mutual gain. But the motive behind this networking and collaboration for “mutual benefit” may have adverse effects to some, within and outside the network.

Aesthetic relational values are not conceptualized here in these collectivist terms. They reside in and are evinced by individuals in their relations with other individuals, within or from outside a particular collective (society or community). As such, aesthetic values have to do with individual agency and may be relative to a particular group or members thereof, neither limited nor as inwardly inclined as anything that has been seen as falling under the ambit of social capital.

This study refers to several of these aesthetic values under the umbrella of self-sacrificial living. They are evinced through a plethora of admirable individual traits: humility, longsuffering or patience, graciousness, a willingness to forgive and the capacity to identify with, or share the joy or

suffering of other people, helping them through the experience of suffering, until they regain their strength.

The fundamental difference between social capital and aesthetic values is that the former is negotiated, transacted and exchanged within people of the same community, community itself being framed by anything from gender, culture or class to ethnicity or race. The term itself is mired in transactionalist language. “Social capital”, Cleaver attests, “implies acceptance of reductionist mainstream economics concepts of ‘capital’ as a social endowment possessed and rationally utilized by individuals” (2005: 894). Little wonder that Beall (2001), who studied this phenomenon as “embedded social resources” (which according to Long [2001] are “negotiated” “social networks and processes”), concluded that social capital can “offer both enablement and constraint to individual actions and may reproduce structural inequalities of class and caste, gender and generation”. This is basically the same conclusion that Cleaver reaches. Institutional arrangements that people enter into can be inequitable. Often, the “right ways” of “associating and participating” in institutions that have been negotiated among people tend to “confirm dominant world views”. In such situations the “chronically poor” “engage on adverse terms” (Cleaver, 2005: 895–6).

Brammer (1973), in his theory dealing with the phenomenon of help, clearly demarcates the space occupied by values that enable the Helper to act in relation to those attributes found in social networks. He gives the following illustration about the Helping Process:

<b>Helper personality</b>	<b>+ Skills</b>	<b>= Growth conditions</b>	<b>&gt; Specific outcomes</b>
<b>traits, attitudes and values</b>	+ skills for action	= trust, respect	> individual benefits and benefits for society

Aesthetic relational values, as conceptualized in this study, are individual traits. As such they may be considered as occupying or residing in Brammer’s *Personality of Helper*. Combined with “agency”, the individual’s abilities and capability to act, the aesthetic values produce trust and respect among and beyond “networked” people. Brammer’s model, therefore, helps one to see that aesthetic values are primary prerequisites before those conditions (social capital) that permit growth (respect and trust) are even produced.

One study on the relationship between social capital and agency in 60 villages in India concluded that “while social capital”, differing as it did from village to village, “is a collectively possessed

resource, agency strength is related to a different set of capacities possessed by a particular individual in villages” (Krishna, 2001: 934). The agency may be weak, and thus, despite the social capital (that is, the apparent networking for “mutual benefit”), there may be no positive performance. This study focuses on the values that may affect the very nature of the agency, whether in the leader or participants in collective or individual relationships.

### **1.7.9 Aesthetic relational values and moral values**

It is quite easy to confuse aesthetic relational values with moral values. Indeed, in the study and discipline of philosophy, the issue of aesthetics is raised in the context of morality. Arguably, no story better illustrates the difference between moral values and aesthetic values than the story of the rich young man/ruler in the book of Matthew (Chapter 19) and in Luke (Chapter 18). The rich young man, the story goes, approached Jesus asking: “What shall I do that I may have eternal life?” This is a common human desire to live life without end, in the present and in any other time. Christ then pointed him to the Law: “You shall not murder, ... not steal ... not bear false witness”, to which he replied, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?” It is then that Jesus revealed to this morally blameless man his bankruptcy in aesthetic relational values. “If you want to be perfect,” He advised him, “go, sell what you have and give to the poor.” This was too much for him. “He went away sorrowful for he had great possessions.”

The main point here is that it is quite possible to live with morally upright, law-abiding people, rich in all kinds of material wealth, but devoid of care and compassion; callous with regard to hunger and the myriad other manifestations of need and poverty that oppress the masses of people they have the means to rescue. Such people keep the law but reject in practice all of its noble principles. They may not take up guns and kill others, but by ignoring their daily needs, they have adopted a more protracted killing method.

The rich young man wanted to make sure that after he had lived his comfortable but distant and uninvolved life of plenty on earth, he would be guaranteed entrance to the “kingdom” in the hereafter. But Christ had made very clear in His “Sermon on the Mount” that the requisite qualification or standard to enter the “kingdom” is not the “keeping of the Law”. The effective standard of living is not simply moral rectitude but living, here and now, lifestyles branded with aesthetic relational values.

In His own life, this Nazarene and Jewish Rabbi demonstrated that these relational values are much more than an intellectual, theoretical issue; they are powerfully transformational in their efficacy as evidenced in his encounter with the woman at the well and the people of Samaria. He approached her as a stranger, a Jew against whom Samaritans harboured bitter mutual animosity. Traditionally, a Jew would receive no kindness from and never seek to benefit a Samaritan. But Christ, sitting by the well from which she came to fetch water, went against tradition and asked her: “Give me a drink” (John 4 vs 7).

The reaction from her was an expected one: “How is it that you, being a Jew, ask a drink of me, a Samaritan woman?” (John 4 vs 9). She was aware of her status as a woman, in the eyes of both Samaritan and Jewish men. In Spivak’s terms, she was a “subaltern”; “the most oppressed and invisible” constituent in society, that “cannot be heard by the privileged either of the First or the Third World” (Introduction to the Spivak Reader, 1996). In both these rival cultures she had no voice. She suffered from within and from outside her own cultural realm.

But this animosity Christ effectively met with the powerful medium of aesthetic relational values: “If you knew”, Christ responded, that I have within me much better “water”, you would have been the one to ask me, and I would not have refused you.

By the end of the day, not only had Christ broken through her own wall of cultural prejudice, but she had brought the whole village down to the well to listen to Him. But more than that took place: He, a Jew, was invited by the villagers to spend the night, and wine and dine with enemies. He ended up spending two days among them.

The transformation in the narrative was made possible by a relational approach. Christ spoke and treated her with unprecedented kindness and respect despite the existing cultural conventions among these tribal rivals. He had entered into a relationship with her and her tribe, which Spivak has theorized as “an embrace, an act of love”. He had met the Samaritans as themselves, “embraced” them as themselves, without imposing His Jewishness as the “essential” order of being. He accepted “others” impartially, unconditionally and unreservedly.

Aesthetic relational values include traits such as peacemaking, mercifulness, loving even those that spitefully use us, and are our enemies doing unto others as we would have them do unto ourselves; showering others with blessings just as the Father {God} gives rain to both the good and

the bad; and humility. All of these have proven much more practical and effective ways of transforming the world we live in, ensuring that all, humans and non-humans, develop sustainably in it, through individual agency. They are the effective means for the establishment of a world of joy and peace for all. Through living by aesthetic relational values humans demonstrate a practical alignment with the principles and spirituality rather than an outward conformity to the letter of the moral law.

## **1.8 Aim of the study**

This study pays particular attention to the role of aesthetic relational values in amaXhosa of the Eastern Cape's socio-cultural lifestyle. These values, which have been expounded and documented by several writers including amaXhosa writers such as Tiyo Soga, the "progenitor of Black nationalism in South Africa" and the "first" Black person to "formulate a philosophy of Black Consciousness" (Williams, 1978), are capable of providing enduring answers to the developmental problems of mankind.

Soga and others expounded and documented well-articulated socio-cultural aesthetics. From an experiential viewpoint, he enjoined his own sons to follow his advice, based on experience, observation and reflection. He exhorted them to cultivate a conscious, African self-identity – "You belong to a primitive race of men, ... second to none", and to use it as an instrument for weathering the storm of colonial cultural corrosiveness, urging them to "disseminate the idea(s) among all your countrymen should you have any influence with them" (Chalmers, 1878).

This study seeks, therefore:

- to demonstrate how, devoid of aesthetic relational values, Western civilization, and the development efforts within its framework, has not succeeded in bringing the global human family to a point of communion critical to sustainable societal development;
- to demonstrate how this bankruptcy emerged in the realm of worship, and continues to be upheld in various socio-religious and intellectual circles, whose ties can be traced to ancient pagan systems of worship and imaginary being;
- to demonstrate the trans-cultural nature, trans-disciplinarity and relevance of these aesthetic relational values with reference to the global human family, their intellectual endeavours and the matrix of the four pillars of sustainability;

- to bring substantial attention to the socio-cultural dimension of amaXhosa as a branch of amaMbo multitudes, whose origins are traceable to Ethiopia;
- to recall how ancient Ethiopians' belief systems and culture resonated sympathetically with those of ancient Israel;
- to demonstrate how the cultural endowments of aesthetic relational values of amaXhosa as an off-shoot from ancient Ethiopia played a role in the quality of their Southern African encounter with colonialists;
- to examine evidence of these values in the lives of selected individuals among amaXhosa, and remnants thereof in the lives of amaXhosa in general, on the basis of available documentation and of ethnographic research conducted among the indigenous people of the Eastern Cape;
- to draw attention to evidence of how colonial influences continue to be perpetuated in post-colonial Africa in socio-political and economic systems marked by an absence of these critical aesthetic relational values;
- to make recommendations on the revival and application of these values in our societies.

From a contributory viewpoint, this dissertation seeks to explore the efficacy of these factors in the quest for sustainable development. A major goal is to produce an aesthetic framework or model of socio-cultural factors that will influence sustainability in its various contexts.

This is a search for a model or cognitive framework that can erode the fabric of colonial conditions and culture; one that serves to guide consciousness, intuition and behaviour, with which human dignity is infused and nurtured in South African society, the bedrock from which citizens – with recognition from government – can carry the responsibility for their growth and development.

## **1.9 Research questions**

This study will seek to answer the following questions.

- What space has been accorded to aesthetic relational values within the major grand/meta narratives among humans?
- What are the implications for sustainability, of social being and nature articulated from the various grand/meta narratives?

- What particular aesthetic values constituted the web of human-to-human and human-to-nature relationships among Africans at the period of the colonial encounter?
- In what specific ways did the colonial encounter impact upon the cherished aesthetic values among amaXhosa and what responses were evinced?
- What colonial conditions that constitute a challenge to sustainable development still remain in post-1994 South Africa, and in what demonstrable ways does the absence of aesthetic values restrain development, ensuring the persistence of poverty, particularly in the Eastern Cape?
- What remnants of aesthetic values are still evident and held?
- What is the efficacy of these aesthetic values in the national quest for sustainable development, especially in the Eastern Cape?
- Where and how best can these values be rejuvenated and applied?

## **1.10 Research methodology**

The primary methodology of research used in this study is documentary research. A variety of qualitative research methodologies, all of which have an ethnographic leaning, have been integrated into this study. It also incorporates work conducted by the author over a period that goes back to 1999. These range from ethnography fused with life-history and participant observation, to action research fused with appreciative inquiry and future search. The techniques used also varied. They included in-depth unstructured interviews, and transect walks through people's own physical settings and surroundings. Prior to this research period the author had gained extensive experience in the application of ethnography in solving work-related issues. For example, it was as a research manager in the Regional Land Claims Office in the Eastern Cape that the skill in the latter methodology was cultivated in unravelling land restitution cases. The Dwesa–Cwebe land claim that will be described is of relevance to this study because it illustrates the relationship that amaXhosa elders had with their natural environment.

### **1.10.1 Ethnography**

Ethnography is regarded as a method of learning about people as subjects within their environment. The aim of the ethnographer is to arrive at an understanding of the subjects being observed and their relationship to their environment. As such, ethnography describes and interprets.

According to Hammersly and Atkinson (1983), “The ethnographer participates overtly or covertly in peoples’ daily lives for an extended period of time; watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issue with which he or she is concerned”. And as Toren (in Richardson, 1996: 103) explains, “there are no simple recipes for specifying exactly how to do it ... not a precise method ... you end up teaching yourself”.

Ethnography lets the voices of those being researched be heard, seeks to arrive at local meanings in what people say and do, and pays attention to detail. For these reasons, it has been found the most appropriate method for the investigation of aesthetic relational values.

### **1.10.2 Life-history**

This method belongs to the same stable as ethnography. Using the anthropological interview technique, it allows the observer to get as close as possible to what it is like to live the life of the subjects of the study. The actual substance and content of the subject’s social relations, and his/her individual agency therein, can be uncovered. As Long suggested, individuals have the capacity to “process social experience ... the ability to choose levels of ‘enrolment’ in the projects of others and to exert influence to enroll others in one’s own project” (in Cleaver, 2005: 895).

Acting as their own historians, people are given the freedom to tell their own stories, which reflect identities and values, placing them in a timeline. They are thus able to connect the present with the past and on this basis, are able to choose a preferred, meaningful future.

### **1.10.3 Action research**

Action research is defined as the exploration of, and inquiry into, people’s lives, in order to apprehend their relational life and work towards articulating possibilities for a better life. The method evolved in Kurt Lewin’s mind out of the passion and conviction that science has to be of creative significance in society. He was brought to the United States as a refugee Jewish student around 1933, leaving his own country in “anger and despair” (Cherry & Deaux, 2004: 1) as the Nazis were in power at the time. His urge was to develop a relevant, not detached, theoretical contribution to society, a science that would provide dysfunctional society with a means for change

and beneficial development. Thus, when he conceptualized action research he claimed: “There is nothing so practical as good theory” (Lewin, 1951: 169).

Sadly, action research has degenerated into a mechanistic ritual that follows certain steps of solving a problem “out there” in society. It has become a technician, detached “method of empirical data gathering that is *comprised of a set of rather standardized steps*: diagnosis, information gathering, feedback, and action planning” (Blake & Mouton, 1976: 101–102).

It does seem true that we discover what we have conceptualized in our own minds. To action-researchers, society is a problem that needs to be solved, hence their methodology. In its technician approach it lacks generative capacity and is unable to provide “alternatives for social action” (Gergen, 1978: 1346) and transformation, because it does not challenge cultural assumptions in society, does not allow for dialogue and does not appreciate the unique in society, but rather takes for granted what is there.

#### **1.10.4 The appreciative mode of action research**

It was to restore action research to serve its original purpose that the “appreciative mode” was introduced into this method of inquiry. The “appreciative mode of inquiry is a way of living with, being with, and directly participating in the varieties of social organization we are compelled to study. Serious consideration and reflection on the ultimate mystery of being engenders a reverence for life that draws the researcher to inquire beyond superficial appearances to deeper levels of the life-generating essentials and potentials of social existence. That is, the action-researcher is drawn to affirm, and thereby illuminate, the factors and forces involved in organizing that serve to nourish the human spirit” (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987: 142).

As David Koib noted:

*Appreciation is a process of affirmation. Unlike criticism, which is based on skepticism and doubt ... appreciation is based on belief, trust, and conviction. And from this affirmative embrace flows a deeper fullness and richness of experience. This act of affirmation forms the foundation from which vital comprehension can develop. Appreciative apprehension and critical comprehension are thus fundamentally different processes of knowing. Appreciation of immediate experience is an act of attention, valuing, and affirmation, whereas critical comprehension of symbols is based on objectivity (which invokes a priori controls of*

*attention, as in double-blind controlled experiments), dispassionate analysis, and skepticism* (1984: 104–105).

Appreciative inquiry is guided by four principles, based on the work of Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987). This research team used the method to probe the social regeneration of organizational life. These principles, whose efficacy has been confirmed through experience, provide the method deemed appropriate to this study.

***Principle 1: The research should begin with appreciation.***

The study was embarked upon with the positive assumption that life among amaXhosa is not in a total state of chaos. It was driven by hope, the hope that, despite “what is”, somewhere, in there, must still linger remnants of innovation.

***Principle 2: The research should have the potential for being applicable.***

If research does not lead to theoretical knowledge that can be validated in actual human situations, knowledge that has the potential for regenerating society, then it becomes little more than academic navel-gazing. It has to have relevance for human well-being.

***Principle 3: The research should be provocative.***

This study is a seeking for innovations and opportunities for alternative development. Appreciative inquiry allows for the emergence of new visions about what life could look like in future. It allows for the shaping of people’s lives according to their own imagination and moral purposes.

***Principle 4: The research should be collaborative.***

No inquiry into people’s lives should take place without their involvement. This is, first of all, the recognition of human dignity, and, secondly, an acknowledgement of people as the primary resource for a worthy understanding of their lives. They are the ones that live their lives. The more rapport found between the researcher and the subjects the better the quality of collaboration and, therefore, the chances of a better final product. A relationship should exist between the process of inquiry, its subjects and their knowledge. Albert Schweitzer (1969) describes this as “reverence for life”.

## 1.11 Main hypothesis

Exploitative relations within the human system, such as those manifested in tribalism, war, racial discrimination or colonialism, damage socio-cultural values of community, but with recognition and effort these may be regenerated through development work that emphasizes *individuality* and *respect for being* from the perspective of relational values between humans and between the human system and the natural system. This study proposes that aesthetic relational values endow humans with the capacity of “openness to others” that “prerequisite” (Arendt, 1970) without which humanity cannot hold together.

The main hypothesis in this study is that unless life-affirming relational values, such as compassion, are consciously recalled, elevated and used to model the lifestyle of societal leadership, inculcated in the young as early as possible, and applied by humans among themselves and in interaction with the non-human world, humanity will be unable to redesign its current future: the end of life as we know it through self-mutilation. Parallel to the expending of energies in efforts to achieve collaboration, transvergence among cultures and concomitant knowledges and disciplines, must be a focus on helping humanity to develop capabilities to appreciate and live with differences.

## 1.12 Description of chapters

Without some understanding of the primary forces that not only gave Western civilization its shape but set the tenor and quality of human to human and human to nature relationships, we are left with no basis for making sense of the present. The next chapter aims to provide this backdrop. It reviews Europe’s ancient past, and the cultural forces that propelled it, in order to trace the impact Western civilization had within itself and its natural and human environment.

The third chapter reviews the life, identity and self-consciousness of amaXhosa before their encounter with Western civilization. It traces this nation from their north-eastern African origins and the cultural unity among Africans on their mother continent. The aim is to reveal and grasp the general springboard of cultural values that informed Africa’s response to its encounter with Europe and the rest of the world.

The fourth chapter focuses on the specific ways that the colonial encounter impacted upon the lifestyle of amaXhosa and their cherished aesthetic values in their southern African setting, and

pays attention to the responses that were evinced from among them. The aim is to clarify the colonial conditions that have come to constitute the present challenges for sustainable development in post-1994 South Africa.

The fifth chapter describes the author's own research, which aimed at unearthing remnant traces of and the efficacy of aesthetic relational values as cherished and applied by individuals in their environment. It also uncovers evidence of the erosion of aesthetic values, and the demonstrable ways in which the scarcity of these values among the people of the Eastern Cape poses a real restraint to their own development, ensuring the persistence of poverty.

The sixth and final chapter sums up various implications of aesthetic relational values for the dimension of human development and its sustainability. It offers recommendations for the restoration, rejuvenation and application of aesthetic relational values, without which efforts at sustainable development are futile.

# **Chapter Two:**

## **The moulding of Europe before the Southern African colonial experience:**

### **A historical perspective**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Since ancient times humans have believed in their ability to achieve progress in whatever they set their minds to do. Kings, governors and army generals have gone to war for it, and clergymen, physicians and scientists have studied and learnt about it in order to make a difference in their societies. The pursuit has been not only about improving the material living conditions of societies but also about raising the intellectual and spiritual standards of individuals and communities for their well-being.

Before delving into the colonial encounter experienced by amaXhosa in the Eastern Cape, this chapter critically reviews some of the events and forces that contributed significantly to the production of the Western cultural mindset. Without such a purposeful and systematic reconstruction to inform the struggle and search for meaningful solutions to the development challenges confronting Africa, her people face the real possibility of conceiving their plight using unexamined terms and logic.

The colonial relationship from which the people of southern Africa are currently emerging was co-produced, for well over three centuries, with people from one particular continent, Europe. The production of the European people's past testifies graphically to a dynamic life pattern fashioned by the pursuit of wealth, health and prosperity, and an innate desire for perpetual continuous development.

Inheritances moulded by the past often get taken for granted, owing to a preoccupation with problems of the immediate; notwithstanding, the fullest understanding of the present hinges on the reflection of how it has evolved. This contextual grounding is of paramount importance, especially in the understanding of the present human development crises that face the entire globe. When those who hold them fail to reflect on and examine this inheritance, they become woefully unaware of the

influences that “set limits on what men and women can or cannot do at particular moments in history” (Roberts, 1996: 20).

Despite the acknowledgement by the middle 1990s of development and sustainability studies being concerned primarily with economic, political and ethical concerns pertaining to environmental problems, the important dynamic of human behaviour was noticeably neglected (Gardener & Stern, 1996).

Even in relation to “environmental concerns”, within which a more comprehensive definition of development has been sought, the economic “market logic” has become the leading director of human relationships. It determines the fate of humans, including their natural environment. Millions in South Africa and billions all over the globe have lost their individuality, independence and safety, to the coercive dominance of the “market”. Dragged in its train are dehumanized able-bodied men and women who have become enslaved and humiliated into soup kitchen dependants and street corner inhabitants. Over 2.5 billion of the world’s inhabitants endure a crushing struggle for a livelihood (World Bank, 2006).

The need to reflect on just how this state has evolved is obvious. This urge must be heeded or humanity faces the peril of perpetuating the crisis. We cannot understand human development without reflecting on our inheritance. This study therefore reaches back into antiquity in search of clues, trends and tendencies that moulded the foundations of Western people and subsequently characterized relations between them and their immediate neighbours, the Near Eastern people, both of whom, later, came to influence the peoples of Africa.

This historical review traces and examines the development of the meta-structural foundations of Europe. This meta-structure encompasses culture in its inclusive sense, that is, “every possible aspect of the life of a people, ... it includes the whole of knowledge, the arts, science, technology, religions, morality, ritual, politics, even etiquette and fashions” (Abrahams, 1962: 12).

Evidence of the patterns, trends and tendencies that characterized relationships of one nation with others is gathered from widely disparate sources. The review relies mostly on archeological data, juxtaposed with biblical records whose sources are as far apart as the Hebrew prophets Isaiah and Daniel, more specifically, annals that reflect the thoughts, beliefs and behaviour of the people that shaped early Europe and the Near East. In the latter I include the Egyptians who, owing to the

dictates of geography, found it more convenient to relate to the Near East than with the rest of Africa.

This chapter is the first step in this work towards initiating a reflection on how might be put in place by the people of Africa the institutional conditions, not merely for responding, counteractively, to whatever in the Western humanism has humiliated them, but for the sustenance of humanity at large, irrespective of the diversity of people. The real danger that faces the African continent is the uncritical and indiscriminate legitimating of Eurocentrism (Muthyala, 2001; Dirlik, in Muthyala, 2001; Hallward, 2007) and the inevitable conception of development in terms counter-beneficial to the prosperity of humanity.

## **2.2 The foundations of modern Western consciousness**

Two sources have been acknowledged as sharing “a primacy in shaping” Western identity, thought and writing: Greek literature and the Christian Bible (Roberts, 1996). Einstein observed that it was “that spirit expressed in the Bible and in Christianity which made possible the rise of civilization in Central and Northern Europe” (1954: 199).

Greek thought and culture hinged on the works of their poets. The most influential and revered amongst these was Homer, whose works, the *Illiad* and the *Odyssey*, provided information about legendary history and characters. In that history, Apollo and Dionysus were two of the Greek deities that the Egyptians also claimed as their own rulers (Burn, 1972: 187). Edward Gibbon, the philosopher and historian of the ancient Roman empire, writing in the eighteenth century, shed abundant light on this issue of the similarity of the gods worshipped in these empires. In *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* he observed that “the nations were less attentive to the difference than to the resemblance of their religious worship”; “the Greek, the Roman and the barbarian [who included the Gauls, Spaniards and the thirty tribes of Britain] adored the same deities” (1981: 52).

In these polytheist cultures, it was believed that the gods actually lived on earth amongst them and behaved in human ways (Burn, 1972: 187; Roberts, 1996: 35). Gibbon explained that “sages and heroes who had lived or who had died for the benefit of their country were exalted to a state of power and immortality ... it was universally confessed that they deserved, if not adoration, at least the reverence, of all mankind” (1981: 51). Homer’s writings came to be respected as infallible

religious texts that provided Greeks with models of behaviour. The books were authoritative narratives and “the staple” of Greek education. The magnitude of these is best illustrated by the fact that the “Great” Hellene soldier and conqueror, Alexander, who believed the god “Achilles was his ancestor”, “carried with him on his campaigns a treasured copy of Homer” (Roberts, 1996: 41).

From the travels, observations and writings of Herodotus, whose authority was “the Egyptians themselves”, it is known that the Ionians (Greeks) had very close and intimate contact with ancient Egypt. “They were the first foreigners to live in Egypt, and after their original settlement there, began regular intercourse with the Egyptians, so that we have accurate knowledge of Egyptian history from the time of Psammetichus [660–529 BC]” (Burn, 1972: 188).

This historical review, therefore, reaches back to the third millennium BC. It begins with the ancient kingdom of Egypt at around 2900 BC, whose lifestyle and world outlook left well-nigh ineradicable traces on the minds of Western and Near Eastern people.

## **2.3 Ancient Egyptian relations with other nations**

From the First Dynasty of the old Egyptian kingdom under Semerchet (about 2950 BC), we have records of Egyptian interests and their relations with Asia and the Sinai region. Records from the Fourth Dynasty under Khufu (2600 BC) “show scenes” of “kneeling figures” being clubbed “accompanied by the following legends: ‘Snerfu, the great god, ... subjugating foreign countries; Khnum-Khufu, the great god, smiting the nomads of Asia’ ” (Pritchard, 1969: 227). From their conquests the Egyptians brought back shiploads of cedar logs to be used in shipbuilding and in royal palaces.

Egyptian interests in Sinai revolved around mining. The Sinai peninsula had copper and turquoise, which were important in advancing Egyptian culture and adornment. These materials “provided a reason for external conquest” and development of the empire. Egyptians believed that their gods “dispatched” their armies “to this mining area”; “their glory” directed them to the area (Pritchard, 1969:227).

The Egyptians were polytheists. The most prominent among their deities was Re (Ra), the sun-god, “*who came into being by himself*”, “*the father of the gods*” (Pritchard, 1969: 4&8).

According to Egyptian myth, Re “made mankind and created the beasts, ... made herbage and gave life to cattle”. He is born every day; “rises in the eastern horizon and goes to rest in the western horizon”. Other gods who ruled under Re included the goddess Isis; Seth, the father of Isis; Thoth, the moon-god; Osiris, the god of the dead; Horus, the son of Osiris; and “Zeus” and “Heracles from time immemorial” (Burn, 1972: 146 – 147).

These deities were a major influence on the quality of the relations the Egyptians had with other nations and among themselves. In this regard the behaviour of the following Egyptian rulers is informative.

### **2.3.1 Thut-mose III: A taker from whom no-one can take (1490–1436 BC)**

Thut-mose III was a conquering pharaoh who led campaigns into Asia over twenty years. From his annals it is recorded that he led these military campaigns “to kill treacherous ones; ... his attacks had been effected in valor and victory so that he caused Egypt to be in its condition as (it was)” when it was first created by Re. “Each individual campaign” according to records carved in the Egyptian temple of Karnak, “together with the booty ... and the dues of every foreign country” the king believed, were ordered and “given to him” by “his father” Re (Pritchard, 1969: 235).

The booty brought back from the “enemies whom Re abominates” included “everything, with male and female slaves, copper, lead, emery, and every good thing”. These were brought back for the worship of Re “with joy of heart”. “Many troops” from the conquered armies are described as coming to the Egyptian king “with bowed head, seeking his breath of life. He is a king, ... a taker, from whom no one can take”. Indeed this “taker” testified in his own words: “Every year is hewed for me in Djahi genuine cedar of Lebanon, which is brought to the court, for life, prosperity, and health! Timber comes to Egypt for me, ... I have not given any of it to the Asiatics for it is a wood which he (my father Amon-Re) loves” (Pritchard, 1969: 234 – 240).

### **2.3.2 Amen-hotep II (1447–1421 B.C.)**

Thut-mose III was followed by his son Amen-hotep II in about 1447 BC. He believed himself to have been “given life forever” by the god Re. In Memphis, Egypt, an ancient text was discovered in which his looting campaigns against the people of Asia are graphically described. With Re as his “magical protection, guarding the Ruler”, he went forth by chariot against many a town and city and

“carried off their princes ... living Asiatics ... hands , horses ... chariots ... weapons of warfare, every able-bodied man, ... their children, their wives and all their property” (Pritchard, 1969: 247).

### **2.3.3 Ramses II (1301–1234 BC)**

Ramses is the Pharaoh that reigned during the period when the Israelites were in bondage in Egypt. As a result of a famine that ravaged the land of Canaan, the patriarch Jacob and his entire household had migrated and settled in Egypt, where they became known, as recorded in the “twelfth century Egyptian papyri”, as the “Apiru [Hebrew]” (Baron, 1962: 37). After an initial period of peaceful stay, the Apiru were enslaved by Pharaoh Ramses II.

Believing himself to be favoured by his father Re “forever”, this pharaoh conducted campaigns in which “great princes of every land heard of the mysterious qualities of his majesty” and were “dismayed and afraid and the terror of his majesty was in their hearts while they lauded his glory and his beautiful face ... making offering to him with their children, ... in order to appease the heart of the Bull and to beg peace from him. ... They despoiled themselves of their own goods, and being charged with their annual dues, with their children at the head of their tribute, in praise and homage to his name, Ramses II. So every foreign country was in humility under the feet of this good god” (Pritchard, 1969: 257).

### **2.3.4 Ramses III (about 1195–1164 BC)**

By the time of Ramses III the Egyptian Empire had amassed enormous wealth, all crammed into the temples of their gods. “One authority”, according to Pritchard (1969: 260), “estimated that at the close of this pharaoh’s reign the temples owned about 20% of the population of Egypt as serfs and about 30% of the arable land”.

There is evidence of Egypt extending their gods to foreign lands at this time. “I built for thee”, said Ramses, referring to the god Amon-Re, “a mysterious house in the land of Djahi ... in Canaan. Foreigners ... came to it bearing their tribute before it according as it is divine” (Pritchard, 1969: 261).

Ramses III further described how he honoured Amon-Re as follows: “I fashioned thy august cult image ... I filled its house with male and female slaves whom I had carried from the lands of the

Asiatics, Syrians and Negroes of the captivity of his majesty – life, prosperity, health!” (Pritchard 1969: 262).

### **2.3.5 Sheshonk I (945–924 BC)**

This pharaoh, during whose reign Egyptian dominance was in decline, is “the Shishank of the Old Testament”, according to Pritchard (1969: 263). Though no narrative of his campaigns exists, his “inscriptions” make “vague and generalized” reference to “victories over the ‘Asiatics of distant foreign countries’ ”.

The biblical record gives more detailed accounts of his campaigns in Palestine. The second book of Chronicles reveals that “Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king’s house” (12: 9). This is not out of character with the trend we have been observing above. In this particular story, we hear that “he took everything. He also carried away the gold shields which Solomon had made” (12: 9).

### **2.3.6 Egyptian social philosophy, life and influence**

Texts thought to date from around the third millennium BC give insight into Egyptian wisdom and popular common social instructions “which were directive for a successful life” (Pritchard, 1969: 412). Egyptians believed in the instruction that “there is no one born wise”, that wisdom came from ancestors and gods, that if an obedient son was a follower of the god Horus all would be well with him.

Though much instruction was to be found, it seems to have been designed to harmonize internal Egyptian relations. Kings, for example, were instructed: “quiet the weeper, do not oppress the widow, supplant no man in the property of his father, ... be on thy guard [not] to punish wrongfully. Do not slaughter: it is of no advantage to thee, ... make monuments for the gods and ... visit the temples”. Yet they were instructed – as exemplified in their relations with Asiatics – to despise non-Egyptians (Pritchard, 1969: 416). As Herodotus observed: “No Egyptian, man or woman, will kiss a Greek” (Burn, 1972: 145).

Herodotus also noted that society founded on differentiation, division of labour and specialization – the cultural heritage that descended on Western Europe from Greek civilization – occurred first in ancient Egypt.

*Egyptians were the first to assign each month and each day to a particular deity.* (Burn, 1972: 159)

*The practice of medicine they split up into separate parts, each doctor being responsible for the treatment of only one disease. There are, in consequence, innumerable doctors, some specializing in diseases of the eyes, others of the head, others of the teeth, others of the stomach, and so on.* (p.160)

Egyptians were divided into seven classes named after their occupations:

*priests, warriors, cowherds, swineherds, tradesmen, interpreters and pilots. The warrior class ... none of whom touch trade of any kind ... have a purely military education, ... are forbidden to follow any trade or craft, and have exclusively military training, son following father.* (p.195)

In a mid-eighteenth century text the division of labour is well articulated even among slaves serving in Egyptian households.

*The king's servant ... houseman; the maidservant ... hairdresser; the Asiatic, ... cook; the Asiatic woman, Rehui, ... warper of cloth; the Asiatic woman, ... weaver of linen; the maidservant, Senaib's daughter, ... gardener.* (Pritchard, 1969: 553)

This character of Egyptian life is attested to by the biblical record about Joseph. In prison Joseph, according to the book of Genesis became acquainted with Pharaoh's cup-bearer and baker.

Herodotus speaks of Egyptians as having practised prognostic judgement and inductive reasoning, the bases of scientific enquiry. He observed that “they keep written records of the observed results of any unusual phenomenon, so that they come to expect a similar consequence to follow a similar occurrence in the future” (Burn, 1972: 159). He had no doubts about the influence of ancient Egypt – “the most learned of any nation of which I have had experience” – on Greek thought and consciousness. He wrote, for example, that: “I could not say for certain whether the Greeks got their ideas about trade, *like so much else*, from Egypt or not”. “I have observed”, he noted, that “all

Greeks have adopted” Egyptian attitudes such as reckoning “craftsmen and their descendants as lower in the social scale” (p. 196).

Regarding the Egyptian justice system, we have records about the Vizier’s office. The Vizier was a position just below that of the king. What is believed to be an autobiography of one of them, Rekh-mi-Re, reads: “I was a noble, the second of the king, ... I was summoned into the presence of the good god Thut-mose III ... he charged me very much: ‘Gather thyself together; be strong in action; do not flag’ ” (Pritchard, 1969: 213).

One of the functions of the Vizier is clearly articulated in Rekh-mi-Re’s own words: “He gave me a tribunal under my authority, and there was none therein who could oppose me, ... I raised justice to the height of heaven, ... when I judged the petitioner I was not partial. I did not turn my brow because of reward.” The Vizier continues elsewhere to explain the gravity of this position: “Then his majesty said to me: ‘Look thou to this office of vizier ... it is the support of the entire land. ... Therefore see to it for thyself that all things are done according to that which conforms to law and that all things are done in conformance to the precedent’ ” (Pritchard, 1969: 213).

The Egyptian justice system was undoubtedly structured, principle-centred – trial preceded condemnation – and legally based. The Vizier was assisted in deciding cases by other public officials. This passage illustrates a formal juristic system: “The regulations for the sitting of the Mayor and Vizier ... while holding hearings in the hall of the Vizier ... he shall sit upon a judgment-chair, ... a scepter at his hand, ... the Chiefs of Southern Tens on two sides in front of him, the Overseer of the Cabinet on his right hand, the Supervisor of Clients on his left hand, and the Scribe of the Vizier beside him”; and there was a well articulated court process that upheld procedural fairness: “Let one be heard after his fellow, not permitting the last to be heard before an earlier” (Pritchard, 1969: 215).

It is, however, the mercilessness of the entire system that gave it its ugliness. In one case where public officials – a Butler, a Scribe of the Archives, a Lieutenant of the Garrison and a Chief of Bailiffs – had “breached judicial behaviour by carousing with women who were under trial”, they were sentenced to “cutting off their noses and their ears”, for having “abandoned the good instruction” (Pritchard, 1969: 215). The Butler, for some unexplained reason, resorted to taking his own life; all of this done to appease pharaoh, the god who made the law.

In sum, what we have just observed are the earliest known origins of a plethora of sociological pathologies related to the polytheistic worship system of the Egyptians. Here we have seen the fundamentals of colonialism as it is grounded in the subjugation of “Others” and the plundering of their livelihoods for selfish gain. We have seen how the very society of Egyptians was polarized and dissected in terms of a multiplicity of professions and intellectual activities (disciplines), clearly pointing out that disciplinarity originated in a religious system that upheld social scaling and class division.

We shall see how, in the following sections pertaining to various civilizations, this culture has perpetuated itself in the various societies. Of particular interest is the realization that this culture has so pervaded and dogged humanity, it is still intact in various religions and intellectual perspectives, even as we enter the twenty-first century.

## **2.4 The Assyrian hegemony**

### **2.4.1 Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076 BC)**

During the decline of Egyptian dominance the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser arose, who referred to himself as “king of the world, king of Assyria, king of all the four rims of the earth, the courageous hero who lives (guided) by the trust-inspiring oracles given to him by Ashur and Ninurta, the great gods and his lords, (and who thus) overthrew all his enemies; son of Ashurreshishi, king of the world, king of Assyria” (Pritchard, 1969: 275).

The Assyrians also had polytheistic beliefs. Prominent among their gods were Ashur (Assur) or Shamash the sun god and Sin the moon god. Other gods among them included Anu, Adad, Ninurta, Bel, Nebo and Marduk (Pritchard, 1969: 275–289). The practice of subjugating and plundering other nations in the name of their gods continued under the Assyrian hegemony.

Tiglath-Pileser, for example, claimed: “At the command of my lord Ashur I was a conqueror ... I made bow to my feet 30 kings of the Nairi countries, I took hostages from them. I received as their tribute horses, broken to the yoke. I imposed upon them regular tribute and *tarmatu*-gifts”.

Attesting to a behaviour similar to what we have observed among the Egyptians, he continued: “I went to Lebanon. I cut ... timber of cedars for the temple of Anu and Adad, the great gods, my lords” (Pritchard, 1969: 275).

### **2.4.2 Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BC)**

On large pavement slabs in the temple of the god Ninurta, the annals of the Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal are inscribed.

Describing his plundering campaigns against other nations, he recorded: “ I departed ... and crossed the Euphrates ... I advanced towards Carchemish. There I received from himself the tribute of Sogora, the king of the Hittites, ... silver, ... gold, ... copper, ... his own furniture, beds of boxwood, ... also young females ... . The kings of all surrounding countries came to me, embraced my feet and I took hostages from them and they marched with me ... forming my vanguard. ... I conquered other towns ... defeating them in many bloody battles ... and burned down with fire; I caught survivors and impaled them on stakes in front of their towns” (Pritchard, 1969: 275).

### **2.4.3 Shalmaneser III (858–824 BC)**

This Assyrian ruler is the one described in the biblical second Book of Kings as part of the story of the Israelite king Hoshea who “reigned nine years” from Samaria.

In his own annals Shalmaneser described himself as follows:

*I am Shalmaneser, the legitimate king of the world, the king without rival, the only power within the four rims of the earth; overlord of all princes ... who has smashed all his enemies ... who shows no mercy in battle, the son of Ashurnairspal, king of the world, king of Assyria.*

*I marched against Akkad (Babylon), ... and inflicted defeat. At that time Ashur the great lord gave me the scepter necessary to rule the people, and I was acting (only) upon the trust-inspiring oracles given by Ashur, the great lord who loves me. (Pritchard, 1969: 276)*

The practice of looting and taking tribute is confirmed in the biblical record mentioned above. “Shalmanaser king of Assyria came up against him; and Hoshea became his vassal and paid him tribute money” (2 Kings 17: 3).

As recorded by Pritchard, Shalmaneser boasts as follows about another king of Israel: “The tribute of Jehu, son of Omri; I received from him silver, gold, a golden *saplu* – bowl, a golden vase with pointed bottom, ... and wooden *puruhtu*”.

*In the month of Aiaru, the 13th day, I departed from Nineveh; I crossed the Tigris, ... I stormed and conquered, I slew with the sword, ... pillars of skull I erected, ... I received tribute, ... silver, ... gold, large and small cattle, wine, ... I covered the wide plains with corpses, ... I dyed the mountains with blood like red wool.*

Believing, also, that his victories were attained through the gods, he wrote:

*At that time, I paid homage to the greatness of (all) the great gods and extolled for prosperity the heroic achievements of Ashur and Shamash, by fashioning a (sculptured) stela with myself as king (depicted on it). I wrote thereupon my heroic behaviour, my deeds in combat ... I marched unopposed throughout the wide seashore. I fashioned a stela with an image of myself upon it as overlord in order to make my name/fame last forever. (Pritchard, 1969: 276–281)*

#### **2.4.4 Tiglath-Pileser III (774–727 BC)**

Another Assyrian king that we hear of in the biblical record is Tiglath-Pileser III. It is evident from both his annals and the biblical record that this ruler took tribute from a host of nations that he subjugated: “I received tribute from Kushtashpi of Commagnene, Rezon of Damascus, Menahem of Samaria, Hiram of Tyre, Sibbitibili of Byblos (Babylon) and Zabibe the queen of Arabia, (to wit) gold, silver, tin, iron, ... horses, ... camels, female camels and their foals” (Pritchard, 1969: 283).

It is also evident that at least three kings of Judah, Jehoahaz, Azriau (Azaria) and Ahaz, were among those who paid tribute to him. Chapter sixteen of the second Book of Kings (v.7–8) reads: “So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, saying, ‘I am your servant and your son’. ... And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasuries of the king’s house, and sent it as a present to the king of Assyria.”

From his side Tiglath-Pileser recorded that “in the course of my campaign I received the tribute of the kings ... Azriau from Iuda [Judah] ... he heard about the approach of the massed armies of Ashur and was afraid ... I tore down, destroyed and burned down” (Pritchard, 1969: 282).

In the Book of Isaiah, chapter seven, more light is thrown regarding the circumstance under which Rezin the Syrian king and Peka the king in the northern kingdom of Israel were subjugated. These two kings had plotted to overthrow the southern kingdom of Judah which was under the reign of king Ahaz. It was then that Ahaz sought and received Tiglath-Pileser’s protection. In his annals the Assyrian king gives detail of how he brought both Ahaz’s enemies down: “I laid siege to and conquered Hadara, the inherited property of Rezon of Damascus, the place where he was born. I brought away as prisoners 800 of its inhabitants, ... I brought away 592 towns ... of the 16 districts of the country of Damascus I destroyed making them look like hills of ruined cities over which the flood had swept”. And regarding king Peka, Rezon’s ally, he notes: “Omri-land (the name he used for the northern Israeli kingdom) ... all its inhabitants and their possessions I led to Assyria. They overthrew their king Pekah and I placed Hoshea as king over them. I received from them 10 talents of gold, 1000 talents of silver as their tribute and brought them to Assyria” (Pritchard, 1969: 282). This proved a crippling blow to the northern Israeli kingdom.

The trend of subjugation and pillaging in the name of the gods was continued by Sargon III (721–705 BC). In his records we read that “The terror-inspiring of Ashur, my lord, overpowered [them], ... I conquered and sacked the towns Shihuhtu and Samaria, and all Israel. I caught, like a fish, the Greek (Ionians) who live (on islands) amidst the Western Sea” (Pritchard, 1969: 285).

#### **2.4.5 Sennacherib (704–681 BC)**

From *The Annals of Sennacherib* by Luckenbill (1924), we have another account of the god-directed trend of subjugation by one of ancient Assyria’s renowned merciless rulers. Sennacherib’s annals boast of such devotion to his gods that he tore out “the tongues of those whose slanderous mouths had uttered blasphemies against my god Ashur, ... fed corpses cut into small pieces to dogs, pigs, ... and ... fish of the ocean, ... and thus made quiet the hearts of the great gods, my lords” (Pritchard, 1969: 287–288).

The Second Book of Kings, chapter eighteen, records the conflict between king Hezekiah of Judah, the son of king Ahaz, and Sennacherib: “In the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, Sennacherib king

of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them”. In Sennacherib’s annals we read: “As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke, I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts and to the countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered them, ... I drove out of them 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, ... and considered them booty. Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage” (Pritchard, 1969: 288).

## 2.5 The Babylonian hegemony

### 2.5.1 Nabopolassar (625–605 BC)

For centuries in the Middle East many nations battled to escape the iron grip of oppression by Assyria. The struggle of the Chaldean people for relief from Assyrian domination was rewarded in 625 BC. Babylon “was to achieve its greatest fame” under king Nabopolassar (Oats, 1979: 127). Nabopolassar, formerly a governor in Babylon, rebelled and was assisted by Cyaxares the Mede, also known as Darius, in subverting the Assyrian empire (Smith, 1912).

These words, from C. J. Gadd’s *The newly discovered Babylonian chronicle*, describe Nabopolassar’s campaign against Assyria:

*Tenth year: In the month of Aiaru, Nabopolassar called up the army of Akkad and marched (upstream) on the embankment of the Euphrates. The people of the countries of Suhu and Hindanu did not fight against him, but deposited their tributes before him. In the month Abu, the twelfth day, he made an attack against the soldiers of Assyria and they fell back before him. A great defeat was thus inflicted upon Assyria and they took many of them prisoners.*  
(Pritchard, 1969: 303–304)

After the fall of Nineveh (the capital of Assyria), Babylon, having been for centuries the vassal of Assyria, arose. Nabopolassar succeeded in “establishing the wealthy and politically astute Chaldeans not only as successors to the Assyrians but briefly as the political power in Western Asia” (Oats, 1979: 127).

### 2.5.2 Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 BC)

Nebuchadnezzar, “a statesman and general of exceptional talents”, and “a builder of ambition and imagination” (Oats, 1979: 128), ruled from Babylon after Nabopolassar had defeated Assyria.

In his annals Nebuchadnezzar claims to have been “entrusted” and through the help of the god Marduk “my lord, I made Babylon to the foremost among all the countries and every human habitation; its name I have [elevated] to the [most worthy of] praise among the sacred cities ... the sanctuaries of my lords Nebo and Marduk”. To satisfy this god, the trend of plundering other nations is seen continuing through the Babylonian reign: “I cut through steep mountains, I split rocks, opened passages and [thus] I constructed a straight road for the [transport of the] cedars. I made the Arahtu float down and carry to Marduk, my king, mighty cedars, high and strong, of precious beauty and of excellent dark quality” (Pritchard, 1969: 307).

In words expressive of self-exaltation and the deep human yearning for immortality, Nebuchadnezzar prayed to his god that he be rewarded for all these efforts: “O Marduk, my lord, do remember my deeds as good deeds, may these my good deeds be always before your mind so that my walking ... may last to old age. May I remain always your legitimate governor, ... may my name be remembered in future days in a good sense, may my offspring rule forever over the blackheaded” (Pritchard, 1969: 307).

### 2.5.3 Nabonidus (555–539 BC)

Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by Nabonidus. This Babylonian king believed himself to have been occupied “daily (and) without interruption” “in the maintenance of the temples” of the gods:

*I brought in for them 100 talents and 21 minas of silver, ... annual offerings which come from tokens of homage, from the excessive abundance of the flat lands, the rich yield of the mountain regions, the incoming taxes of all inhabited regions, from tokens of esteem given by kings, from the vast treasures which the prince Marduk has entrusted to me, ... offerings for Bel, Nebo and Nergal, the great gods who love my rule and watch over my life. ... I brought to them sumptuous gifts. ... brought silver, gold and precious stones to Sin, Shamash and Ishtar.* (Pritchard, 1969: 310)

#### 2.5.4 Socio-political life in Babylon

As seen in the above quotations, Babylonians were also polytheists. Marduk, who according to Akkadian myth was “the Sun of the heavens”, was foremost amongst others – Sin, Shamash, Nebo, the same gods who were revered by the Assyrians.

The inter-human relationships that have been observed thus far were characterized by a belief in gods who entrusted to their worshippers the duty to pillage others and to bring to them the booty as tokens of their love. The Babylonians were steeped in such a culture, as demonstrated, especially in the life of Nabonidus, who “spent his entire reign of seventeen years in restoring the temples” of the gods of his country (Wellard, 1972: 182).

Other features of Babylonian society that were already evident in Egyptian society were the administration of law “in public courts rather than arbitrary interpretations behind closed doors” (Oats, 1979: 128), the division of labour and the stratification of society. Hammurabi, the sixth of eleven kings in the Old Babylonian Dynasty, enacted a lawcode which was discovered by a French archeologist in the winter of 1901–1902 and carried to Paris (Pritchard, 1969: 164). In the prologue of this code Hammurabi wrote that Babylonians “established law and justice in the language of the land, thereby promoting the welfare of the people” (Pritchard, 1969: 165).

Hammurabi’s lawcode distinguished between three distinct groups in society, regulating relations between these. There was the *awellum*, the upper class of men, “superior to others by reason of” birth, ability and wealth. They conserved law, order and tradition; consisting of officials from the king to public officials like magistrates, they were effectively the ruling class. The *mushkenum* were the second class, the bourgeois or burghers; this was the business class consisting of “merchants, professional men and skilled artisans”. The third and lowest class were known as *wardum*, “slaves who worked for wages” (Pritchard, 1969: 165).

The lawcode regulated the class structure. For example any particular offence committed against a member of the upper class had more dire consequences than if it was inflicted on a member of a lower class. The following clauses illustrate this structured inequality in society.

*204: If a commoner has struck the cheek of another commoner, he shall pay ten shekels of silver.*

*205: If a seignior's slave has struck the cheek of a member of the aristocracy, they shall cut off his ear.*

*206: If a seignior has struck another seignior in brawl and has inflicted an injury on him, that seignior shall swear, "I did not strike him deliberately", and he shall also pay for the physician.*

*207: If he has died because of his blow, he shall swear (as before), and if it was a member of the aristocracy, he shall pay one-half mina of silver.*

*208: If it was a member of the commonality, he shall pay one-third mina of silver.*

(Pritchard, 1969: 175)

Hammurabbi, as the epilogue to the code indicates, claimed that he had "set up" these laws with the ability that the god Marduk had given him and because the god had committed to him to be a shepherd of the people.

With Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, the dominion of the kingdom of Babylon came to an end. This was brought about by king Darius, the very Mede that had assisted Nabopolassar to defeat the Assyrians. According to the biblical record, by this time the southern kingdom of Judah had been brought to its knees. In 606 BC Jerusalem was invaded by Nebuchadnezzar and led its inhabitants to Babylonian captivity during the reign of king Jehoiakim (II Chronicles, 36) (Smith, 1912: 50).

## **2.6 The Persians**

### **2.6.1 Cyrus (555–529)**

The domination of the Medes over Babylon was effected by Cyrus, a son born out of wedlock to Mandane, the daughter of the Median king Astyages, and a Persian called Cambyses (Burn, 1972: 85). Cyrus himself identified his father as Cambyses: "I am Cyrus, king of the world, great king, ... son of Cambyses".

"He grew up to be the bravest and most popular young man in Persia" (Burn, 1972: 92). "All the inhabitants of Babylon as well as of the entire country of Sumer and Akkad, princes and governors bowed to him and kissed his feet, ... and they worshipped his very name (Pritchard, 1969: 316).

It is apparent, from his own annals, that Cyrus was conquered by the Babylonian culture. He adopted and worshipped their gods: “I am Cyrus, king of the world, ... whose rule Bel and Nebo love, ... Marduk, the great lord, was well pleased with my deeds. ... All the kings of the entire world from the upper to the lower sea ... brought their heavy tributes and kissed my feet in Babylon. ... I resettled upon the command of Marduk, the great lord, all of the gods of Sumer and Akkad whom Nabonidus has brought into Babylon to the anger of the lord of the gods, unharmed in their former chapels, the places which make them happy. ... I (also) gathered all their (former) inhabitants and returned (to them) their habitations. ... May all the gods whom I have resettled in their sacred cities ask daily Bel and Nebo for a long life for me, and may they recommend me to him, to Marduk” (Pritchard, 1969: 316).

Amongst those inhabitants returned by Cyrus to their habitations, and whose places of worship he restored, were the Jews. In both the Median and Persian occupations of Babylon they were still held in bondage in that city. This is attested to in the biblical book of the Jewish prophet Daniel, from chapter 5.

Remarkably, the Jewish prophet Isaiah predicted the resettlement of the Jews and the restoration of their worship, though he never lived to witness the Babylonian captivity himself. Chapters 44 and 45 of the book of Isaiah refer to Cyrus performing this function.

The biblical book of Ezra (1: 2) actually quotes Cyrus: “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: ‘All the kingdoms of the earth the Lord God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah’ ”.

Verse 7 of the same chapter notes that even Cyrus could not escape the practice of taking the wealth of others to please his own gods: “King Cyrus also brought out the articles of the house of the Lord which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and put in the temple of his gods”.

### **2.6.2 Persian customs**

In *The Histories*, Herodotus has provided a glimpse of the customs of the polytheistic ancient Persians: “The erection of statues, temples and altars is not an accepted practice among them, and anyone who does such a thing is considered a fool. ... Zeus, in their system, is the whole circle of

the heavens and they sacrifice to him from the top of the mountains. They worship the sun, moon, and earth, fire, water, and winds, which are their only original deities” (Burn, 1972: 96).

Persians also had rigid social stratification. Herodotus observed that “when Persians meet in the streets one can always tell by their mode of greeting whether or not they are of the same rank; for they so not speak but kiss – their equals upon the mouth, those somewhat superior on the cheeks. A man of greatly inferior rank prostrates himself in profound reverence” (Burn, 1972: 97).

From the following observation it can be seen that their attitude to and relationship with other nations was not always cordial: “After their own nation they hold their nearest neighbours most in honour, then the nearest but one – and so on, their respect decreasing as the distance grows, and the most remote being the most despised. Themselves they consider in every way superior to everyone else in the world” (Burn, 1972: 97).

## **2.7 The Greeks**

What has emerged so far is a pattern of campaigns conducted by the mighty under the enabling power of their gods. The fear and terror inflicted on others, the destruction, the material and human booty taken, the tributes imposed, were all motivated by a spirit and desire marked by greed, power mongering and self-interest under the notion that it all would please and appease the multiplicity of gods invented in their own imagination. In the Grecian socio-political economy this pattern and tendency deepens within a framework of “foundation oracles” (Price, 1999).

In Ancient Greek societies oracles were sacred places or advice believed to be handed to the people by the gods. Oracles invested individuals with religious authority to act on particular matters. Among these, the Delphi oracle was “regarded in antiquity as the most prominent authority by far in matters of colonization”. It formed part of the so-called foundation oracles, believed to have been directed by the god Apollo as early as the eighth century BC. These foundation oracles “usually indicated the need to colonize the prospective site, and the founder”, known as the “oikist” (Malkin, 1987: 87–88).

The “motif” of these oracles was that of “supplying justification and sanction” for the colonization of others. For example, colonies such as “Satyrion and Taras [were] explicitly said to be a gift from the god, ... Paleus says of his son that he raised him ‘to be a plague to the Trojans’ ”. The oracles

created the impression of “a divinely justified and inspired war, with the god personally at the side of the leader” (Malkin, 1987: 51).

Polytheism had a strong grip on its worshippers. There has been an assertion that Greeks in the “second century had 365 gods” (Price, 1999). According to Herodotus, “Homer and Hesiod are the poets who composed our theogonies and described the gods for us, giving them all their appropriate titles, offices and powers” (Burn, 1972: 151). Herodotus asserts that Greek ceremonies and festivals were of Egyptian origin, and found out through enquiry that “the names of all the gods came to Greece from Egypt, ... for the names of all the gods have been known in Egypt from the beginning of time, with the exception ... of Poseidon (whom “they learnt from the Libyans”) and the Dioscuri – and also of Hera, Hestia, Themis, the Graces, and the Nereids” (Burn, 1972: 149 – 150).

The most prominent among the Greek gods were the “twelve Olympians”: Zeus (the “father of gods and men”, whom Egyptians called Amun); Hera (the sister-wife of Zeus); and the rest his siblings or children: Athena; Apollo; Artemis, Poseidon; Hermes; Hephaistos; Ares; Demeter; and Dionysos.

All these gods, according to Greek mythology, were related and lived together on Mount Olympos. The relationships among them, as were those among Egyptian gods, were driven by fear as the dominant motive. Competition and conflicts defined the relationships, with parents and children jostling for power and control. Kronos, the father of Zeus, for example, “swallowed his own children for fear of being overthrown by one of them”. Had it not been for Rhea, his wife, who “gave birth secretly to Zeus on Crete”, the god Zeus would never have survived (Price, 1999: 16). Little wonder then that when he was grown Zeus threw his father into captivity.

Zeus himself, according to Kerényi (1958: 21), fell into conflict with his mighty sister and brother, Hera and Poseidon. His own children, according to a belief held by Athenians, became locked in a contest for the control of Athens, a contest eventually won by Athena.

Greek religion had a definitive effect on Greek society. Belief in the gods was the bedrock (the substratum) of Greek culture and society. Greek society was organized on the basis of their beliefs and worship. Reforms, whether social or political, including citizenship, were decided on by the religious oracles. Though belonging to many tribes and separated by large distances in the colonies, their identity centered on this one issue: the worship of Greek gods. Before these gods they stood

religiously – used here in the sense of giving the highest honour and respect. It was not a “value additional to” their cultural good “but the most profound revelation” of their cultural peculiarity, their true selves; it was regarded as “the infinite cause of their particular genius” (Kerenyi, 1962: 12–14).

To these gods was ascribed, by Greek philosophers such as Aristotle, “the joy of seeing and viewing. When the Homeric gods touched our world by their divine radiance knowledge in our existence was created”. This is why the Greeks “define their piety as *episteme*, ‘science’ ... true knowledge, ... of which only the gods are really capable, ... and the one who possesses this knowledge is himself divine, is god, is Zeus” (Kerenyi, 1962: 147). A perfect intellectual reflection of that which exists is not possible without the seeing, the *noein* of Zeus.

Seeing the gods face to face was one of two points of intensity in the life of the Greek. The yearning to see became the most compelling motive, hence the art which gave the portraits of Greek gods a degree of liveliness to entice human worship. The worship of gods in their visible appearance in human form, therefore, came to characterize Greek religion.

The other point of intensity was seeing like the gods; anyone having such a vision could with the same right exclaim *theos*. It is believed that such moments were reached as a matter of fact by religious Greeks and by the Greek philosophers, hence the borrowing by philosophers of the word *theoria* from the Greek religion. In Plato’s Republic, Socrates describes a ceremonial visit to see a deity. From this visit Socrates returns from a *theoria*.

This is the world in which prominent Greek philosophers lived. “Socrates and Plato” in particular, notes Kerenyi, “lived in this religious experience”. So did Aristotle “as his *Metaphysics* testify” (1962: 147).

By the first century AD there is evidence that the Greeks had not outgrown mythology, despite the growth of rational thought among them. In the confrontation depicted in the biblical Book of Acts when Paul preached the name of Christ among the Greeks in the theatre at Ephesus, the Ephesians shouted him down, chanting “Great is Artemis (Diana) of the Ephesians” (19: 28). Even in the second century, observes Price (1999: 19), Greeks had not outgrown mythology. From the third to the sixth century, Christians and emperors such as Constantine who were “converted” to Christianity, were coercing Greeks to abandon belief in their “pagan” deities. In the year AD 386

the temple of Zeus was destroyed by Christians at Apamea, Syria, by the local Christian bishop “with the help of troops” provided by the state. Many Greek communities and intellectuals like Zosimus were still committed to traditional Greek gods. Up to the ninth century, the need to effect “mass conversions” of Greeks to Christianity was real (Price, 1999: 171).

### **2.7.1 The last years of the Greek empire**

In 335 BC the last of the Persian kings, Darius Codomanus, came upon the throne. In the battle of Arbela, 331 BC, Alexander, at the head of Greek soldiers, “dismounted” Codomanus from his throne and, according to Prideaux, “became absolute lord of the Persian empire”, his dominion including “the greater portion of the known habitable world” (in Smith, 1912: 57). Alexander, who believed the god “Achilles was his ancestor”, “carried with him on his campaigns a treasured copy of Homer” (Roberts, 1996: 41).

Alexander died at the very young age of thirty-two from “drunken debauchery” (Smith, 1912: 248). Within a few years “all his posterity had fallen victim to the jealousy and ambition of his leading generals”. True to the fashion in which their gods treated their own heirs, “not one of the race of Alexander” ... “was left to breathe”.

The unity of the Grecian Empire did not last long after Alexander’s death. “It took forty years or so of fighting before the lands of the former empire settled down into a number of kingdoms” (Roberts, 1996: 42). It was divided into colonies among his four leading generals: “Cassander had Macedonia and Greece in the west; Lysimachus had Thrace and the parts of Asia on the Hellespont and Bosphorus in the north; Ptolemy received Egypt, Lydia, Arabia, Palestine, and Coele-Syria in the south; and Selencus had Syria and all the rest of Alexander’s dominions in the east” (Rollin in Smith, 1912: 131).

From the era of these four generals, whose territories were later ruled by kings, revolts within and between Greek kingdoms became commonplace. Ptolemy in the kingdom of Egypt, for example, lived under threat from the kingdom of Syria under Antiochus. The shaky peace they had entered into after a bloody battle was broken by Antiochus soon after the death of Ptolemy. He then entered into a treaty with Philip, king of Macedonia, against Egypt, expecting to have an easy victory over the infant king Philopater, who was destined to succeed his father Ptolemy, and divide the Egyptian kingdom between themselves.

## 2.8 The Romans

While the Greek kingdoms and their numerous colonies were destabilized by incessant rebellion, “far away on the banks of the Tiber, a new power had been nourishing itself with ambitious projects and dark designs. Small and weak at first, it grew with marvelous rapidity in strength and vigor” (Smith, 1912: 256).

Rome interfered in the hardship that Egypt was experiencing under Syria and Macedonia. She determined to protect Egypt from the ruin that was planned by Philip and Antiochus. In his *Ancient History*, Rollin observes “While they were meditating to dispossess a weak and helpless infant of his kingdom by piecemeal, Providence raised up the Romans against them, who entirely subverted the kingdoms of Philip and Antiochus, and reduced their successors to almost as great calamities as those with which they intended to crush the infant king” (in Smith, 1912: 256–257). This was 200 BC.

By 51 BC Rome, under the reign of Julius Caesar, had entered “into and absorbed the whole of the kingdom of Alexander” (Smith, 1912: 262). According to Roberts, this young politician who had been chosen as consul took command of the Roman army in transalpine Gaul and destroyed the independence of its Celtic people. By the year 50 BC “all the northern coast of the Mediterranean, all France and the Low Countries, all Spain and Portugal, a substantial chunk of the southern Black Sea coast and much of modern Tunisia and Libya were under Roman rule” (Roberts, 1996: 51).

After almost all of Alexander’s former kingdom was subdued, only one part still remained, Egypt, which was ruled by a brother and sister pair, Ptolemy and Cleopatra, the children of Ptolemy Auletes (who died in 51 BC). During their childhood, the rivalry between Julius Caesar and Pompey broke out into open war. Pompey fled to Egypt, followed by Caesar, but was murdered by Ptolemy before Caesar arrived.

By the time Caesar arrived in Egypt, the country was in commotion as Ptolemy and his sister were engaged in internal strife. He disbanded their armies and decreed that they should rule jointly.

Caesar delayed his stay in Egypt, not to maintain the peace he had restored but owing to his enchantment with the seductive Cleopatra. Jealousy was aroused in some, who read in this a design to eventually make her the sole ruler in Egypt. “There was open sedition against Caesar.” He sent

for help into all neighbouring countries. Large armies were mobilized, among whom were 3 000 Jews from Idumea. Alexandria and all Egypt submitted to the victorious Caesar (Roberts, 1996: 51).

### **2.8.1 Internal strife**

After the Egyptian victory, Julius Caesar returned to Rome to be crowned “a dictator for life” (Roberts, 1996: 51), “absolute sovereign of the whole empire”. But for this man who had fought victoriously in over five hundred battles and killed over “one million one hundred and ninety-two thousand men, ... when he thought his pathway was smooth strewn with flowers, and when danger was supposed to be far away, ... the dagger of treachery suddenly struck him to the heart” (Smith, 1912: 265). His own countrymen, including Cassius and Brutus, motivated by fear of his power, conspired against him, piercing him “with twenty-three wounds” in 44 BC.

Julius Caesar was succeeded by his uncle, Augustus Caesar, who later added to his name that of Octavianus. He formed the so-called triumvirate with Mark Antony and Lepidus to avenge the death of his nephew. The triumvirate ruled for a while, during which time Mark Antony became the brother-in-law of Augustus by marrying his sister Octavia.

When Antony was sent to Egypt he also fell victim to the “arts and charms” of the beautiful Cleopatra, to the extent of rejecting his wife. In gratification of her desire for power Antony conquered several provinces and added these to her kingdom. In Josephus’ perspective, Cleopatra constantly persuaded Antony to “make an attempt upon everybody’s dominions; for she persuaded him to take those dominions away from their several princes, and bestow them upon her; and she had a mighty influence upon him, by reason of his being enslaved to her by his affections” (Whiston, 1980: 318). The Roman people took this as an affront. Augustus decided to attack him. In the battle of Ambrica, fought in 31 BC, Antony was overthrown. After the death of the other two members of the triumvirate Augustus became supreme ruler of Rome.

The Roman kingdom reached the pinnacle of its greatness and power during his rule. His was the glorious “Augustan Age”, the golden age of Roman history. It is during Augustus’ reign that an event took place of which Roberts (1996: 53) has this to say: “If historical importance is measured by impact on numbers of people, we can safely say that none in ancient times and perhaps none in the whole of human history is so important.” This was the birth of a Nazarene boy who would be called Joshua in Hebrew and Jesus in the then language of culture, Greek.

Augustus, who had been regarded as a god among the Romans, was succeeded towards the end of his life by the “vile” Tiberius, his stepson, who subdued the Germans and Varus and his legions. He never enjoyed the respect that Augustus did from his countrymen, “until his infamous and dissolute retirement”. It was during his reign that Jesus of Nazareth lived and died.

### **2.8.2 The destruction of Jerusalem, AD 70**

After Rome’s great victory and the subjugation of Egypt under Cleopatra, the next problem to take care of was Judea. Shortly after the death of the last of the Caesars, the next emperor, Nero (AD 64–68), unleashed a series of persecutions against the followers of Christ. By this time Christian teachings had spread to many parts of the Roman kingdom, starting in Jerusalem. [By the end “of the first century there were Christian congregations all over the Roman world” (Roberts, 1996: 63)].

Christians attracted the attention of the despotic Nero when some members of his own household were converted to Christianity. This excited his anger and from then on he sought for a pretext “to make the Christians the object of his merciless cruelty”. He had descended into cruelty to the point where he “murdered his own mother and his wife. There was no atrocity which he would not perpetrate [nor] vile act to which he would not stoop” (White, 1911: 485 – 488).

A fire broke out in Rome during Nero’s reign, destroying about half of the city. Rumour had it that it was caused by Nero himself. Nero countered this by acts of extreme generosity toward those who had been left homeless. Nevertheless the crime was blamed on him. It is then that he resorted to cunning by turning the accusation on Christians – “men, women and children were cruelly put to death” (White, 1911: 488).

In February AD 68, Nero appointed Vespasian, his best general, to command his armies against Jerusalem. Thirty thousand Jews were captured and enslaved and 15 000 were killed in Joppa and all of Galilee. In June of the same year, Nero committed suicide. In AD 70, after a siege that lasted five months, with the Jews refusing to surrender, Jerusalem fell, under the Roman general Titus. Eleven thousand Jews perished in Jerusalem and 97 000 were taken into captivity.

### 2.8.3 Roman culture

It has been noted above that the social and political life of the Greeks, their entire culture, including knowledge and science, was defined by their religion. The religion's "objective content" was the "Homeric world of gods" (Kerenyi, 1962: 141–144).

The impact of Greek culture upon their conquerors was profound. "Rome was herself subdued" by Greece (Gibbons, 1952: 62). We come now to a comparative look at some of the Greek and Roman gods, as observed by Tooke (1809).

Prominent among the gods worshipped by the Romans were the commonly-called Celestial gods.

#### *Jupiter, the first and father of gods*

Jupiter, the father and king of all gods and men, was believed to be the son of the god Saturn. He delivered Saturn from prison and thereafter dethroned him. Among his "very lewd and dishonourable exploits" he ruined his twin sister, deluding her with the promise of marriage; violated the chastity of the king of Argives; corrupted the wife of king Tyndarus; abused the wife of Lycus king of Thebes; deflowered Clytoris, a virgin of Thessalia.

#### *Other names of Jupiter*

The Greeks knew him as Ammon and the Assyrians and Babylonians called him Belus. Other nations knew him as Beel, Baal, Beelzebub and Beelzeman.

#### *Apollo, the beardless youth called the Sun*

According to Cicero, Apollo was the son of Jupiter. He was famous for his light to dispel darkness and to make manifest hidden truth, and for his knowledge of medicine and power of healing.

He invented music, poetry, physics and rhetoric. He was in love with Hyacinthus, a pretty boy whom he killed by misfortune; was passionately in love with Cyparissus, and another very pretty boy.

#### *Other names of Apollo*

The Latins called him Sol, because there is but one sun; some think that the Greeks called him Apollo for the same reason. The Egyptians called him Horus.

### *Mercury, the god of gain*

He is the son of Jupiter, his mother, Maia, the daughter of Atlas. His most prominent job was that of carrying the commands of Jupiter; hence his name as the Messenger of gods. He was the inventor of letters and excelled in speech. He is known to have invented the arts of buying, selling and trafficking. He is accounted the god of merchandise and of gain. He is the very prince and god of thieves. The very day he was born he stole cattle.

He had a son by his sister Venus and fell in love in the woods where he hunted with the nymph called Salmacis.

### *Other names of Mercury*

The Greeks called him Hermes because of his skill in interpreting or explaining.

### *Bacchus, the captain and emperor of drunkards*

He was born of Jupiter and his illicit lover, Semele.

He invented many useful things to mankind. He invented the use of wine; and first taught the art of planting the vine. He invented merchandise and found out navigation; he subdued India riding on an elephant.

### *Other names of Bacchus*

The Egyptians called him Osiris.

*The Celestial goddesses* were Juno, Vesta, Minerva or Pallas, Venus, Luna and Bellona.

What we observe here, therefore is an unbroken chain of an influence that is clearly traceable from, at least, ancient Egyptian modes of belief and worship that had a direct bearing on people's quality of social living.

## **2.8.4 Extent of Greek influence on Romans**

The Romans enthusiastically "took to Hellenist ways", notes Roberts (1996: 48). "The first Roman literature was translated Greek drama." "The education of the upper-class Roman boys ... incorporated the study of Greek classics, the literary expression of a culture they were now taught to

respect as the roots of their own” (Roberts, 1996: 48). Within the Roman empire, the Greek language became, in the words of Gibbon (1981: 62), “the natural idiom of science”. Clearly, Greece, whose standards were based on Egypt, set standards for Rome. So glaringly captivated by the Greek ways were the Romans that one of their poets remarked: “Captive Greece took her wild captor captive” (quoted in Roberts, 199: 73).

For a while it appeared that “the fiercest barbarians were united” under the “auspicious influence” of the Roman empire (Gibbon, 1981: 82); they “acknowledged the true principles of social life, laws, agriculture and science, which had been first invented by the wisdom of Athens”. Physics and astronomy, successfully cultivated by the Greeks, were diffused by the Romans. “Homer as well as Virgil were transcribed and studied on the banks of the Rhine and Danube.” Under this influence, the tribes of Britons “acquired taste for rhetoric”; “the authority of Plato and Aristotle ... reigned in ... schools” throughout the empire. Not “a single writer of original genius” was produced in the provinces of Rome, noted Gibbon (1981: 82); a uniform “artificial foreign education”, instead of “kindling a fire like their own, inspired only cold and servile imitations”, which became “the genius of Europe”.

### **Remnant Greek Influence on Hinduism**

The pattern of nature worship, particularly sun worship, which was prominent among ancient religions is thought to have come and gone in the world. In the global spread of the Sunday worship of the Christian Sabbath from the original seventh day, Saturday Sabbath whose influence is traceable to Emperor Constantin an “ardent votary” (Tolcott, 1914: 199) and worshipper of sun-gods under pagan religions, this form of worship is very prevalent to day.

Shelquist, a follower of Hazrat Inayat Khan, asserts:

*“The mythical religion of the ancient Greeks, the gods and goddesses of the old Egyptians, all are still found today in the religion of the Hindus. They count among their gods almost all the animals and birds known to man; and all the different aspects of life are explained in their myths, which teach man to see the divine Being in all. The great powers of the Almighty are pictured as various gods and goddesses, to whom special powers are attributed. Some worship these”* (undated).

Tyler Tolcott corroborates the fact of this influence in his classical work *The Lore of All Ages*:

“As we have seen Osiris, the Sun-God of the Egyptians, ... so in India we find Indra, the great solar deity of the Hindus, ...

“The worship of Indra constitutes the very essence of the Vedic religion, although he was by no means the only sun-God worshipped in India, for the Hindus worshipped the sun in its various aspects after the manner of of the Egyptians. The rising sun was called ‘Brahma’, on the meridian it was known as ‘Siva’, and in the west at nightfall, ‘Vishnu’” (1914: 162)

The sun is still invoked as it was in ages past, “as the Holy One, the Creator, and Preserver” and animal are sacrificed to him, notes Tolcott. “One of the earlier and most important Sun-Gods was Surya”, notes Tolcott (1914: 164). “Surya is the sun god, the solar deity. He is also the god of illumination and liberation” (Chinmoy, undated).

Nowhere is sun worship as conspicuously prevalent and predominant in religion today as it is in some eastern religions like Hinduism. According to Dasa (2001) the Kumbha Mela festival (which takes place in relation to the position of Jupiter and the sun) is attended by millions every twelve years in four cities in India, to bathe naked in rivers in what is the largest human gathering on the planet. The four places are where four demi-gods Brihaspati (Jupiter), Surya (the sun), Chandra (the moon), and Shani (Saturn) to whom the nectar was distributed by Mohini, a goddess, the most beautiful woman in the universe, had spilt nectar in a fight with demons who wanted to drink it. According to Knapp (undated), the significance of this festival is the belief that:

*“It offers the chance to transcend, to reach beyond the endless suffering of material existence and reincarnation and enter the level of liberation, salvation, and immortality. It promises to purify us in the spiritual sense, and merge or become connected with the Divine in all of us”.*

Inayat Hazrat Khan, born 1882 “traveled widely in America and Europe from 1910 until 1920, when he set up a residence in France.” He established schools and taught Hinduism and the “Suffi” message, widely. “His message was always aimed at unity, bringing together all of humanity, rising above the differences and distinctions that have separated us” (Shelquist, undated).

Sufism, fundamentally teaches that “there are no barriers of race, creed or religion, it is not a religion, but rather a way of life that enhances and fulfills every religion”. Inayat Khan himself is believed to have noted: "The Sufi sees the truth in every religion.", and when asked “what is the

difference between Sufism and other religions", he had replied, "The difference is that it casts away all differences" (Shelquist, undated).

Millions today, all over the world chant thousands of mantras (incantations),” but there is one mantra that stands out as most significant and that mantra is the Gayatri Mantra”. With hands folded, every morning worshippers look up into the sky as the sun comes up and chant:

*Aum bhur bhuvah svah*

*Tat savitur varenyam*

*Bhargo devasya dhimahi*

*Dhiyo yo nah prachodayat*

The meaning of this mantra is:

*"We contemplate on the most brilliant light of the Creator-deity, the sun god, to achieve inner understanding, to illumine our intelligence to stimulate our understanding, to transform our earthbound consciousness into the boundless Light of the inner Sun, the sun god." (Chinmoy, undated)*

## **2.8.5 Sun-worship in Japanese Shintoism and Buddhism**

In the spiritual world of Japan can be found a myriad deities within Shintoism and Buddhism. The two are reconciled by the claim by the priests that the Sun-Goddess is an incarnation of Buddha. There are, two deities which according to Tolcott, “occupy together the chief place in the Japanese pantheon”, these are the Sun-Goddess whose temple is in the province of Ise, and the “Goddess of Food”.

The worship of the sun god is so supreme in Japan the deity is regarded as “the heaven-enlightened great spirit, - below him stand all the lesser spirits through whom as mediators, guardians, and protectors, worship is paid by men” (Tolcott, 1914: 179).

### **2.8.6 In Peru and Mexico**

Sun worship temples are of impressive architecture all over the world. But Peruvians are believed to have by far the most impressive ones. Gold is used in abundance to beautify the structures. The sun god Inti, which stands for light, to Peruvians, is “the sovereign lord of the world, the king of heaven and earth” (Tolcott, 1914: 181).

Ancient Mexicans called themselves “Children of the Sun”. One of the rituals used to be the offering of meat and drink to the solar deity. To this day inhabitants when they go to the mass under Catholic Church worship, “throw a kiss to the sun before entering the church”.

### ***Sun-worship in contemporary England and Ireland***

On the twenty-first of June, annually there is a worship group known as the Druids that meet at a place called Stonehenge. At dawn the Druids observe the sun as it rises exactly over the center of a stone there, called “the Pointer”. Since their rites conform to those observed by sun worshippers of ancient Egypt, it is believed that the Druids have been directly influenced by colonists who introduced sun worship in Ireland and England (Tolcott, 1914: 199).

According to Susan Reed (2007), who classifies Druids as a neo-pagan, they exist in a great variety of groups with differing aims and practices. There are three known “Orders”, the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids.

From the information drawn from their online website (Druid Network) Druids regard themselves as “polytheists” (Raven, undated) who have a “sacred relationship with nature in all its forms” (Wilson, undated). Emma Restall Orr, the chief of the British Druid Order (2005) says that “Druidry, a native spirit of the British Isles” “is rooted in the land, its foundation is that of earth and ancestors, through which are honoured the powers of nature. In honouring the earth, the soil that feeds us, the sun that gives us light and warmth, the source of our water, the plants and animals, we honour our external environment. In honouring our ancestors and all who have made us what we are, we honour our internal environment. It is this that gives Pagan traditions a good deal of their potency”.

Some of their basic beliefs today are:

- A belief in a multiplicity of deities
- Holding festival to celebrate sun movements
- Crystals have a healing power
- Nature worship

Druids deny that they are a human sacrificing group as claimed in classical writings by Tacitus, Strabo and Ceaser. If this is so “what does it matter?, asks Megli (undated). The Druid Network does, however, confess to the following practices:

- Making offerings to the dead
- Dancing on tombs
- Walk in local woods at the dead of night
- Worship in groves of trees and plants where the oak and the mistletoe are the most sacred
- Making prayers and offerings to not only the dead of the land, but also of blood (Wilson, undated).

In language that reminds one of the tenets of transdisciplinarity Druids claim to play the following roles among people”

- “walk between worlds”
- “build bridges”
- work in “areas of conflict”
- “mediate between groups as counselor(s), peacemakers and judge(s) and
- “search for relationship with very different gods and concepts of deity” (Orr, 2005: 8).

### **2.8.7 The New Age movement**

One of the features of Druidry we have noted is the diversity of religious beliefs that Druidry is. Their festivals boast of bringing together Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Wiccans and Witches (Orr, 2005: 9). The New Age Movement is another, such movement.

Paul McGuire writes that one cannot understand the New Age Movement apart from understanding ancient myths like Hinduism and Buddhism. A look at its beliefs is enough to show that this is

indeed a heterogeneous movement that has brought together just about all of those considered above.

One of the spokesmen of the New Age Movement, Jeremy Tarcher is quoted as having said: “No one speaks for the entire New Age community”; that there is “no unanimity as to how to define it” (in Chandler, 1993: 26). What seems clear, however, is that it brings together those who want to live without boundaries. Its “bottom line can be stated in three words: ‘All is One’”. “Everything in its view is “one vast, interconnected process” in a “cosmos [that] is [a] pure, undifferentiated, universal energy” (Chandler, 1993: 27).

In its contemporary status, known also as “self-spirituality” and “new spirituality” the movement has brought together a multiplicity of worldviews and beliefs such as:

- Each person is a god
- Astrology is a method of telling the future
- Crystals are a source of healing
- After death we are reborn
- Tarot cards are a reliable base for life decisions
- All that exists is god
- Since all is God there are many paths to Him
- One can through guided imagery bring about own transformation and create one’s own reality
- A possible new world order and world government.

### **2.8.8 Wicca**

According to the self-proclaimed “professional Witch” A. J. Drew (2003: 9), “Wicca is a religion”. As such, it has many features but the most outstanding is the: “Symbolic Great Rite” of sex. This, therefore, make Wicca, as confirmed by Drew, “a fertility religion”, and all of its rituals are “designed around the natural life cycles” beginning from the conception of a child, life and death (2003: 34).

Many of Wicca’s features connect the religion with many ancient pagan beliefs and practices. For example, according to Drew (2003: 38), “as sex Magick” is a “sacred rite in the Wiccan religion”,

which should not be mistaken to mean that he advocates “that public ritual should include sex as a method of raising energy”, he, nevertheless, asserts that “Wicca in no way forbids such choices when all involved are consenting adults”. Indeed “such activities” public sex that is, though they be “in the smallest of minorities” are practiced “within our communities”, confesses Drew. Such were the ritual practices that took place, for example in the temple of the Roman goddess Diana. Indeed Drew agrees in A Wiccan Bible, that “Wicca explains the world in which we live very much as did the ancient Pagans” on which this “religion is based” (2003: 258).

Patti Wigington (undated) connects this Wiccan tradition with the ancient Egyptian worship grounded on Isis, the fertility goddess:

*“A number of contemporary Pagan traditions have adopted Isis as their patron Goddess and she is often found at the heart of Dianic Wiccan groups and other female-centered covens. Although modern Wiccan worship does not follow the same structure as the ancient Egyptian ceremonies that were once used to honor Isis, today's Isiac covens incorporate Egyptian lore and mythology into a Wiccan framework, bringing the knowledge and worship of Isis into a contemporary setting”.*

In addition to this observation, Wigington provides another connection between Wicca and the New Age movement:

*“...there are countless eclectic Wiccan groups throughout the world that have selected Isis as their deity. Because of the strength and power displayed by Isis, spiritual paths that honor her are popular among many Pagans and Wiccans who are seeking alternatives to traditional patriarchal religious structures. Worship of Isis has seen a resurgence as part of the "Goddess-oriented" spirituality that has become a notable part of the New Age movement”.*

Wiccan rites normally take place during days referred to as the “Sabbats” or “High Days, and Holy Days” which are “defined by the sun’s travel”. This feature brings Wicca to close affinity with Witchcraft as described in Geddes and Grosset (2005: 43). Witches attend similar rituals during days that are also called “Sabbats” in Witchcraft. In these “celebratory gathering(s) of witches, usually held in some remote location” what takes place is “feasting, drinking and dancing, often in

the nude, uninhibited, indiscriminate sexual encounters and worship of the devil” notes this publication.

### **Symbolism of Isis Worship**

The worship of Isis and sun-worship, which, also, grounds the Wiccan religion in nature worship is can today be identified easily through the symbolism that these religions use and communicate through. Again Wigington provides the connection:

*“Because Isis' name means, literally, "throne" in the Ancient Egyptian language, she is usually represented with a throne as a depiction of her power. She is often shown holding a lotus as well. After Isis was assimilated with Hathor, she was sometimes depicted with the twin horns of a cow on her head, with a solar disc between them.*

It is quite revealing to note that this very symbolism, of the “twin horns of a cow” with a “solar disc between them”, is, also, found today in both the Moslem and Catholic Church centers of worship. This very fact suggests strongly that though these religions may appear contradictory, they are, as a matter of fact, swayed by the same spirituality, and grounded in nature worship.

### **2.8.9 Freemasonry / Masonry**

The roots of this secretive form of worship may be hidden in obscurity. But Masonic writers agree that “our mysteries have affinities not only with the Egyptian rites and ceremonies, but with those of a good many other nations.” (Lawrence, 1912:196). We also now know from one of the foremost leaders of Freemasonry, Albert Pike’s assertions, (in his book on Freemasonry, *Morals and Dogma*) that:

*“Masonry is identical to the ancient mysteries”*

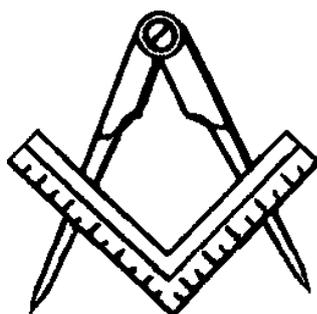
Explaining what is meant by the “Mysteries Albert Mackey (1869) noted:

*“Almost every country of the ancient world had its peculiar Mysteries, dedicated to the occult worship of some especial and favorite god, and to the inculcation of a secret doctrine, very different from that which was taught in the public ceremonial of devotion.”*

Mackey then cites a few examples:

*“... in Persia the Mysteries were dedicated to Mithras, or the Sun; in Egypt, to Isis and Osiris; in Greece, to Demeter; in Samothracia, to the gods Cabiri, the Mighty Ones; in Syria, to Dionysus; while in the more northern nations of Europe, such as Gaul and Britain, the initiations were dedicated to their peculiar deities, and were celebrated under the general name of the Druidical rites. But no matter where or how instituted, ... — the great object and design of the secret instruction were identical in all places, and the Mysteries constituted a school of religion in which the errors and absurdities of polytheism were revealed to the initiated. The candidate was taught that the multitudinous deities of the popular theology were but hidden symbols of the various attributes of the supreme god, — a spirit invisible and indivisible, — and that the soul, as an emanation from his essence, could "never see corruption," but must, after the death of the body, be raised to an eternal life”.*

Symbolism used in Freemasonry.

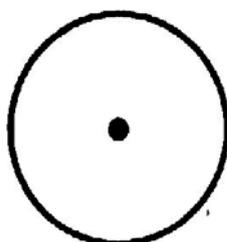


The traditional square and compass are the symbolism of Freemasonry. These represent the heterosexual sex act. Albert Pike has provided the meaning behind this symbol as follows:

*"The Compass, therefore, is the Hermetic Symbol of the Creative Deity, and the Square of the productive Earth or Universe." [Morals and Dogma , p. 850-1].*

The compass is considered the male sexual organ and the square as the female organ. Put together these depict the penetration of the female vulva by the male phallus, obviously a sexual act.

Dr Albert Mackey, a Freemason and writer draws attention and explains another Masonic symbol that of the circle and a point inside.



*“The point within a Circle is another symbol of great importance in Freemasonry, and commands peculiar attention in this connection with the ancient symbolism of the universe and the solar orb” (1869:850).*

Referring to a popular (exoteric) “trite and meager” teaching regarding the meaning of this symbolism Mackey notes:

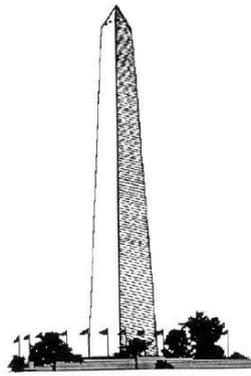
*“We are told that the point represents an individual brother, the circle the boundary line of his duty to God and man, and the two perpendicular parallel lines the patron saints of the order—St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist.*

*Now, this explanation, trite and meagre as it is, may do very well for the exoteric teaching of the order; but the question at this time is, not how it has been explained by modern lecturers and masonic system-makers, but what was the ancient interpretation of the symbol, and how should it be read as a sacred hieroglyphic in reference to the true philosophic system which constitutes the real essence and character of Freemasonry? (1869:850).*

Having dealt with the exoteric teaching Mackey then goes to the esoteric (real, inner meaning), the heart of the matter, and unequivocally connecting masonry with sun-worship.

*“Perfectly to understand this symbol, I must refer, as a preliminary matter, to the worship of the Phallus, a peculiar modification of sun-worship, which prevailed to a great extent among the nations of antiquity.*

*The Phallus was a sculptured representation of the membrum virile, or male organ of generation, and the worship of it is said to have originated in Egypt, where, after the murder of Osiris by Typhon, which is symbolically to be explained as the destruction or deprivation of the sun's light by night, Isis, his wife, or the symbol of nature, in the search for his mutilated body, is said to have found all the parts except the organs of generation, which myth is simply symbolic of the fact, that the sun having set, its fecundating and invigorating power had ceased.*



Today the phallus is no more prominently displayed than the obelisk of the Washington Monument, in the United States capital. It is known to have been the gift by Freemasons to President George Washington, a Freemason in his own right.

In the book of the 2 Kings 10:23-27 (King James Version / Amplified) we have evidence of the archaic nature of the worship of the obelisk as part of Baal worship which was detested by the Israeli God:

*"Then Jehu with Jehonadab son of Rechab went into the house of Baal and said to the worshippers of Baal, 'Search and see that there are here with you none of the servants of the Lord, but Baal worshippers only' ... As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, Jehu said to the guards and to the officers, 'Go in and slay them: let none of them escape'. And they smote them with the sword; and the guards or runners threw their bodies out and went into the inner dwelling of the house of Baal. They brought out the pillars, or the obelisks, of the house of Baal and burned them.*

Mackey also notes the wide prevalence of this system of worship among nations:

*"The Phallus, therefore, as the symbol of the male generative principle, was very universally venerated among the ancients, and that too as a religious rite, without the slightest reference to any impure or lascivious application. He is supposed, by some commentators, to be the god mentioned under the name of Baal-peor, in the Book of Numbers, as having been worshipped by the idolatrous Moabites. Among the eastern nations of India the same symbol was prevalent, under the name of "Lingam." But the Phallus or Lingam was a representation of the male principle only. To perfect the circle of generation it is necessary to advance one step farther. Accordingly we find in the Cteis of the Greeks, and the Yoni of the Indians, a symbol of the female generative principle, of co-*

*extensive prevalence with the Phallus. The Cteis was a circular and concave pedestal, or receptacle, on which the Phallus or column rested, and from the centre of which it sprang”.*

Mackey then concludes:

*“All the deities of pagan antiquity, however numerous they may be, can always be reduced to the two different forms of the generative principle—the active, or male, and the passive, or female. Hence the gods were always arranged in pairs, as Jupiter and Juno, Bacchus and Venus, Osiris and Isis. But the ancients went farther. Believing that the procreative and productive powers of nature might be conceived to exist in the same individual, they made the older of their deities hermaphrodite, and used the term ἀρρῆνοθέλυς, or man-virgin, to denote the union of the two sexes in the same divine person” (1869:856).*

Writing about Isis and Osiris, Albert Pike, himself said they were "the Active and Passive Principles of the Universe ... commonly symbolized by the generative parts of man and woman ..." [*Morals and Dogma* , p. 401]

#### *Other Masonic Symbols*

All Seeing Eye (Eye of Providence)



This is “an ancient symbol of the sun, and historically has been used as a symbol of omniscience. The idea of the solar eye comes to us from the Egyptians, who equated the eye with the deity [Osiris](#); the human eye in its ability to perceive light was viewed as a miniature sun.

The use of the eye emblem to represent God was quite common in the Renaissance; often, the eye would be enclosed within a triangle representing the triune godhead. Such an emblem can be found in numerous examples of Christian art.

This emblem was eventually adopted by Freemasons as a symbol for the Great Architect” ([Jennifer Emick](#), undated).

Skull and Crossbones (death's head)



This symbol is also used by Templars. “Bodies in Templar graves have been found with the legs removed and crossed”. The symbol is “also an important emblem in Masonry, where it symbolizes the transience of the material world, and is used in initiation rituals as a symbol of rebirth” ([Jennifer Emick](#), undated).

### **Nature of Freemasonry**

What we shall relate here is what has been provided by one of the “brothers”, an adherent of Freemasonry, C. W. Leadbeater, in his work *Glimpses of Masonic History* (1926).

Freemasonry which is called “the Craft of to-day”, regarded by its adherents as “this most wonderful Organization” which

*“embodies one of the finest schemes ever invented for the helping of the world and for the outpouring of spiritual force”* (Leadbeater, 1926: 5).

Its “Doctrine of the Hidden Light” is believed to have its origins among the gods of ancient Egypt. This doctrine, also called “the great doctrine of the ‘Inner Light’”, was brought to the “sacerdotal hierarchy of Egypt, headed by its Pharaoh”. “That Light is Osiris”. It “is the true man” and it is “hidden everywhere; it is in every rock and in every stone” (Leadbeater, 1926: 27). It is worth noting, as Wigington (undated) also observed from history, that, Isis was considered the “*Wife and sister of Osiris*”,

All of this begins to introduce some affinity between Druism and Freemasonry, connecting these strongly with Wicca as considered above. Indeed Leadbeater confirms that to the same World Teacher who taught the Egyptians the Doctrine of the Hidden Light, can be traced “the Mysteries of the origins of the Druids” (1926: 169) also those of Buddha (1926: 267).

Then, in a statement that connects Freemasonry with just about all forms of nature worship religions, Leadbeater (1926: 5) adds

*“When a man becomes one with Osiris, the Light, then he becomes one with the whole of which he was part, and then he can see the Light in everyone. ... The Light is the life of men, ... nearer than aught else, within his very heart. For every man the Reality is nearer than any ceremony, for he has only to turn inwards, then he will see the Light. ... When a man knows, ... he goes to Osiris, he goes to the Light, the Light Amen-Ra, from which all came forth, to which all shall return”.*

This is the very belief shared by some cosmologists today. Edgar Morin, for example, in his work, *Method*, makes the very same claim:

*“Therefore our Sun deserves much more, much better than the hymns to Ra and the homage to Zeus, devote to energy power and sovereign order. We must above all devote our praises to its matrix truth, which Zeus had hidden by swallowing his wife, the great Metis”* (1992: 160).

*“The Sun made us”; “We are children of the sun, ... we, are, somewhat sometimes infant suns”.* (1992: 161).

In all of these forms of worship there is one thing common one or the other creature in nature is elevated as an object of worship. Among these, the foremost object of wonder, from ancient times to the present, is the sun. But of more significance to notice in all of these various forms of nature worship is a cross-cutting tendency, self-worship.

The book *Morals and Dogma*, written, as already noted by Albert Pike, is considered the most authoritative and central theology of Masonry. The book of just over 800 pages has the full title, *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Review of Freemasonry*. It paints an unmistakable record of Freemasonry as a secret society with origins in “organized occultism” according to Gary Kah’s work, *En Route to Global Occupation*. Just as Leadbeater has testified

above, Kah, also comes to the conclusion in his study, that Freemasonry is “a modern day continuation” of the “ancient mystery religions” of Babylon, Egypt, Persia, Greece, and India, among others. Kah quotes Albert Pike’s *Morals and Dogma* in this regard, who stated:

*“What we now call Masonry, or Free, or Frank-Masonry ... by what ever name it was known in this or other country, Masonry existed as it is now exists, the same in spirit and at the heart ... before even the colonies emigrated into the Southern India, Persia, and Egypt, from the cradle of the human race”* (Online, p. 2).

During the first century, at a time when Christianity was taking root in the Roman kingdom, there was fierce opposition from certain groups of Jews against the teachings of Christ and the spread thereof. One such group, was called the Gnostics. This “was an offshoot of Kabalism, an oral occult tradition, which was adhered to by a minority of the Jews” notes Gary Kah (online, p.6). Kah notes, that “at the base of each form of Gnosticism existed this adoration or worship of Satan, as well as a profound hatred for Christ and His teachings” (p. 7).

Gnostics, according to Kah handed down their beliefs to a group in AD 1118 called the Knight Templars. This is the group that championed the course of the crusades through which the Roman Catholic Church persecuted all who would not adhere to its beliefs. The name itself was derived from the fact that this groups’ headquarters were in Jerusalem “built on the site of Solomon’s Temple” (Kah, online, p.7). Illustrating how the Knight Templars had taken the tradition of Gnosticism forward, Kah (p. 8) refers to the occult historian, Edith Starr Miller, who noted “Having embraced Gnosticism while in Palestine, and in touch with the sect of Assassins [“a ruthless Arabic military order” according to Kah], the Templar order degenerated, and some of its members, under the influence of that sect, were said to imitate of Phallicism or sex-worship and Satanism ... [and] the crime of Sodomy was a rite of Templar initiation.”

When around AD 1312 Templars were vehemently opposed as when Philip IV of France would not tolerate the worship of Satan and had 54 of the Templars burnt alive, many escaped and settled in Portugal. Since then the Templars mingled themselves with another secret order known as the Rose-Croix. Intending to avoid being connected with Templars of the past this new order “devised an allegory of its history” notes Kah (online, p.11) “around a mythical character by the name of Christian Rosenkreuz”. This happened during “the early 1600s”.

The Order of the Rose-Croix (Rosicrucians) emerged in London as “operative masons”, continuing the old tradition of Templars as a “benevolent organization of good works ... {later} they merged with and finally took over the stone mason guilds of Europe” (Kah, online p. 12). Hence it was in London where “the world’s first Grand Lodge” was built in 1717. This is how the “torch was passed to the Masonic order, with the Rosicrucians embedding themselves deep within its structure and hierarchy to become the Adepts, or the Princes of Freemasonry” (Kah, online, p. 12).

Under the influence of “illuminized Freemasonry” begun in 1776 by Adam Weishaupt, a professor of canon law at Ingolstadt University, many “Christian initiates” were attracted to join the sect of freemason that had become influential in the banking industry and among the royals and nobility in Europe. The leading “apostate teaching” used to attract them was according to Von Knigge (in Kah online, p. 14):

*“Jesus Christ established no new Religion; he would only set Religion and Reason in their ancient rights. For this purpose he would unite men in a common bond. He would fit them for this by spreading a just morality, by enlightening the understanding, and by assisting the mind to shake off all prejudices. He would teach all men, in the first place, to govern themselves. Rulers would then be needless, and equality and liberty would take place without any revolution, by the natural and gentle operation of reason and expediency.”*

Under this cover, notes Webster (in Kah, online, p. 14), Weishaupt “worked for Christian unity” and “worked for Christian unity” received the “backing of numerous credulous leaders who thought they were working for a noble cause”. The ultimate prize for Weishaupt, according to Webster, was “world domination.”

Albert Pike, “a great student of the Cabala and the occult” (Kah, online p. 17), became the “Sovereign Grand Commander of the Southern Supreme Council” of Freemasonry in Charleston in the United States of America, (according to Mackey’s Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry, p. 564, notes Kah online p. 17). Pike devised an Order called the “New and Reformed Palladian Rite”. This, according to the occult historian, Edith Starr Miller (in Kah, online p. 18) was neo-Gnosticism “teaching that the divinity is dual and that Lucifer [Satan] is the equal of Adonay. It is in fact Lucifer who is worshiped within this rite of Freemasonry.”

Revealing the true character of Freemasonry, Albert Pike is known to have issued instructions in a speech given to the leading “degrees” of Freemasonry (Kah, online, p. 19) that went as follows:

*“That which we must say to the crowd is ... We worship a God, ... To you, Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, we say this, That you may repeat it to the Brethren in the 32<sup>nd</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> degrees – The Masonic religion should be, by all of us initiates of the high degrees, maintained in the purity of the Luciferic doctrine.”*

What we are seeing here is an extremely wealthy organization that spreads under the guise of good works, teaching one doctrine (the esoteric) to millions while hiding another. We see a continuation of the intentions of the Templars using similar methods to influence unsuspecting millions. The book, *Morals and Dogma* reveals the values and mind from which this incredible deception emanates (in Kah, online, p. 20):

*“To acquire influence and wealth, then intrigue, and at need to fight, to establish the ... Gnostic and Kabalist dogma, ... The Papacy and the rival monarchies, they said to them, are sold and bought in these days, become corrupt, and tomorrow, perhaps, will destroy each other. All that will become the heritage of the Temple: The world will soon come to us for its Sovereigns and Pontiffs. We shall constitute the equilibrium of the Universe, and rule over the Masters of the World”.*

### **Esoteric doctrines driving Exoteric doctrines**

Clearly, our world and its people are being driven to slaughter like unsuspecting sheep. There are, obviously *exoteric* (popular/external) doctrines – intended to eventually “*destroy each other*” - being manipulated by a few, extremely powerful individuals who hold *esoteric* (hidden/internal) doctrines as demonstrated in Pike’s statements above.

All of this begins to suggest to an observer that though some nature-worship-supporting cosmologists like Capra and Morin may imagine and suppose and hope to convince the academic and the world at large that we live in a world wherein the “sensate” and an “ideational” culture are involved in cyclical “rhythmic recurrences and patterns of rise and decline” of various “value systems” (Capra, 1982:9) or in “an analogous relationship” and a “formidable complexity” in which “degenerescence/regeneration, life/death are “intimately” “linked and blended” (Morin, 1992: 302), evidence suggests the contrary. Our planet is suffering because two micro-physical frameworks are jostling for hegemony. One, grounded in life diminishing creature-worship contends against another grounded as will be further demonstrated in this work, in Creator-worship. These two are mutually

exclusive, not complementary, hence the controversy, the side-by-side existence of life and death, joy and pain, unity and division among humanity.

Nature worship is marked by duplicitous living. As it was in the ancient days, so are our days being manipulated to become. There is an intention to establish one world governance of intolerance; a governance driven by the same motive force that directed the pagan kingdoms of ancient Egypt and Babylon, Greece and Rome where covetousness, greed, lust and immorality reigned supreme leading to the dehumanization of humanity and the destruction of the natural environment. Globalization, the villagization of our world, after all, is not an inevitable, natural “evolutionary process”, as centers of higher learning and political leaders would have people believe, but a deliberate design.

### **2.8.11 The decline of the Roman Empire**

As far back as the AD 70s, Jewish people were not the only ones that were desirous of freeing themselves from Roman domination. Referring to this period, Josephus noted: “the affairs of the Romans themselves were in great disorder. The Gauls ... were in motion, and the Celts were not quiet; but all was in disorder after the death of Nero” (Whiston, 1980: 427). Exactly at the time when Titus was “lying at the siege of Jerusalem, a great multitude of the Germans were in commotion, and tended to rebellion”. This rebellion by the German peoples, according to Josephus, was spurred by at least two things: “the hatred they bore to those that were their governors, while their nation had never been conscious of subjection to any but the Romans, and that by compulsion only” and

*the opportunity that now offered itself which above all the rest prevailed with them so to do; for when they saw the Roman government in a great internal disorder, by the continual changes of its rulers, and understood that every part of the habitable earth under them was in an unsettled and tottering condition, they thought this was the best opportunity that could afford itself for them to make a sedition, when the state of the Romans was so ill. (Whiston, 1980: 592)*

Nothing, indeed, attested more to the illness of the Roman state and the relational depravity among its leaders than the constant changing of its rulers. For example, Roberts (1996: 65–67) asserts that “between AD 226 and 379, there were thirty-five Roman emperors, while only nine Sassanid kings ruled in Persia”. After AD 200 Germanic peoples pressed harder and harder against Roman rule.

Others, the so-called barbarians, did the same: Goths crossed the Danube in AD 251, killing an emperor, but were “stopped by Claudius in 269”, according to Potter (1990: 58). Claudius “drove them into the mountains” expecting that they would be destroyed by “starvation and illness or their surrender”. The Franks, soon after the Goths had attacked, also crossed the Rhine around 256; the Alamanni, also, raided as far south as Milan, to be driven back by Aurelian who had just ascended the throne; after this he drove the Vandals back to their own lands. By 271, Aurelian appeared to have settled “his problems with the barbarians” (Potter, 1990: 60). He was to be assassinated in 275 in an internal controversy.

In AD 284 Diocletian became emperor of Rome. He took upon himself the name of “Jovius” or Jupiter, the Roman name for the Greek god Zeus, and sought single-handedly to find a solution to the empire’s ills and re-create the old power and glory of the Roman kingdom. One of his measures was the disastrous attempt to stop inflation “by fixing prices and wages” (Roberts, 1996: 67). Another measure he took was to split the kingdom into two, giving the western half to a co-emperor who called himself “Augustus”.

### **2.8.12 Seeing “if the Christians’ god would help”**

While all this turmoil within and against the Roman Empire was going on, the persecution of the fast growing body of Christians had not come to an end. In AD 303 Diocletian launched “the last general persecution” (Roberts, 1996: 69).

Diocletian was succeeded by his son Constantine in AD 306. Civil instability continued to plague Rome, but after a decade Constantine managed to reunite the empire. As a stratagem to achieve this unity, “he decided to see if the Christians’ god would help him” (Roberts, 1996: 69). In AD 312, while preparing for an important battle, he gave his soldiers the order that they should put on their shields the Christian monogram in demonstration of his and their respect for the Christians’ god. After winning the battle he extended favours to the Christians, giving the Christian Church gifts and supporting the spread of Christianity by building churches. So close did he draw towards the Christian Church that in AD 325 he presided over an ecumenical council attended by bishops – church leaders from the whole Christian world.

This seemed to be a resounding victory for the church as it was now “tied to the glamorous and prestigious tradition of Rome” (Roberts, 1996: 70). But this union of the church and a “pagan” state

was to “colour Christianity history” for ages to come. “Christianity not only conquered Rome, but Rome conquered Christianity”, observed Flick (1909: 149). The monotheistic Christian world embraced the polytheistic world of “pagan” gods. Edward Gibbon’s analysis and reflection on the situation is profound. According to him, as the Roman world crumbled into decay, barbarism and superstition gained ascendancy. “It was the triumph of the once-despised beliefs of a tiny Jewish sect. Christianity now grew within the imperial civilization, not outside it, and became almost unwittingly a great transmitter of a pagan past to the future” (Roberts, 1996: 70).

Clear shifts followed, “many changes” (Flick, 1909), on the part of the church from some of its orthodox Christian beliefs, giving undeniable evidence to its apostasy. These have remained intact up to the present. A few will be looked at here, beginning with some cosmetic ones and then moving on to one or two foundational ones.

### **2.8.13 Change of location**

When civilization emerged in Western Europe, there were three main centres of influence: Athens, Rome and Jerusalem. Athens is known as “the city of culture”, that bequeathed art, philosophy and science to the Romans and then to the rest of the peoples of the world; Rome was “the city of power”. The attention-grabbing change here is that when the Roman state embraced Christianity, Jerusalem, which gave Christianity to the world, was overthrown by Rome; in fact when this happened Athens had already been overthrown by Rome; so both their contributions were received by Rome, which rose to prominence.

D’Aubigne, in the first chapter of *History of the Reformation*, Vol. I (quoted in Smith, 1912: 142) gives a perspective on how the first pastors or bishops in Rome and the Roman Church came to enjoy world prominence “proportionate to the city itself”. The attitude and reasoning of “ambitious Rome” was that “all the inhabitants of the earth belong to her” – a claim once made by Julian the Roman Emperor. “ ‘If Rome is the queen of cities, why should not her pastor be the king of bishops?’ was the reasoning these Roman pastors adopted, ‘Why should not the Roman Church be the mother of Christendom? Why should not all nations be her children, and her authority the sovereign law?’ ”

“The bishops in the different parts of the Roman empire,” concludes Smith (1912: 144), “felt a pleasure in yielding to the bishop of Rome some portion of that honor which Rome, as the queen

city, received from the nations of the earth. There was originally no dependence implied in the honor thus implied, 'But usurped power', D'Aubigne reasoned, 'increases like an avalanche' ”.

Durant (1950: 50) concurs with this line of reasoning: “The bishops of Rome did not show the Church at her best. Sylvester (314–35) earned the credit for converting Constantine; and pious belief represented him as receiving from the Emperor, in the ‘Donation of Constantine’, nearly all of western Europe”. This belief, however, was not well received by the Eastern bishops, who resisted this supremacy as misrepresenting the humility and simplicity of Christ. “The patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria claimed equal authority with the Roman see; and the furious controversies of the Eastern Church continued with scant obeisance to the Bishop of Rome. ... In the West, however, the popes exercised a growing leadership even in secular affairs. They were subject in non-religious matters to the Roman state and prefect, and until the seventh century, they sought the confirmation of their election from the emperor”.

Some of the early state support given to popes was demonstrated when Leo I (also known as Leo the Great):

*by courage and statesmanship raised the Apostolic See to power and dignity. When Hilary of Poitiers refused to accept his decision in a dispute with another Gallic Bishop, Leo sent him peremptory orders; and Valentinian III seconded these with an epoch-making edict imperially confirming the authority of the Roman bishop over all Christian churches. Thus was paved the way for the Christian Church in Rome to become the church of the world and the leader of the church in that city, the Bishop of Rome to occupy a world commanding position (Flick, 1909: 151).*

He “arrogated the very titles of Deity”, calling himself: “Lord God the Pope” (White, 1998: 42).

## **2.8.14 Changes in institutions, rites and ceremonies**

The church of the third and fourth centuries was very different from that which emerged in the first century, observes Flick (1909). The original church had a clear position forbidding the worship of images such as those deified by the Romans in the Pantheon, the temple filled with images of Roman gods. In the latter centuries “a pompous ritualism with suggestions of image worship had been introduced”. “The Bishop of Rome was elevated above all bishops as God’s chosen representative on earth. The bishops were exalted above ... priests” who in turn were superior to

subordinate officials. The laity under these subordinate officials were separated by a “pronounced gulf” (Flick, 1909: 162). A worldly, hierarchical institution had evolved from the simple one of the first century wherein all “were brothers”.

### ***Change from Sabbath to ‘Sun’day worship***

One of the strongest demonstrations by the papal system of worship power is the authority claimed to change institutions put in place by the God who created nature; institutions intended to direct worship away from images and idols in nature to the unseen God of nature. The Bible presents the Ten Commandments given to Moses by God as a code for the preservation of the people’s allegiance to the Creator and the recipe for their joy, for all time: “the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always” (Deuteronomy 6: 24–25).

Christ, the founder of Christianity, appears to have upheld this same stance of the changelessness of The Ten Commandments. He commented as follows: “for assuredly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled” (Matthew 5: 18). He regarded the law as more permanent in its steadfastness than heaven and earth. This was echoed in the book of Luke 16: 17), where Jesus is recorded as saying: “It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one little tittle of the law to fail.”

Amongst these Ten Commandments is the Sabbath Law. God insisted that the Hebrew people should “Remember, ... to keep holy the Sabbath day” (Exodus 20: 8). The keeping of the Sabbath as a special day was important in that God appointed it to be a “sign” of their belonging to Him: “Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations”, “Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant” (Exodus 31: 14–16). Much later this was repeated by one of the prophets, Ezekiel: “I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them”, “and hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you that ye may know that I am the Lord your God” (Ezekiel 20: 12–20).

The original Christians believed in the perpetuity of the commandments including that of the Sabbath. The Jerusalem Church continued to keep the Sabbath long after Christ had died, as evident in the Book of the Acts of His Apostles. Both Jewish Christians and Greeks who had been converted been converts “met regularly in the synagogue on the Sabbath (Acts 18, verse 4; 13,

verses 5, 14, verses 42 and 44; 14, verse 1; 17, verses 1, 10 and 17)” (Bacchiocchi, in Strand, 1982: 124).

There is evidence that even at the time and after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, the Sabbath was still observed by the Christians. The historian Epiphanius (AD 315–340) corroborates this fact: “those Jewish Christians who fled from Jerusalem became known as the sect of the Nazarene, who ‘fulfill till now Jewish rites as circumcision, the Sabbath and others’ ” (Bacchiocchi, in Strand, 1982: 125). All of this refutes the popular theory that Christ himself set aside the Sabbath and instituted Sunday observance.

### ***The change: Rome and Sunday***

It was in Rome, where the church was predominantly composed of non-Jewish converts to Christianity, that there arose “a chasm between the Church and the synagogue” (Goppelt, in Strand, 1982: 126). Vespasian (AD 69–79) ordered that the “practice of Jewish religion and particularly, the Sabbath, be outlawed”.

The earliest explicit replacement of Sabbath-keeping with Sunday-keeping seems to have taken place during the time of Justin Martyr, who, from Rome, took systematic measures to condemn the keeping of the Jewish Sabbath. According to him the Sabbath was imposed by God upon Jews “as a mark to single them out for punishment they so deserve for their infidelities” and upheld Sunday as “the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead” (in Strand, 1982: 127). So, in contempt for the Jewish people, everything that was unique about them, including those things that Christians respected, was swept aside under some reasoned excuse.

Further evidence of this contempt was displayed when the Church in Rome introduced a fast on the Sabbath day and imposed it on other Christians. “The fast was designed not only to express sorrow for Christ’s death but also, as Pope Sylvester emphatically states, to show ‘contempt for the Jews ... and for their Sabbath ‘feasting’ ” (in Strand, 1982: 127). Clearly, the change was motivated by anti-Semitism and the desire to separate this papal version of christianity from Judaism.

Why Sunday was chosen, instead of another day of the week, was explained by Bacchiocchi as the effect of pagan forms of worship creeping into Christianity. Many pagans had joined Christianity and by the first century the “Cult of Sol Invictus”, Sun worship, “one of the oldest components of the Roman religion”, was still dominant in Rome and in other parts of the empire. This is plausible as Zeus and Apollo among the Greeks and Romans were venerated as the Sun gods. The planetary week was already in existence among the Romans in our first century. The day of the Sun, “the dies solis”, was identified with the worship of the Sun god. “Only in such a case could the predominant Sun cults have enhanced the day of the sun and consequently influenced Christians to adopt this day for their weekly worship”, reasoned Bacchiocchi (in Strand, 1982: 129).

The formal change itself, of making Sunday the public holy day of worship, was introduced on 7 March 321 by Constantine. This was endorsed officially in the Council of Laodicea in 337 when it adopted “the first National Sunday Law” (White, 1998: 41).

### **2.8.15 Faiths at war: The fall of the last world empire and the triumph of the barbarians**

In AD 335, shortly before his death, which occurred in AD 337, Constantine, the first Christian emperor, divided the Roman empire among his sons and nephews. Constantine II, his eldest son was allocated the West: Britain, Gaul and Spain; another, Constantius, got the East: Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt; to his youngest son, Constans, he assigned North Africa, Italy, Illyricum and Thrace. Greece and Macedonia were given to two nephews.

Constantine had spent his life attempting to restore and unite the empire. He divided the empire as a strategy to keep away strife and internal controversy. Nevertheless, instability and civil war continued to dog the Roman state.

Among his sons it was Constans, the youngest, who “took theology more seriously than his father”. He took it upon himself to study more about the life of Jesus Christ. Whereas his father had discouraged but did not forbid pagan sacrifices to their gods, Constans “forbade them on pain of death, ... ordered all pagan temples in the empire closed, and all pagan rituals to cease” (Durant, 1950: 3–8).

On the other hand Julian, one of the nephews of Constantine the Great's sons, was banished to Athens by Constantius. There he learnt about and worshipped Greek gods. "He wept when he heard of famous temples overthrown" (Durant, 1950: 11), and harboured deep-seated hatred against Christianity.

Julian showed valour, skill and intelligence when Germans invaders who had destroyed the military power of the Roman empire in the West were driven back by his smaller army in 356. He did the same against the Alemanni – the tribe that gave its name to Germany – and the Franks whom he forced over the Rhine. He was hailed as another Julius Caesar for these victories. Around AD 361 he marched against Constantius in Constantinople, the new Roman seat of power that had been established by Constantine the Great. Before Julian actually reached the capital Constantius was overcome with fever and died. A month later, Julian entered Constantinople and set himself on the throne.

It is hardly surprising that Constantinople, a Christian city that had only known Christian emperors, accepted the young pagan emperor. The entire Roman world, whose official religion had become Christianity through Constantine's machination, was blurring into paganism, of which many of its citizens were adherents. Another proposed explanation is that, as was confirmed later by his behaviour, Julian succeeded in concealing his "never-forgotten" purpose "to restore the ancient cults" (Durant, 1950: 15). Indeed, before he died, he gave orders for the restoration of the temples of the pagan gods and opened them for worship. "In every town he established a school for lectures and expositions of the pagan faith"; he withdrew all state subsidies from the Christian Church; and forbade Christians from teaching at universities; "ended the exemption of the Christian clergy from taxation ... and made Christians ineligible [for] governmental offices" (Durant, 1950: 17–18). Little wonder there was rejoicing among Christians when he was killed in the battle against the Persians in AD 363.

The Persians were only one of many tribes that had refused to succumb totally to the Roman Empire along a frontier of about 10 000 miles. In the south of the empire, nations such the Ethiopians, Berbers and Lybians waited patiently for signs of the weakening of the empire. "In the heart of Europe ... moved the restless tribes that were to remake the map and rename the nations of Europe: Thuringians, Burgundians, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Frisians, Gepidaes, Quadi, Vandals, Alemanni, Suevi, Lombards and Franks. Against these ethnic tides the Empire had no protective wall" (Durant, 1950: 22).

Side by side with the desire for political freedom from Roman sovereignty was the desire for religious independence. Many in Africa, and the rest of the Roman world, all over Europe, Asia and Palestine, were conquered by Christianity. The bishops in Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria were dissatisfied with the supremacy claimed by Roman bishops under state support. The Church in Alexandria, for example, had become influential under Arius, a priest who propounded Christian doctrines that were not acceptable to the Church in Rome, to the extent that Constantine called the church Council of Nicaea and condemned these.

But the controversy never disappeared. For many years after Constantine, Arius' influence continued and Arians became bitter enemies of the bishop in Rome and the Roman Catholic (Christian) Church. Arianism spread and became a counterforce to the influence of the church in Rome, which was upholding a diluted church.

Edward Gibbon also mentions some of the tribes that accepted Christianity and were influenced by Arianism: "The Ostrogoths, the Burgundians, the Suevi, and the Vandals" had listened to the eloquent Arius and domestic preachers who had the message which was "adopted as the national faith of the warlike converts ... seated on the ruins of the Western empire" (in Smith, 1912: 146).

Three names stood out in the final fall of the iron kingdom. There was "the terrible Genseric at the head of the Vandals. From his headquarters in Africa he waged war against the Romans, preying on their commerce. Through a formidable navy his pirates incessantly afflicted Italy; on land they moved with celerity, attacking the remotest Roman colonies. According to Stanley's *History of the Eastern Church* (quoted in Smith, 1912: 147), he was an Arian convert.

Secondly there was Attila who, according to Barnes (in Smith, 1912: 485), "regarded himself as devoted to Mars, the god of war". At the head of "hordes of Huns" he waged desolating wars and furious invasions, with dazzling speed, inspiring terror, "boasting that the grass never grew on the spot which his horses had trod".

The third name that led to the extinction of the power of Rome and saw her "glories star by star expire" was that of Alaric. He poured into Rome with an army of 40 000 Goths, subjecting the city to three days of plundering. Gold, silver and other precious materials were taken; corpses of the rich

were strewn on the streets. “Alaric, the first conqueror of Rome”, according to Stanley (Smith, 1912: 147), was an Arian convert too.

The Roman Empire effectively faded as the direct result of the various conquests by the so-called “barbarians”. The results were numerous, with wide ranging economic and social complications. Economically, the division into individual kingdoms meant a return to a rural economy where hunting and herding still dominated the way of life.

Socially there was ethnic mingling. “Germans had conquered Italy as Genseric had conquered Africa, as the Visigoths had conquered Spain, as the Angles and Saxons were conquering Britain, as the Franks were conquering Gaul. ... What happened was the elimination of weak individual strains through war and other forms of competition, ... individualism and violence increased, ... the states of modern Europe were born” (Durant, 1950: 43). Indeed, this period harboured in its womb the seed for the unstable Europe of the future, including the present.

## **2.9 The rise of papal Rome**

Nearly four hundred years after the death of Christ imperial Rome had fallen. As the Roman power faded, another civilization, anchored on faith, was being born of its foster mother, the Roman Catholic (Universal Christian) Church.

From under the ruins of the Roman Empire, however, the Church, which had started as “a pure and humble religion” (Gibbon, 1952: 179) lost its purity under the influence of the very pagan world it had triumphed over. Particularly in order to win over pagans, who had been accustomed to similar practices, the use of relics and saint worship crept into Christianity.

*Down to the tenth century individuals renowned for some pious deed or some suffering on account of the Christian faith were exalted to sainthood by the voice of the people with the consent of the bishop, ... The relics in the Church were the greatest treasure of the community, ... The use of relics and images developed comparatively early, ... so wild were the people of the West for relics that imperial law had to prohibit the cutting of corpses of martyrs into pieces for sale. ... The seventh ecumenical council of Nicaea (AD 787) forbade bishops to dedicate a church without sacred relics under penalty of excommunication. (Flick, 1909: 378–380)*

All of this had begun with the conversion of pagan Rome's Constantine, a worshipper of the sun-god who "declared himself a Christian" "without formally disavowing the old cults" (Roberts, 1996: 69), as a strategic move to unite an empire that was reeling under disunity.

Thus emerged the Bishop in Rome from a "humble dwelling to a spacious palace", owned to this day by the Pope. In 529 Justinian decreed that all the clergy of the East should be subject to the Roman See. "He also expressed a firm resolution never to allow any business affecting the general welfare of the Church to be transacted, without notifying the head of all the churches" (Smith, 1912: 287). Under the Justinian Code, which asserted that "the elder of Rome was the founder of the laws", chapter two stated: "We therefore decree that the most holy pope of the elder of Rome is the first of all priesthood, and that the most blessed archbishop of Constantinople, the new Rome, shall hold the second rank after the holy apostolic chair of the elder Rome". This meddling by the ruler into ecclesiastic matters pleased Pope John II. It was all convenient, it was a time political disunity. Justinian, according to Roberts hoped by this, to "reunite and restore the old empire" at a time when people "were wondering where Rome had gone" (1996:82). In 534 the pope responded, showering praises on Justinian: "one [who] shines as a star" and on "his reverence for the apostolic chair, to which he has subjected and united all the churches, it being truly the head of all" (in Smith, 1912: 287). The Church in Rome, having gained primacy over all others in the decaying empire, was elevated to "a counterpart to the Emperor" (Flick, 1909: 175–179).

These developments had a devastating impact on the character of the Church.. The erosion in the Church's spirit of humility soon became evident. With its union with the state it had imbibed intolerance unknown to its founder, Christ, who had taught His followers to love their enemies and to "do good to those who hate you and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5 vs 44). The departure from this teaching became glaringly obvious.

Leo I was elevated to the papacy in 440. He was chosen at a time when the decay of the Roman empire was almost complete. Inspired by the Petrine belief of being the head of the Church after the manner of the Apostle Peter, Pope Leo was driven by a dream of the universal dominion of Rome. One of his challenges was to prevent the fragmentation that the Church had started to experience in Arianism; such heresies were to be destroyed. They were numerous and widely spread. Monophysites in Asia and Egypt wanted to be free from Constantinople; Donastics in Africa wanted freedom from Rome. As the Church had become one with the state, these heresies were antagonistic to both (Durant, 1950; Roberts, 1996).

### **2.9.1 Persecutions**

By the sixth century pagan Rome had given way to papal Rome. The “papacy had become firmly established. Its seat was fixed in the imperial city” of Rome. Persecution against the heretics – Christian sects who opposed the Church in Rome – “opened” and the world “became a vast battlefield”. This was the beginning of the Dark Ages, a time when “for hundreds of years, the circulation of the Bible was prohibited. The people were forbidden to read it, or to have it in their homes. ... Thus the pope came to be almost universally acknowledged as the vicegerent of God on earth, endowed with supreme authority over Church and State” (White, 1998: 43–46). Those who opposed the Church’s power and authority on any scriptural matter “were forced to choose, either to yield their integrity and accept the papal ceremonies and worship, or to wear away their lives in dungeon cells, or suffer death by the rack, the fagot, or the headsman’s ax” (White, 1998: 45).

The Church sanctioned what were known as “ordeals” to punish heretics. “There were four different kinds of ordeals: by water, by fire, by battle, and by some sacred emblem”. The ordeal by hot water was the oldest form in Europe, ... the accused was compelled, with naked arm, to thrust his arm into it. If his arm was scaled he was guilty, if not, innocent. ... The ordeal by fire was performed either by hot iron or stone. ... The accused was compelled to walk barefooted over six or twelve red-hot ploughshares, or to carry a piece of red-hot iron in his bare hand nine feet or more. The unburned, of course, was innocent” (Flick, 1909: 362). These ordeals, according to Flick, lasted up to the sixteenth century.

## **2.10 A torrent over Christendom: Mohammedanism**

While papal Rome was starting to assert its hegemony in the sixth century, expanding in northern and central Europe, “she was losing nearly as much in territory and numbers in Africa and Spain” owing to a new “rival religion in Arabia which bid to outstrip Christianity in the race for world conquest” (Flick, 1909: 257).

At the time when the Visigothic power and Persians were subjugating the Roman territories in Asia and in Africa, an obscure Arabian and citizen of Mecca was watching. When the strengths of both the Roman and Persians were severely spent, the “Arabian prophet”, called Mohammed, attacked, “with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other” (Fick, 1909: 257), “subdued by force those

who had opposed him” (Roberts, 1996: 97) and erected his throne on the ruins of Christianity and of Rome. The Visigoths and their king, Chosroes, were defeated around 711 AD.

### **2.10.1 Arabia and the conditions that led to the rise of Islam**

Before the rise of Islam, a period that Akbar Sha Najeebabadi (2000: 65–81) calls the “Age of ignorance”, Arabia consisted of provinces with separate rulers. What used to be “the cradle of the Sam [Shem, son of Noah in the Bible] dynasty” became a territory of various tribes who:

*acknowledged neither the Creator nor reward and punishment. ... Idolatry was openly practiced all over Arabia. Four hundred years before the advent of Muhammad ... they brought camels for sacrificing and offering to their idols. ... Worshipping stars was very common; the sun was worshiped by the Hymyar tribe, the moon by the Kinanah, ... Jupiter by the Lakhm, ... and Mercury by the Asad. Most of the idols were named with the names of stars.*

Gibbon corroborates this: “The religion of the Arabs as well as of the Indians, consisted of the worship of the sun, the moon and the fixed stars” (1952, Volume II: 226). Najeebabadi continues:

*Defects of deceit, cheating and conniving in trade and business were plentiful. They were expert in raiding and highway robbery of the nomadic type. Almost all were addicted to looting the traveler and snatching away goods by force. On finding someone making a journey alone, they covered and hid the wells which were on the way with grass and other things so that the traveler would die of thirst and they would take his goods.*

Regarding the state of Christianity, Najeebabadi (2000: 65 – 81) observes that:

*two hundred years after the birth of Isa (Jesus), there was no trace of a monk among Christians. But during the sixth century, the number of monks rose to such an extent in Syria, Greece and Rome that anybody desirous of being held in esteem became a monk. Gradually this custom prevailed among the womenfolk with the result that monasteries became centres of all kinds of shameful acts”. According to another observer, Irfan Shahid (1989), “The monasteries had penetrated deep in the heart of Arabia, into regions to which the church could not penetrate.*

These facts are corroborated by Gibbon (1952: Volume II: 226–228):

*Arabia was free: the adjacent kingdoms were shaken by the storms of conquest and tyranny, and the persecuted sects fled to the happy land where they might profess what they thought, and practice what they professed. The religions of the Sabians and Magians, of the Jews and Christians, were disseminated from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea. ... Seven hundred years before the death of Mohammed, the Jews were settled in Arabia; and a far greater multitude was expelled from the Holy Land in the wars of Titus and Hadrian; ... they erected synagogues in the cities, and castles in the wilderness; ... The liberty of choice was presented to the tribes: each Arab was free to elect or to compose his private religion; ... the Jews and Christians were the people of the Book; the Bible was already translated into the Arabic language, and the volume of the Old Testament was accepted. In the story of the Hebrew patriarchs the Arabs were pleased to discover the fathers of their nation, ... and [they] imbibed with equal credulity the prodigies of the holy text, and the dreams and traditions of the Jewish rabbis.*

What is being described by Gibbon and Najeebabadi is the era called the Dark Ages, the period of:

*the accession of the Roman Church to power, ... as her power increased, the darkness deepened. Faith was transferred from Christ ... to the pope of Rome; ... forms of religion multiplied, ... vice prevailed, even among the leaders of the Romish Church. ... Fraud, avarice, and profligacy prevailed. Men shrank from no crime by which they could gain wealth or position. The palaces of popes and prelates were scenes of the vilest debauchery. Some of the reigning pontiffs were guilty of crimes so revolting that secular rulers endeavored to depose these dignitaries of the church as monsters too vile to be tolerated upon the throne. For centuries there was no progress in learning, arts, or civilization. A moral and intellectual paralysis had fallen upon Christendom. (White, 1998: 50–51)*

Patricia Crone, in her book *Meccan trade and the rise of Islam*, (1987: 231ff), refers to another plausible reason for the rise of Islam. She draws attention to a hypothesis put forward by Watt that “mercantile economy undermined the traditional order in Mecca, generating a social and moral malaise to which Muhammad’s preaching was the response”. It is Watt’s view that the Qur’an “testifies to an increase of an awareness of the difference between rich and poor and a diminishing concern on the part of the rich for the poor and weak even among their own kin, orphans in particular being ill-treated”.

This proposal finds support in the evidence of the Roman historian Strabo (Book XVI; AD 22). According to Strabo, “Arabia” which “commences on the side of Babylonia with Maecene [modern Kuwait]”, has cities “governed by one monarch, and are flourishing. They are adorned with beautiful temples and palaces”. Arabians who lived in Sabaei (modern Yemen) were particularly observed to “have become the richest of all the tribes, and [to] possess a great quantity of wrought articles in gold and silver, as couches, tripods, basins, drinking-vessels, to which we must add the costly magnificence of their houses; for the doors, and roofs are variegated with inlaid ivory, gold, silver, and precious stones”. Arabians, who according to Strabo, “mostly engaged in traffic and commerce”, were therefore no strangers to wealth. But extreme wealth existed side by side with extreme poverty.

Watt notes “further”, that “the Qur’anic stress on acts of generosity implies that the old ideal of generosity had broken down to the point that the conduct of the rich would have been looked upon as shameful in the desert, ... Meccans had come to worship a new ideal, ‘the supereminence of wealth’ ”.

Thus was let loose over all the Roman world a new force, a new religion propagating a new doctrine, which “stirred [its adherents] to rapine and violence” (Smith, 1912: 500). As with Christianity when it started, it could not have been imagined then that Islam would grow into a huge influence in the world.

In 633 the Saracens, as the Arab armies, highly skilled in horsemanship, were called, attacked the Byzantine territory, the eastern territory of the former Roman Empire. Their attacks were speedy and vigorous. It took them five more years to overcome Jerusalem and drive the Romans from Syria. Egypt, Kabul in Afghanistan and many parts of Africa followed. To this day Jerusalem, Damascus in Syria, Baghdad, Afghanistan and many territories of Africa remain some of the holy places of Islam (Roberts, 1996: 97).

On 16 May 1453, Constantinople was captured from the Greeks by Mohammed II. “And the eastern city of the Caesars became the seat of the Ottoman Empire” (Smith, 1912: 509). It was to be resurrendered to Christian powers in August 1840.

## **2.10.2 War against Islam**

A concerted effort was started by papal Rome to regain Christian territory lost to the Moslems. In 999, for example, warriors of all Christendom were called upon to join the “Crusades” to drive the armies of Islam out of Jerusalem and again in 1074, all Christians were urged to drive them out of Palestine. The crusades covered a period of about two centuries, directly affecting all Europe, northern Africa and western Asia. These crusades were an “arrayal of pan-Christianity against pan-Mohammedanism, or European civilization versus Asiatic civilization, broadly speaking, one great movement, ... which held the world’s destiny in its result ... The purpose of the movement was primarily to wrest the Holy Land from the Mohammedans and to restore it to Christianity” (Flick, 1909: 491–492). Thus was broken the rapid spread of Mohammedanism.

## **2.10.3 The principles of Islam**

Like Christianity, Islam proclaims that there is only one God. “Moslems”, notes Roberts (1996: 95), “believe that this is the same God worshipped by Jews and Christians, though they worship Him differently”. Moshe Sharon (Professor of Islamic Studies at the Hebrew University, in Jerusalem) stresses, however, that “a Moslem has to acknowledge the fact that there is one God and Mohammed is His prophet. These are the fundamentals of the religion” without which “one cannot be a Moslem” (in Bacchiocchi, 2002: 2).

Essentially Islam “was born with the idea that it should rule the world”; “it was created to be the army of God, the army of Allah. Every single Moslem is a soldier in this army. Every single Moslem that dies in fighting for the spread of Islam is a shaheed (martyr) no matter how he dies,” notes Moshe Sharon (in Bacchiocchi, 2002: 3–5). This, perhaps corroborates Roberts’ perspective that Islam was always a religion of conquest. The fact that its founder, the Prophet Mohammed, used the sword to subjugate nations of “infidels” and establish Islamic laws in their societies attests to this.

## **2.11 The rise against papal extremes**

By 1000 AD, the Church had pervaded society in all of Europe and had “almost a monopoly of culture ... it was a great landowner which did not die. It controlled much of society’s wealth, (and) was the economy’s major employer” (Roberts 1996: 121). The belief strengthened during the Middle Ages that the:

*Church ruled by the divinely appointed Pope and his army of ecclesiastics “was the dispenser of salvation” ... Discipline was administered either directly by the Pope or by the bishops and their representatives, the archdeacons, or in each congregation by the priest. Civil authorities aided the Church in enforcing discipline. Charles the Great ordered the bishops to hold annual public synodical courts to try cases of incest, murder, adultery, robbery, theft and other vices contrary to God’s laws. (Flick, 1909: 366)*

Side by side with the ordeals, described above, the most dreaded form of discipline was excommunication. It could be pronounced upon a layperson, whether king or common man, or against a bishop or a priest. To kill an excommunicated person was not murder. “If a king, his subjects were all released from allegiance to him. ... There were very many cases against kings, criminals, heretics, etc., and the punishment was even applied to animals” (Flick, 1909: 368). Eventually the practice of appointing emperors became the right of the Pope. It was a time of confusion as the papacy and the State ruled over the same people and the same regions, one ruling the souls of men while the other ruled their bodies. Nevertheless, the papacy had the upper hand. The papal theory “made the Pope alone God’s representative on earth and maintained that the Emperor received his right to rule from St Peter’s successor” (Flick, 1909: 413).

This obvious loss by the Church of its original humility and its distance from the state took its toll. The tenth century papacy and the Church, observed Flick (1909: 419), became “a reflection of the chaotic” condition of the state and society in its ignorance, superstitions and vices: “The head of the Church had lost all dignity and independence, and the office had become a prey to greed, force, and intrigue. Most Popes ended their careers in deposition, prison, or murder. ... The Papacy was openly bought and sold for money”.

By the thirteenth century the situation was no better. “Venality was an accompanying evil” practised by the Church. The rich and influential could easily obtain absolution through bribery. “Rome”, declared Bishop Grosseteste “was a fountain of pardon for all infractions of the Decalogue” (Flick, 1909: 590). “A moral and intellectual paralysis had fallen upon Christendom” observes White (1998: 51), who concurs with Flick that this was a direct result of their having set aside the word of God. She pointed to the words of the prophet Hosea in chapter 4, claiming they had found “striking fulfillment”: “Seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood”

(Hosea 4: 1–2). In the words of Titus, disciple of Christ: “they profess to know God, but in works deny Him being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work” (Titus 1: 16).

Papal leaders, as noted by Bishop Grosseteste, were “a fountain” of disobedience against the law of God, upon which the entire scriptures and Christianity is based, for as the disciple of Christ wrote and taught: “By this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him’ (i.e. God), and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (I John 2: 3–4).

The results of this gross neglect are a matter of historical fact:

*In general the Church did not so much encourage superstitions as inherit them from the imagination of the people or the traditions of the Mediterranean world. The belief in miracle-working objects, talismans, amulets, and formulas was as dear to Islam as to Christianity, and both religions had received these beliefs from pagan antiquity. ... The Church found that rural converts still revered certain springs, wells, trees, and stones; she thought it wiser to bless these to Christian use than to break too sharply the custom of sentiments; ... Pagan festivals dear to the people ... began to reappear as Christian feasts ... and the celebration of Christ’s resurrection took the pagan name of Eostre (Easter), the old Teutonic goddess of the spring. (Durant, 1950: 745–746)*

William Gildea (1894, in Standford & Standish, 1996) corroborates this:

*The Church took the pagan philosophy and made it the buckler of faith against the heathen. She took the pagan Roman Pantheon temple of all gods, and made it sacred to all the martyrs; so it stands to this day [emphasis added]. She took the pagan Sun day and made it the Christian Sunday. She took the pagan Easter [in honor of the goddess Ishtar] and made it the feast we celebrate during this season ... the sun was a foremost god with heathenism ... and thus the pagan Sunday dedicated to Balder, became the Christian Sunday, sacred to Jesus.*

Other pagan traditions that were adopted by the Church – and are still in existence to this day – include the ancient Babylonian cult of the “virgin mother-goddess who was worshipped as the highest of gods” as noted by Langton in *Semitic Mythology* (quoted in White, 1998: 70). “Mary”, observes Durant (1909: 746), “became the patron of Saint Constantinople and the imperial family;

her picture was carried at the head of every great procession, and was [and still is] hung in every church and home in the Greek Christendom”.

### **2.11.1 Continued protest against the apostate Church**

While the policy of the papal Church by now was the obliteration of any form of opposition to her rule and teaching as heresy, both within Europe and in lands that were never reached by papal Rome, in Africa and Asia, places that had been reached by Christianity from the time of the apostles, there were Christians who had never been affected by the Roman church.

Writing about the Armenian Church, Claudius Buchanan observed: “The history of the Armenian church is very interesting. Of all the Christians in Central Asia, they have preserved themselves most free from Mohammedan and Papal corruptions ... they have preserved the Bible in its purity, ... they maintain the solemn observation of the seventh day” (quoted in John Kiesz’s *A History of the Sabbath*, 1873).

In the south-western part of India around 1673 people were found by the Portuguese, in about one hundred Christian churches, who were solemnizing the Sabbath, noted Buchanan. In China under the Ti-Pings the Sabbath of the seventh day not of the first day of the week was observed. When “Europeans had opportunity to visit them, they were told that it was first, because the Bible taught it, and second, because their ancestors observed it as a day of worship” (Buchanan in Kiesz, 1873).

The hallmark of these people, according to White (1998: 56), is that “they continued to regard the Bible as the only rule of faith, and adhered to many of its truths. These Christians believed in the perpetuity of the law of God and observed the Sabbath of the fourth commandment”. Such churches, notes White in agreement with Buchanan, existed in “Central Africa and among the Armenians of Asia”. “Among the leading causes that had led to the separation of the true church from Rome, was the inveterate hatred by the latter toward the Bible Sabbath” (White, 1998: 57).

First among the Armenian descendants in Europe to obtain a translation of the Bible in their own language were the Waldenses. “The Bible was their text-book. They studied and committed to memory the words of Holy Writ.” From the security of caves, in the “deep caverns of the earth”, they spent a considerable part of their time reproducing copies of the Bible by the light of torches. From the mountain schools, their youth were sent out to complete their education in the big cities,

with copies of the Bible concealed in specially made garments. Converts to the teachings of the Bible were won, “yet the papist leaders could not, by the closest inquiry, trace the so-called corrupting heresy to its source”. These people “kept the Sabbath day, observed the ordinance of baptism according to the primitive church, instructed their children in the articles of the Christian faith and the commandments of God” noted the History of the Christian Church (Jones, undated, Section 4).

According to Andrews (in Kiesz, 1873: 460):

*Sabbath-keepers were found in Transsylvania, Bohemia, Russia, Germany, Holland, France, and England. It was not the Reformation which gave existence to these Sabbatarians, ... on the contrary, these observers of the Sabbath appear to be remnants of the ancient Sabbath-keeping churches that had witnessed for the truth during the Dark Ages.*

Within Europe, Reformation was born in the work of an English scholar, John Wycliffe (1320 – 1384). Educated in law and seeking to obtain knowledge from any branch thereof, Wycliffe dedicated himself to the study of the Bible, from which he perceived the distance between the teachings and the customs of papal Rome and the Bible. “He was to become the progenitor of the Puritans” (White, 1998: 72). As nearly half the people of England accepted his teaching, Rome’s hatred of opposition was “kindled”.

The writings of Wycliffe led John Huss of Bohemia boldly to denounce the “scandalous living of the clergy”. This earned him persecution. After a long trial before the Council of Constance, Huss was made to choose between life and death. “He chose the martyr’s fate” (White, 1998: 76). Jerome his friend met with the same end. In many countries around Europe, the struggle for religious liberty continued over hundreds of years: in France there was Calvin; in Switzerland, Zwingli; and in Germany, Luther.

In 1501 the zealous eighteen-year-old Martin Luther, whose parents were devoted to the Catholic Church and had instructed him in the knowledge of God, entered Erfurt University and in 1505 received a Masters degree. In 1510 he travelled to Rome where he obtained a doctorate in Theology in 1512 and began preaching. It was while in Rome that he wrote: “It is incredible what sins and atrocities are committed in Rome. If there is a hell, Rome must be built above it. It is an abyss whence all sins proceed” (White, 1998: 83).

After receiving the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Wittenberg University, he began to devote himself to the study of the Bible as never before. He was by now the “authorized herald of the Bible”. He declared from the pulpits that “Christians should receive no other doctrines than those which rest on the authority of the Bible” (White, 1998: 83), words that militated against the very core of the papacy.

After a series of oppositions to the assertions of the Pope, Luther received a summons to appear in Rome where he was to be charged with heresy. Influential people in Germany who feared for his life protested and demanded that he be tried in Germany. The trial took place in Augsburg where he refused to retract his teachings. From that period, his life was in constant danger.

Luther became very successful in Germany. His lectures attracted hordes of young people. From all of Germany, they crowded Wittenberg. His writings and doctrines eventually spread to all Europe.

Testimony for the Reformation that was led by conscientious protestors such as Luther was offered in Germany by her princes. Their opposition to “imposed faith” (Roberts, 1996: 225) and the papacy earned “the reformed church the name of Protestants” (White 1998: 132). It is upon the very principles of their opposition that Protestantism was founded. A demand was made by the priests that all the states which supported the work of Reformation must submit implicitly to the jurisdiction of the papacy. “Let us reject this decree”, said the princes. “In matters of the conscience, the majority has no power.” King Ferdinand himself tried to persuade them to submit but failed. “We will obey the emperor in everything that may contribute to maintain peace and the honor of God”, they told him (White, 1998: 132–135).

The princes were eventually summoned to appear before the Diet (council). They drew up a declaration and presented it:

*We protest ... before God, ... and before all men and all creatures, ... that we, for us and our people, neither consent nor adhere in any manner whatever to the proposed decree in anything that is contrary to God, to His Word, to our right conscience. ... We are therefore resolved by divine Grace to maintain the pure preaching of God's only word. ... This word is the only truth.* (White, 1998: 135–137)

The “grandeur” and the extravagant manner in which bishops and the papacy lived amidst the poverty of parishioners (Roberts, 1996: 226) were external symptoms, evidences of a deep spiritual

destitution. At the heart of the Protestant movement, however, was the fight for freedom of conscience. They rejected the claim by both the Church and the State to legislate in matters of belief. In rejecting the arbitrary authority of the Church they were asserting that everything must rise or fall by the authority of one standard, the Bible. They were asserting the power of conscience and the authority of the Bible, protecting the right of all men to worship according to the dictates of their conviction.

The reign of the papacy, which was introduced when Justinian declared the Pope “the head of the holy churches” in 533, and firmly set in place in 538, when the third and last hurdle to papal rule, the Ostrogoths, were defeated, continued until the period of the ‘Reign of Terror’ in France. In 1797, while Joseph Bonaparte was stationed in Rome by the French, he was given instruction never to allow the election of any other pope after the death of the ailing Pius VI.

In the following year, 1798, one of Napoleon’s Generals, Berthier, arrived in Rome. He demanded that Pius VI give up his political power. The Pope refused, upon which he was “dragged from the altar, ... his rings ... removed from his fingers” and imprisoned (Trevor, 1868); thus ended the lengthy season of persecutions by papal Rome against her opponents.

In 1800, however, the forces of France were experiencing difficulties. Cardinals took advantage of this weakness and elected a Pope. In what was greeted with surprise, Napoleon entered into an agreement with the Catholic Church, acknowledging it as the state religion in France. The Pope traveled to France in 1804 to crown Napoleon, as the papacy had been accustomed to over all Europe, Emperor in France. Napoleon, actually, crowned and “proclaimed an empire” himself (Roberts, 1996: 317).

Thus was the violent dominance of the Catholic Church interrupted. In 1870, Garibaldi seemed to ensure that its supremacy would never rise again as he wrenched political power from the papacy by ceding all the papal states to Italy. The situation remained thus until the signing of the Treaty of Lateran in 1929, when the kingdom of Italy gave the Roman Catholic Church political power and international sovereignty over the Vatican State, an area in Rome of about 108 acres, effectively undermining a world institution that had governed over mankind with fear for centuries.

### **2.11.2 The re-emergence of papal influence**

Since 1929, the papacy has steadily been regaining world prominence and international power and influence. From 1958, with the election of Pius XII as the pope, the image of the papacy changed from one of suspicion. From the reign of Pope Pius XII to the recently completed reign of John Paul II the image of the papacy has been that of “love and social justice”. This image was no more strongly affirmed than by one of the biggest events of the end of the twentieth century, the fall of communism.

The greatest evidence of the new rise of the papacy towards becoming the world power it was during its medieval reign is probably provided in the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ronald Reagan has been given credit for winning the Cold War against communism. According to Roger Chapman (2004), this is “more fiction than fact”. Many reasons for the Russians’ abandonment of Marxism have been suggested. Among these being the fact that the international environment contributed to internal processes that undermined the Soviet system, such as: the decline of the communist regime in the eyes of its own citizens and leaders; the need for substantial reform; and the divisions within Soviet society.. All of this and more strengthened Roger Chapman’s conclusion that the first non-Italian leader of the Catholic Church in more than four centuries had inspired the people in eastern Europe to unshackle themselves from anti-Catholic communist rule. He gave the people a philosophical and moral pressure to apply against the Russians. As noted by Joaquin Navarro Vallis, the Pope’s spokesperson and one of his close advisors, “They (the Russians) knew how to deal with political pressure but they did not know how to deal with moral pressure” (Christensen, undated).

In the 1940s Joseph Stalin had vehemently opposed the Russian Roman Catholic Church, which had between four and five million members. He disbanded its organization. But the Church simply “went underground”. Freedom was regained in 1989 when Pope John Paul agreed to visit Moscow on invitation by Mikhail Gorbachev, on condition that permission was granted that Lithuanian and Ukranian Catholics be allowed to reorganize themselves and operate freely.

Before this event, President Ronald Reagan had used the growing influence of the Pope to win the presidency in the United States. In 1984 he met the Pope in Alaska. Soon thereafter he established full diplomatic relations with the Vatican City in Rome. This trend among the United States presidents had been going on since the time of Lyndon Johnson, who sought the Pope’s support on

Vietnam. It continued through Jimmy Carter's period up to the Bush Presidency, which he won in 2000 with the assistance of Catholics by 57% against Al Gore's 43%.

In another event, in 1986 the Pope met with the world's religious leaders in Assisi for the World Day of Prayer for Peace. In June 1989, seven hundred world delegates met with him in San Jose, to discuss peace and the new world order that must be established in the twenty-first century. Just eight months before he was consecrated as Pope John Paul II in 1980, Karel Wotolya gave utterance to what qualified as a challenge to world leaders in any sphere of life political, economical or otherwise: "Christ cannot be kept out of the history of man in any part of the globe, at any longitude or latitude of geography". He was speaking in front of 250 000 Poles, who broke out in song after that remark, singing: "Christ conquers, Christ rules".

## **2.12 The Hebrew and Christian phenomena in perspective**

At this point let us focus attention on the other major influence in Europe and the Middle East. From as far back as the ancient Egyptian through to the powerful Roman kingdoms there existed a people whose social economy was based on a unique religious pattern and lifestyle. The forebears of the Hebrew people were the descendants of the patriarch Abraham, who lived in the ancient Marduk-worshipping Babylonian city of Ur (Pritchard, 1969). Knowledge about the Hebrew people has been handed down by the historian Josephus, whose source was the writings and commentaries of the ancient writer Nehemia The collection of Nehemia, which was removed by the Romans (as reported by Grocius, the Roman) from the Jewish temple to the temple of Herod, was given to Josephus by the Roman general, Titus, who led the Roman army in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 (Whiston, 1980).

The Hebrew people have their origins among the three sons of Noah: Shem, Japhet and Ham. The descendants of Japhet inhabited, according to Josephus (Whiston, 1980: 30), the area from the mountains of Taurus to Asia as far as the river Tanais and along Europe to Cadiz. Various nations came from him whose names were altered by the Greeks. Japhet's son Gomer founded the people called the Galatians by the Greeks, later known as the Galls in Europe; Mogog and Madai (also sons of Japhet) founded the Magogates and the Madeans, known as the Scythians and the Medes; while from another son Javan came the Ionians and all the Greeks.

From Ham, Noah's second son, came nations that occupied the land from Syria and Amanus and the mountains of Libaus. Some of the names of the nations, noted Josephus, have disappeared. The following were some of the known ones: Ham's son Kush (Chus) reigned over the Ethiopians, who were known all over Asia, and to this day by themselves, as Cushites; Nimrod, Kush's son, founded the kingdom Babel, and Akkad (Accad); the people from Gaza to Egypt were called by the Judeans Mesraites, after another of Ham's sons, Mizraim; Phut is the son that founded the Lybians and Canaan inhabited the country that came to be known as Judea; Sidon, one of his sons, built the city called by Greeks, Sidon.

Shem, Noah's third son, had five sons. They occupied the land from the Euphrates to the Indian Ocean. Elam was the father of the Persians; Ashur lived in Nineveh and called his people the Assyrians – this ancestor is the one that came to be deified by the Assyrians; Lud and Aram founded the Lydians and the Syrians; Arphad's son, Sala, begat Heber, and from this son descended the Hebrew (Whiston, 1980:30).

### **2.12.1 Abraham**

Heber bore two sons, Joktan and Phaleg (Peleg in Genesis 10). Peleg begot Ragau (Reu in Genesis 11), who was the father of Serug, who became the father of Nahor. To Nahor's son, Tera (Thera), was born Abraham – his was “the tenth generation from Noah”.

The historicity of Abraham and his origin from among the Chaldeans who inhabited the Akkad kingdom founded by Nimrod, one of the sons of Cush, is attested to by at least three non-Hebrew historians. Josephus reported that Berossus mentioned Abraham “without naming him” as follows: “In the tenth generation after the flood, there was among the Chaldeans a man righteous and great, and skillful in the celestial science” (Whiston, 1980: 32); Hecateus wrote an entire book about Abraham. Nicolaus of Damascus wrote:

*Abram reigned at Damascus, being a foreigner who came with an army out of the land above Babylon, called the land of the Chaldeans. But after a long time he got him up, and removed from that country also with his people, and went into the land then called the land of Canaan, but now the land of Judea, and this when his posterity were become a multitude.*  
(Whiston, 1980: 32)

Attesting to Abraham's greatness, White (1958: 133) noted, "Abraham was honored by the surrounding nations as a mighty prince and a wise and able chief. ... His life and character, in marked contrast with those of the worshipers of idols, exerted a telling influence ... his affability and benevolence inspired confidence and friendship and his unaffected greatness commanded respect and honor".

### **2.12.2 The covenant**

The Hebrew myth of their origins has it that Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldeans by God the Creator of the heavens and the earth and everything in them, to start a new nation to be directly ruled by God Himself (Genesis 12). God entered into a contract – the Covenant – with Abraham as follows: "*I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; And you shall be a blessing; ... In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*"

Herein lies the uniqueness of the Hebrew origins from the origins of other peoples considered thus far. This nation was purposefully designed not to *live off* other nations but to *live for* the wellbeing – call it the development and growth – of other "families of the earth". This fact is demonstrated in Abraham's assistance of the king of Sodom and others against king Chedoloamer and five others whom he defeated in north Damascus. When the king of Sodom offered Abraham all of the booty – the hostages from Sodom and their possessions – that Abraham had rescued from Chadoloamer and his allies, Abraham refused to take anything: "I will take nothing", responded Abraham, "from a thread to a sandal strap" (Genesis 14: 23).

According to the biblical record, Abraham's magnanimity and compassion for people who were not of his nation was demonstrated when he interceded for the corrupt city of Sodom and its people (Genesis 15–18). This spirit of selflessness, benevolence and goodwill even towards perceived enemies was upheld later by the founder of Christianity. Little wonder that Abraham earned the biblical title, "friend of God" (White, 1958: 140).

### **2.12.3 Israel**

From the grandson of Abraham, Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, the nation got its name. Israel married two wives, who had two "maidservants"; together, these women bore him twelve sons: Reuben, his first born, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun were from Leah; Bilhar, the

maidservant of Rachel, gave birth to Dan and Naphtali; Zilpha, the maidservant of Leah, gave birth to Gad and Asher. Rachel bore him two sons, Joseph and Benjamin.

Owing to a famine that ravaged the land of Canaan, Israel and his entire household migrated and settled in Egypt, where they became known, as evidenced in the “twelfth century Egyptian papyri”, as the “Apiru [Hebrew]” (Baron, 1962: 37). After an initial period of peaceful stay, the Apiru were utilized by Pharaoh Ramses II – who reigned between 1301 and 1243 BC – as slaves. During the reign of Ramses’ son Merneptah (1234–1214 BC), the Israeli were miraculously freed from Egyptian slavery, according to the biblical record, through the efforts of Moses.

At the time of this escape from Egypt, the purpose and programme of existence for the Hebrew people, given to Abraham in Genesis 12, was revisited. It was articulated in the message to Pharaoh, very clearly: “Let My people go, that they may serve Me” (Exodus 7).

Over six hundred thousand men were led by Moses and his elder brother Aaron, of the tribe of Levi, out of Egyptian bondage. They travelled through the Sinai desert on their way to Canaan, the land that their God had promised to Abraham. For over thirty-eight years they “wandered in the *Badeit et Tih* (Wilderness of the Wanderings)” (Gigot, 1910), fighting long and hard battles with other nations that were opposing their entrance into Canaan.

It is around the beginning of this desert experience that the Covenant made with Abraham was revisited. Under the lofty Mount Sinai, the original plan was “revealed to a people called to make known to every nation, kindred and tongue the principles” of the government of God, principles that should mark relations among individuals and nations (White, 1948: 10). They embraced precepts regarding their relations with themselves and other nations. These were the Ten Commandments. The households of Israel lived and taught this law, not only among themselves and to their descendants, but to all other nations, so that the other nations might worship this God.

The foundational teaching of this law is couched in the instruction by their leader and teacher, Moses, who taught them in Leviticus (one of his five books, known jointly as the Pentateuch) (19: 17): “Love your neighbour as yourself”. And one of their major prophets, Isaiah carried this message to the people from their God: “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me? ... I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams, ... I do not delight in the blood of bulls or lambs or goats, ... bring no more futile sacrifices, ... when you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes

from you. Even though you make many prayers I will not hear” (1: 11). The main requirement was that the people should “learn to do good, seek justice, rebuke the oppressor, defend the fatherless, plead for the widow” (1: 17).

The Israeli people were to “be the channels for the outworking of the highest influence in the universe” (White, 1948: 12). The advice given by Moses (Deuteronomy, 4: 6) concerning the precepts, was clear and simple: “Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great”.

It will be observed, below, that the principles of the Decalogue were made plain in the life and teachings of the man whom Josephus called the “Great Teacher” – Jesus. As has been demonstrated, these principles, under a new movement, Christianity, spread to almost every corner of the known world. The life and teachings of Jesus impressed and/or made an impact on individual lives as distinct as those of Tolstoy in Russia, Ghandi in India, Schweitzer in Germany, Martin Luther King in the United States, and Chief Ngqika, Nxele ka Makanda, Ntsikana and Soga among amaXhosa in the Eastern Cape region of South Africa. Later in this study the lives and influence of these particular persons will be reviewed.

#### **2.12.4 Moses**

This “liberator, leader, lawgiver, prophet and historian”, according to the Catholic Encyclopedia, lived in the “thirteenth and early part of the twelfth century, BC” (O’Reilly, 1911: 1).

As evident in the social laws he enacted, Moses was a kind and gracious leader to humans and animals alike. Examples of this can be clearly observed in the words he spoke after having led the Israelites in the desert for forty years. From the borders of the promised land he instructed that:

*30. It is not lawful to pass by any beast that is in distress, ... 31. It is also a duty to shew the roads to those who do not know them, and not to esteem it a matter of sport, when we hinder others’ advantages, by setting them in a wrong way. 32. In like manner let no one revile a person blind or dumb.* (Whiston, 1980: 95–103)

His magnanimity and graciousness is perhaps best demonstrated soon after the Israelites had left Egypt. During a long absence the people had remained under the temporary leadership of his

brother Aaron, whom they convinced to lead them in reverting to the gods of Egypt. A golden calf, the image of one of the Egyptian deities, was built. This constituted a rejection of the leadership and honor of Yahweh as the true and only God.

This event infuriated God to the extent that He took a decision that the Hebrews be wiped out as a nation. God suggested to Moses that He should destroy all the idolaters and that a new nation be started after him (Exodus 32). This Moses refused, requesting rather that grace be shown to the “stiff-necked people”. He pleaded for pardon for “our iniquity”, including himself in rare humility among those that had wronged God. He went further to propose that God should rather “blot” him out of His book, and spare the lives of the nation rather than wipe them out of existence. Such leadership and beauty of character earned Moses the people’s deepest respect and honour and the accolade of being known as the friend of God. Josephus observed that at his death “the people mourned him thirty days; nor did any grief so deeply affect the Hebrews as did this upon the death of Moses” (Whiston, 1980: 103).

### **2.12.5 The Israeli sacrificial system of worship**

In dramatic contrast to the system of worship seen in the other kingdoms such as Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece and Rome, where a multiplicity of gods were appeased by plundering both compatriots and the people of other nations and by offering booty to them as sacrifices, Israeli worship was based on honouring a single Godhead who insisted on the Israelites being a “blessing to others” within Israel and to “all families of the earth”. The Israeli sacrificial system, illustrated in the sanctuary service given to Moses, rested on the principle of “atonement” for wrongs committed against other humans. Wrongdoing against others constituted wrongdoing against God, and therefore the wrongdoer had to be reconciled both with God and the wronged by seeking atonement. The latter term is composed of the three constituents at-one-ment, seeking to be one again. A premium was therefore put on harmonious relations among the people and their neighbours. If a neighbour was robbed or had possessions extorted from, there had to be restitution, first before any seeking after forgiveness by the wrong doer, from God. This why the system, without grounding in practical day-to-day acts of human ‘at-one-ment’ (centred on forgiveness), became a dry, meaningless formality.

This model of worshipping God through beneficial social relations was held as supreme through successive generations. Even during later periods such as that of one of their minor prophets, Hosea,

this lifestyle was still stressed, that their God “desires mercy and not sacrifice” (Hosea 6: 6). Devoid of this type of social relationship with and service to their “neighbours”, a concept which included people of other nationalities, their worship was regarded as an abominable futility.

Even during the period of the Roman hegemony and afterwards, this constituted the core teaching of Christ and his apostles to both the Hebrews and the gentiles. The apostle Paul, for example, taught new converts in the Greek city of Corinth: “Let no one seek his own but each one the other’s well being” (I Corinthians 10: 24). This put looking after others “purely for their own good” (Bruinsma, 2004: 9) as an ideal to be intentionally observed in relationships with others.

### **2.12.6 The disintegration of the House of Israel**

Moses had given the Israelites stern warnings against the worshipping of foreign gods. In the book of Leviticus (18: 21 and 20: 5), the command was “And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, ... I am the Lord”; “thou shalt say to the children of Israel, whoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death”.

After the Hebrew people entered the promised land of Canaan, most of the opposing nations having been defeated, a period followed known as that of the Judges. Moses was dead and Joshua, his successor, was dead too. According to the book of Judges, “another generation arose who did not know God nor the work which He had done for Israel” (2: 10–17). This was a period when the Israelites “forsook the Lord God of their fathers, ... they followed other gods from among the gods who were all around them; ... They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the Lord; they did not do so”. A series of enslavements marked this period: Eglon, king of the Moabites, “despised” them and made them “pay tribute to him for eighteen years” noted Josephus; the Canaanites, Midianites, Arabians, Amalekites and Philistines took turns to subjugate them (Whiston, 1980: 110–115), exactly as Moses had warned in the book of Deuteronomy (4: 27).

This period was followed by that of the kings. Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin, became the first king of the Israelites, who demanded a king like the other nations. He was followed by David from the house of Judah.

David, “a man after God’s heart”, defeated all of Israel’s enemies and restored peace to his people. This he ascribed to the fact that: “I have kept the ways of the Lord; And have not wickedly departed from my God” (II Samuel 22: 22). Unfortunately, David’s son Solomon and Solomon’s son Rehoboam led the people of God to worship other gods. The people forsook God for foreign gods such as Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh of the Moabites, and Milcom, the god of the Ammonites.

### ***The decline: Worship of Chemosh, Milcom and Ashtoreth***

Moral decline started when, according to the First Book of Kings, “King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; ... when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods; ... for Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites; ... Solomon built an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab” (11: 1–8).

*The nature of Chemosh worship:* The central part of the worship of Chemosh, “the national god of the Ammonites” was the sacrifice of children” as burnt offering (Jeffreys, 1992).

*The nature of Milcom worship:* Milcom or Molech or Moloch, according to Collin de Plancy (1863), was the god of the Ammonites. He was “portrayed as a bronze statue with a calf’s head, adorned with a royal crown and seated on a throne. His arms were extended to receive the child victims sacrificed to him. Milton wrote that Moloch was a frightening and terrible demon covered with mothers’ tears and children’s blood. When a child was sacrificed to Moloch, a fire was lit inside the statue. The priests then beat loudly on drums so that the cries would not be heard” (in Drake, 2006).

*The nature of Ashtoreth worship:* This mother-goddess called Ishtar in Babylonia and Athtar in Arabia was the chief goddess of Sidonia. She was worshipped as an independent divinity (Jastrow & Barton, 2002). The prominent feature of her worship rituals was wailing for Tammuz. “Women were obliged to sacrifice either their hair or their chastity. ... Her worship made its way to Corinth where it corrupted the simple purity of the old Greek family life, [then] to Italy and North Africa. In Babylon she was known as Zarpanit the wife of Marduk. Every woman in Babylon, according to Herodotus (1972: i, 199) was compelled once in her life to “offer her person at Zarpanit’s shrine”.

The worship of these foreign gods marked a period of departure from the mission and lifestyle lived by Abraham and their other forefathers. It was a period of social decline premised on the dehumanizing religious systems of the gods mentioned above. This decline, which followed soon after Solomon, has been analyzed by Baron (1962: 68) as “general economic decline” which was “accompanied by a steady process of differentiation. Some of the rich grew richer at the expense of their fellows”. The intellectuals of the time, such as Isaiah, Hosea and Micah, articulated the fundamental weaknesses: wealth accumulation, self-aggrandizement, corruption and callous disregard of the plight of the poor.

*Woe to those who join house to house; they add field to field;  
Woe to men, ... who justify the wicked for a bribe. (Isaiah 5: 8)*

*There is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land;  
Therefore the land will mourn, and everyone who dwells there will waste away;  
Israel is stubborn, like a stubborn calf (Hosea 4: 1)*

*O children of Israel, ... You only have I known of all the families of the Earth; ... See great  
tumults in her midst. And the oppressed within her  
For they do not know how to do right  
who store up violence and robbery in their palaces;  
who oppress the poor; who crush the needy. (Amos 3: passim; 4: 1)*

In this “pre-capitalistic system”, notes Baron “money, although not yet in coined form, became a dominant factor. He continued:

*Economically exhausted (through the frequent wars and payments of regular or irregular tributes), the country must have suffered a severe capital shortage. If in contemporary Assyria, with all the vast resources of a great empire, the average rate of interest was 25 percent, credit must have been much more expensive in this impoverished country. The poorer peasants were often permanently ruined by their debts. ... Israeli law, like that of the other ancient oriental and western nations, gave the creditor the right to exact payment in the form of prolonged involuntary service. Thus many ‘Hebrews’ became ... slaves of more well-to-do-brethren. When the term of bondage of such debtors was over, they could only join the increasing mass of landless workers; ... most of them became hired agricultural laborers on large estates (1962: 69).*

Such unfair social and economic conditions were clearly contrary to the values upheld by their ancient leaders such as Moses, who cherished justice. The results were dramatic. Israel was split into two kingdoms: the northern kingdom with headquarters in Samaria and the southern kingdom of Judah with headquarters in Jerusalem. Eventually the northern kingdom was subdued by the Assyrians and its people dispersed.

### ***The fall of the northern kingdom and the scattering of Israel***

Even a cursory reading of the history of the northern kingdom of Israel reveals one simple point, it had assumed a nature similar to that of the polytheistic kingdoms they had been warned against by Moses and into which Solomon had married. Twenty kings ruled, each over an average period of about ten and a half years. Seven of these ascended the throne by murdering predecessors. All of them, especially the so-called “Omri Dynasty” from 885 to 841 BC – Omri, Ahab (Omri’s son), and Ahazia and Jehoram (Ahab’s sons) – had one main characteristic: they “did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any” (I Kings 16).

Hoshea, the last king of the northern kingdom, came into power by murdering king Pekah. He ruled for only nine years.

The most fatal blow to Jerusalem came in AD 70, as described above in the section on the Romans. In a siege that lasted five months, the Jews refused to surrender Jerusalem, the symbol of their nationhood, to the Roman general, Titus. Eleven thousand Jews perished in Jerusalem and ninety-seven thousand were taken into captivity. Thus were the Jews scattered among other nations, as Moses had warned.

### **2.12.7 The historicity of Jesus**

The historical authenticity of Jesus Christ has been a matter of controversy. The German historian Bruno Baur, for example, has suggested that Jesus was nothing more than the mental invention of a few people who were influenced by Graeco-Roman philosophy; many have come to accept with little evidence that “the new Testament Jesus is a myth” (Barker, 1992: 378).

Apart from the biblical testimony, history is replete with evidence of the reality of the person of Christ whose followers bear His name. The most well known is that of Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian who won the respect of the Romans. He was born in about AD 37 and accompanied Titus when he led the armies into Jerusalem in AD 70. He never became a Christian. This is his testimony about Jesus:

*At that time lived Jesus, a wise man, if he may be called a man; for he performed many wonderful works. He was a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. ... And when Pilate, at the instigation of the chief men among us, had condemned him to the cross, they who before had conceived an affection for him did not cease to adhere to him. For on the third day he appeared to them alive again, the divine prophets having foretold these and many other wonderful things concerning him. And the sect of the Christians, so called from him, subsists at this time. (Whiston, 1980: 379)*

Several Roman writers and historians alluded to the existence of Jesus (Bettenson, 1961). Tacitus's *Annals* (AD 115) make reference to "Christus" who "was executed at the hands of the procurator Pontius Pilate" during the reign of Tiberius". The popular Roman writer, Suetonius, declared that Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome because they were "continually making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus". Pliny, the governor of Bithynia, wrote to the emperor Trajan, seeking his advice about how he should deal with Christians who made it a practice to sing hymns to "Christ as if to God" (AD 112).

The oracles of the Romans have been an "invaluable source of Roman imperial history" to modern historians, as they revealed "the sort of things that people knew and believed about the political life of their times", notes Potter (1990: 114); in the sixth to the eighth oracles references can be found to Christ and Christianity.

Another source of the historical veracity of the existence of Christ are the antagonists of Christianity (Hurst, 1897: 180–189). In his book, *True Discourse* (AD 178), Celstius bitterly attacked Christ on account of his illegitimate birth and for announcing himself to be God as he grew. Samosata (AD 115–200) contemptuously referred to Christians as worshippers of a well-known "sophist" who was crucified in Palestine because of the "new mysteries he introduced".

### **2.12.8 The centrality of human relations in Christ's teaching**

At a time when leaders of His society (the Pharisees) were propagating social stratification in the form of this kind of regulation: “No madman, or lunatic, or simpleton, or fool, no blind man, or maimed, or lame, or deaf man and no minor, shall enter into the Community” teaching such as was held by the community of the Essenes (Charlesworth, 1992: 25), Christ was mingling with prostitutes, dining with tax collectors – a class of people considered as traitors and brigands – feasting with lepers and every other sort of social outcast who felt comfortable around Him. His lifestyle forced the question to His followers from the lips of the leaders: “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” (Matthew 9: 11).

Kindness and mercy seem to have been among the leading motives driving His relations with people, especially the needy. These enjoyed his attention and care more than did his own mother and brothers: “Who is my mother, or my brothers?” he asked when he was called out to meet them outside while he was teaching. “Here are my mother and my brothers” (Mark 3: 34), he responded, pointing to the multitude that surrounded Him.

The so-called beatitudes are considered to contain the most comprehensive doctrines taught by Christ as far as human values and relations are concerned. The following are illustrative of these as reflected on by Ellen White in her 1898 book *The desire of ages* (1940: 299–314 ).

*Contrition:* Only those who are “poor in spirit”, the humble, are acceptable and pleasing in the sight of the Creator. God declared through the prophet Isaiah (57: 15): “I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit”. It is those who realize that of themselves they have nothing to be proud of that are in fact better than others.

*Meekness:* Lowliness of heart, through self-control, strengthens a person to rise above the daily annoyances. The Psalmist King David taught: “Though the Lord be high, yet He hath respect for the lowly” (Psalm 138: 6). Greatness, wisdom, beneficence, “zeal and restless activity”, without meekness, are all futility.

Having meditated on the greatness of this aesthetic value, meekness, F.B. Meyer (quoted in Batchelor, 2001: 102) came to this conclusion:

*I used to think that God's gifts were on shelves one above the other, and that the taller we grew in Christian character the easier we could reach them. I now find that God's gifts are on shelves one beneath the other. It is not a question of growing taller but stooping lower; that we have to go down, always down, to get His best gifts.*

*Hunger and thirst after goodness:* The ultimate measure of righteousness is God. This character must be sought after. In the book of Exodus (34: 6) God Himself taught Moses, who requested to know Him, that He is “merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth”. Jesus lived on earth at a time when the mere assent to truth constituted righteousness. It was the greatest deception of the time. This is the reason behind the statement by Christ, “except your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5: 20). Merely subscribing to certain theological tenets, according to him, does not amount to goodness. The truth must, from inner goodness, be brought into daily living. Pharisees were religious leaders who prided themselves in their paraded piety; it was only an outward charade. This is why Jesus said to them; “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.” (Matthew 23: 27).

*Makers of peace:* In a world in which people are at enmity with themselves and the natural environment, Christ taught that God expects of those who want to be accepted by Him to work towards bringing harmony in their natural environment. Strife and dissention are the direct consequences of the rejection of and disobedience to the commandments of God, which are the transcript of His character. The Psalmist proclaimed: “Great peace have they that love Thy law” (Psalm 119: 165). Human plans for the purification and uplifting of individuals or society will fail at producing peace because they do not reach the heart.

*“Salt” and “light” of the world:* In ancient times salt was used not only to give flavour to food but also to prevent decay. Christ taught that those who follow His instruction and develop character as explained above can be an influence for good and preserve the world from corruption. Such a character must not be confined within walls that separate them from a world that is in need, but must live openly, radiating light, for all to see and benefit from.

In his Sermon on the Mount Christ emphasized His belief in the Torah: “Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law and the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill” (Matthew 5: 17).

He then proceeded to deal separately with the “Law and the Prophets” giving an interpretation that showed how far-reaching its principles are, and exposing errors in the way that they were outwardly observed at that time. A few of these are considered briefly here, again drawing on White’s *The desire of ages* (1940: 299–314) and Philip Yancey’s *The Jesus I never knew* (1995: 130–144).

#### *Love your enemies*

The Jewish people at this point in time were under Roman oppression. Such a statement from another Jew surprised them as the spirit of bitterness, animosity and retaliation against the world empire was cherished. This in turn established their enemies in their hardness. Christ, who taught that God the Father causes the “sun to rise on the evil and the good” and sends the rain “on the just and on the unjust”, instructed them, to their amazement, to “bless them that curse you” and to “do good to them that hate you” (Luke 6 :27). These he taught as the principles of the law they claimed to keep. There can never be any excuse for cherishing hatred against others, no matter how unlovable and unloving they may be.

#### *Give in sincerity, not to win praise*

Almsgiving and fasting in public were common. Christ taught that these should not be done from the motive of self-glorification, to attract attention and praise, but out of sincerity for the benefit of the poor. Just as murders and adultery start from a negative inner spirit, there is nothing commendable about doing something that looks externally good when it emanates from a corrupt inner spirit. “When you do a charitable deed”, He said, “do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory. ... When you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing” (Matthew 6: 2).

#### *Responsibility for the wellness of others*

“Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them.” This Christ taught as the essence of “The Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7: 12). This is a far-reaching statement that applies especially to taking care of the needs of the poor. The implication of this statement includes the seeking to understand the struggles of the poor; those who are rich putting themselves in the place of those in need of development. Failure to do this compels the needy to feel deeply “the poverty that narrows their life, and [be] tempted to become envious, jealous, and full of evil surmisings. Those who themselves have not endured the pressure of want too often treat the poor in a contemptuous way, and make them feel that they are looked upon as paupers” (White, 1940: 639).

The Commandments are not simply a set of rules to regulate external behaviours such as adultery or theft. Christ taught that beneath the letter of the law lies a spirit that enables people to satisfy the law. Without an appreciation of these fundamental endowments such as humility, meekness, compassion, long-suffering and tolerance, loving ones enemies, law-keeping becomes a dry and useless formality that transforms no-one.

### *Mercy not sacrifice*

Christ projected the law of God as “perfect and righteous”. The law therefore requires perfect obedience. Because of the human condition of imperfection before the perfect law, God in his kindness and mercy has reconciled humanity to Himself through Christ who took on himself the punishment that was the imperfect world’s to bear. This is the message of the prophets in the Torah. The prophet Isaiah (53: 5–8) foretold: “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, by his stripes we are healed; ... he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.”

Christ taught His fellows to mete out this sort of treatment even to those who angered and sickened them, like Zaccheus the tax collector. Tax collectors “collected taxes on a commission basis, pocketing whatever profits they could extort from the locals, and most Jews viewed them as traitors serving the Roman Empire” (Yancey, 1995: 151). The amazing thing is that Christ invited Himself to the house of this ostracized man for a meal in the presence and in the hearing of what must have been a disapproving crowd of admirers. But the mercy extended towards Zaccheus transformed him, to the extent that he committed to giving “half of my goods to the poor;” and to restoring to those he had robbed “fourfold” (Luke 19: 8).

Christ illustrated this relationship – of transformative grace and mercy – no more emphatically than in the parable of the Pharisee and the remorseful tax collector who went to pray in the temple. The Pharisee who, in self-commendation related his sacrificial lifestyle, fasting twice a week and tithing faithfully, “piously thanked God that he was above robbers, evildoers, and adulterers” and asked Him to note how much better he was than “this publican”, the tax collector standing to the side. The tax collector, “standing afar off”, too humiliated even to raise his eyes to heaven, prayed the simplest prayer possible, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner”. “I tell you”, Christ concluded, “this man rather than the other, went home justified before God” (Luke 18:9–14).

Having noted the loss by humanity of the “arts of living together in mutual respect” (Toulmin, 1990: 89), which, as suggested in the introductory chapter implies the disappearance of beauty in inter-human and human-nature relationships, the relational principles advocated by Christ provide humanity with the actual tools for the actualization of the harmony that eludes our globe. This is the good art which according to Plato, is not merely appealing to emotions but also challenges people “toward disciplined behaviour and proper habits of social harmony” (Blocker and Jeffers, 1999: 2).

### **2.12.9 The relational principles in the Hindu Kural**

A quick glance at the teachings of the Hindu Kural reveals that the principles taught by Jesus were also appreciated by others who were not of the Christian faith. The following passage illustrates this:

*The aim of the sinless one consists in acting without causing sorrow to others, although he could attain to great power by ignoring their feelings. The aim of the sinless one lies in not doing evil unto those who have done evil unto him. If a man causes suffering, even to those who hate him without reason, he will ultimately have grief not to be overcome. The punishment of evil doers consists in making them feel ashamed of themselves by doing them a great kindness (Srinivasa, 1987: 48).*

This passage echoes and resonates with biblical wisdom as taught by the Jewish king Solomon: “Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles” (Proverbs 24: 17). Similarly, the apostle Paul (Romans 12: 20–21) admonished: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him a drink, for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (here he quotes from Proverbs 25: 21).

### **2.12.10 The impact of Christian teaching illustrated**

Soon after the death of Christ, his teachings grew and spread as swiftly as wildfire:

*From Jerusalem the Apostles and disciples of Jesus spread his teachings to Syria, Asia Minor, Africa, Greece, and Rome. Throughout every city and village churches were quickly established and filled with members from every people. ... The ‘Christians’ – a term of derision first used by the heathen of Antioch, – numbering 500 in 30 AD, grew to 500 000 by 100 AD and increased to 30 000 000 by 311 AD. (Flick, 1909: 54)*

As Roberts observed, if numbers are an indication of any importance, the impact of the phenomenon of Jesus is unrivaled “in the whole of human history” (1996: 53). In the Christian scholar, Mark Finley’s experience “the Gospel of Jesus Christ, ... is moving people’s hearts – in every part of the earth” (2000: 428). In an “isolated” place, “inaccessible by motor vehicle” beyond the “rocky hills of the central Phillipines”, notes Finley, “where the people were animists who worshipped objects of nature”, a group of Adventist Christians found that shortly before their arrival and teaching about Jesus, whose message they gladly embraced, they had, inexplicably, been getting ready to build a structure in which they were to worship the unseen God who created all nature. “Deep into the jungles of the islands of Mindoro in the Phillipines, the Olagan tribe has been untouchable but today they are accepting” the news and teachings of Jesus Christ (2000: 429). The teaching is entering places in Mongolia, Yugoslavia, Romania and Russia, where communist rule never tolerated any ideological rivalry (Finley, 2000).

This growth has continued to surge ahead all over the world in present times. According to the Institute of Christian History, it is taking place in an “unprecedented” manner in Africa (2007).

Many explanations have been proposed for why Christianity spread as widely as it did in Europe and to all the corners of the Roman Empire in such a relatively short time. Josephus noted that “he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher, who drew over to him both many of the Jews and gentiles” (Whiston, 1980: 379). Flick (1909) put forward “causes for this marvelous growth”: 1. “the revolutionary teaching, particularly the idea of immortality”; 2. “the miraculous powers attributed to the first Christians”; 3. “the purer and austere morality of the early Christians”; 4. “the unity and discipline of the Church”, amongst others.

According to Finley (2000: 429), “its not just human strategy, ... we’re seeing the fulfillment of that promise to the disciples (made by Christ Himself): ‘you shall be witnesses to Me ... to the end of the earth’” (Acts, 1 vs 8). The bottom line is that his teachings benefited society. They made those who appreciate and practise them an admirable blessing to others as we shall observe below. The impact that Christ’s teaching made in the lives of individuals, even as late as the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, has been phenomenal. The following testimonies are illustrative of this.

### *Leo Tolstoy of Russia*

Tolstoy wrote in his *Confessions*: “I was baptized and brought up in the Orthodox Christian faith. I was instructed in it both as a child and throughout my boyhood and youth”. His faith came to a decline when he was about sixteen: “I no longer believed in what I had been taught as a child”. Essentially the decline had come about in the same way in which it does to “those from our kind of background”, he noted, and then explained it as follows: “People live as everyone lives, but on the basis of principles that not only have nothing in common with religious doctrines but are, on the whole, contrary to them; religious doctrine has no part in life, or in relations between people” (1987: 12).

At the age of twenty-six he took up writing seriously and was well paid – “and I was famous” – living in the company of literary associates who believed themselves to be in a vocation that educated people. The question that bothered him was: “What do I know and what have I got to teach?”. This question was avoided among his associates by the theory that “the poet and the artist teach unconsciously”. He found himself becoming “one of the priests” in the religion of poetry and writing. The point of doubt came when he noticed that the “priests in this religion” were often vehemently in disagreement among themselves; “they argued, quarreled, deceived and tricked one another”. Slowly he began to hate himself and his “fellow priests” (1987: 13).

Despite considering the task of writing unimportant, he continued to write, tasting the temptations of authorship, obtaining enormous “financial gain and applause for my trivial work”. “I wrote, teaching what was for me the only truth: that we must live in order to give ourselves and our families the best possible in life”. But he never gave up the attempt to find an answer to the question that bothered him: “Why do I wish for anything, or do anything, ... is there any meaning in life that will not be annihilated by the inevitability of death which awaits me?”.

“I searched all branches of knowledge,” said Tolstoy, “and not only found nothing, but was convinced that all those who had searched the realms of knowledge like myself had likewise found nothing.” “All our activities,” he concluded, “our discussions, our science and our art struck me as sheer indulgence. I realized that there is no meaning to be found here” (1987: 13)

Dissatisfied with the Russian Orthodox Church, which to him was simply “the arm of state”, he embarked on a path of criticism against it and subsequently earned excommunication in 1901. This had all started when he made a deep examination of the teachings of Christ in the late 1870s in

order to find the essence of “Christ’s message to humanity” (1987: 13). Many of his conclusions were presented in writing, for example: What is religion and of what does its essence consist? Herein he described what he saw as “the Church’s distortion of the truth in the Christian teaching”. The Church and its members, the Christians, had become practitioners of the sort of lifestyle characterized by violence; the institution had become a “deception that resembles religion” (1987: 124).

He defined true religion as a “relationship with God, ... which in turn leads to the practical rules of the law of doing unto others as you would have them do unto you, or ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ ”. Tolstoy described faith as a state of the soul conducive to certain behaviour, rather than the fulfilment of meaningless ceremonies and repetition of certain words (1987: 14).

Human prosperity, Tolstoy came to believe, ultimately depended on the following of the relational principles taught by Christ, including the denial of violence in all its manifestations. He summarized the commandments of Jesus, “truths which humanity can never afford to part with”, as follows:

*Do not be angry without a cause;*

*Do not commit adultery;*

*Do not swear;*

*Do not resist evil by violence;*

*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.*

“Parents, rulers and teachers,” Tolstoy proposed, “ only need to instill in children these clear and simple truths, common to people of all religions, ... the practical law of which is that man must behave towards others as he would wish others to behave towards him” (1987: 122). People have become accustomed to “establishing and securing their existence by force, bayonets, bullets, dungeons, and gallows” and have come to believe that this is the only way that works, and is normal. Even to this day, governments perceive this as the normal way; so do churches and schools operate. All such efforts “to improve” people’s lives through violent external behaviour” must fail; they do not improve life; “on the contrary”, such efforts “increase the evil which gathers size like a snowball and increasingly alienates people from the only possible way of genuinely improving their lives” (1987: 122).

The way out of this violence cannot be found by “non-religious people”, suggested Tolstoy, not even by those who pretend to “be concerned for the welfare of the masses”. It is the enslavement in which the masses live that enables the rich to rule over them, and so they do not attempt to guide the masses out of this enslavement. On the other hand, the masses themselves, guided by their aim of gain, tend to avoid doing anything that would make the situation worse.

But Tolstoy observed that religious people, few as they were, did exist. Only they “can tear asunder” the chains in which people are shackled. This is made possible by a “religion corresponding to the present state of mankind, the religion of Christ” which according to him is “a practical religion not promising future bliss but giving bliss on earth.” (Summers, 2007)

How did Tolstoy apply all of this in his own life? Tolstoy started as a count. He lived in a period in which the elite and the rich in Russia “esteemed: Moscow balls, luxurious surroundings, expensive clothing, social success, spicy, tasty, and plentiful food and an insatiable desire for acquisition”. Born around 1827, he was a beneficiary of an enormous estate from which he could sustain his family without having needed to work. Yancey (1995: 137), described the effect of the teaching of Christ on Tolstoy’s life as exemplified in the advice given by Christ to the rich young ruler, to sell everything he possessed and to give to the needy. Tolstoy freed his serfs, gave away his copyrights, and disposed of his vast estate.

In his native country Tolstoy was against what he called a “bestial order of life existing among the Christian nations”. He was an ardent protector of the liberty of conscience: “the task of each man is only to observe his own life in accordance with the supreme religious law revealed to him” (1987: 220).

He exposed the “evils of the government, the Church and Capitalism” and unwittingly prepared the way for the Russian Revolution, as acknowledged by Lenin. For years he warned and advised the Tsar to make social reforms: “Every thinking person of our time cannot fail to see that there are only two ways out of the oppressive and menacing situation with which we are now confronted: one, though very difficult, is bloody revolution; and the other is for the government to realize not to oppose the law of progress” (1987: 10). “Through his doctrines of non-resistance and love, Tolstoy proposed to reconstruct society so as to wipe out economic and social inequality” (Srinivasa, 1987: 11). The “greatest and most important changes in the life of humanity”, Tolstoy taught, are not brought about by any “feats of heroism, ... neither by the arming of men, nor construction of new

railways and machines, ... nor perfection of aerial navigation”, but through the practice, in society, of the principles expounded by Jesus.

Dostoevsky, Tolstoy’s compatriot, upheld these principles, which Zenkovsky called his “aesthetic views” (1962: 142). The “beauty” of these principles, Dostoevsky believed, “inheres in everything healthy”. “Mankind,” Dostoevsky also taught, “can live without science” but cannot live without this beauty. The whole mystery is there, and the whole of history”; this beauty “is harmony, and it contains a guarantee of tranquility” (1962: 141).

Tolstoy’s understanding of Christ’s teaching influenced the history of an entire nation in another country, through his influence on the life of one man in that nation, Mahatma Gandhi, in India.

### ***Gandhi***

Gandhi is known to have acknowledged himself as Tolstoy’s “humble follower”. In the early years of the nineteenth century, Mahatma Gandhi and Tolstoy “had begun a correspondence” (Iyer, 1986: 15).

Gandhi started his search of the Bible while living in South Africa. It was in particular the Sermon on the Mount, upon which Tolstoy had defined “true religion,” that impressed him. As he experienced the cruelty of an inhuman political system that was supported by both the Church and the State that claimed to be Christian, “the bloody butchery that European aggressors have unloosed” (Iyer, 1986: 519), Gandhi had to ask himself as he read the Bible: “Is this Christianity?”; “not this, not this” had to be the answer. He observed in the teachings of Jesus, a “forgiving” God with a “boundless love; infinite compassion, such that He allows man insolently to deny Him, wrangle about Him, and cut the throat of his fellow-man” (Iyer, 1986: 449). If the treatment he suffered in South Africa, and later in India under British rule, was Christian, then it was a distortion of what he was reading about in the Bible. The “message of Jesus”, which is “contained in His Sermon on the Mount unadulterated and taken as a whole, ... is different from the orthodox, ... to my mind, has suffered distortion in the West; conduct everywhere falls far short of belief” (in Iyer, 1986: 498).

Gandhi believed that man has in himself “an impulse for good and a compassion” which he always hoped would “burst forth into full flower” for the benefit of all mankind (Iyer, 1986: 519). In the

life of Jesus he found “an example of this flowering”. He acknowledged the power of Jesus’ teaching to change lives: “the lives of all, have in some greater or lesser degree, been changed by His presence, His actions, and the words spoken by His divine voice” (Iyer, 1986: 519). There is therefore no doubt that Gandhi found in the teaching of Jesus, especially the Sermon on the Mount, “the quintessence of true religion” (Iyer, 1986: 248) for all humanity.

Though Gandhi was a Hindu, he not only admired Jesus but believed that Jesus must be allowed to “find” a place in each person’s heart. Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, in particular, gave to a person “the culture of the heart” to which, according to Gandhi, “the culture of the mind must be subservient”; this, he taught, “is the basis of all sound education”. He admonished Hindu students that “your lives will be incomplete unless you reverently study the teachings of Jesus” (Iyer, 1986: 496–497).

The effect and extent of the teachings of Jesus on Gandhi’s life can, perhaps, be best expressed in an illustration given by an American missionary, Stanley Jones, who wrote: “I am still an evangelist. I bow to Mahatma Gandhi, but I kneel at the feet of Christ and give Him my full and final allegiance. And yet a little man, who fought a system in the framework of which I stand, has taught me more of the spirit of Christ than perhaps any other man in the East or West” (in Srinivasa, 1987: 13).

Stanley Jones was not the only Christian preacher that benefited from Gandhi. The effectiveness of non-violence as a practical way of life had been demonstrated in India through the teaching and life of Gandhi. Martin Luther King Junior, a Gandhi-inspired leader, helped people in the United States to reach out beyond cultural boundaries towards harmonious living relations. He started with his own, black, people, helping them to discover the gems of the principles in the Sermon on the Mount, to appreciate and take pride in who they were as a people, whose worth was as that of any other, and to be comfortable in reaching out to others from this position.

### *Schweitzer*

Albert Schweitzer was the son of a Christian pastor in Kaysersberg, Alsace, Germany. He grew from an early age listening to his father’s sermons, “which were reflections of day-by-day experience”. The self-sacrificial labours of missionaries like Casalis among Africans in South Africa and Lesotho so impressed him that he developed very early on a sensitivity to the suffering

of both humans and animals. Once, a village boy he had “subdued in a wrestling bout had cried that he too might be strong if he had broth twice a week like the pastor’s son”; after that incident, broth had gagged him, “he did not want what the village boys did not have” (Hagedorn, 1962: 22).

He had an unusual sympathy for animals. So real were the sufferings of animals to him, that when at bedtime his mother told him to pray for humans only, he obeyed; but as soon as she had “put out the light and left the room, he returned to his devotions with a whispered prayer of his own that embraced all living creatures: ‘O, heavenly Father, protect and bless all things that have breath. Guard them from all evil, and let them sleep in peace’ ” (Hagedorn, 1962: 23). Schweitzer later wrote in his *Memoirs of Childhood and Youth*: “As far back as I can remember the thought of all the misery in the world has been a constant source of pain and grief to me. ... The chief cause of pain to me was the knowledge of the untold sufferings of animals. The sight of a limping horse which a man was dragging along behind him to the slaughter house in Colmar, whilst another was belabouring it with a stick, haunted me for weeks. ... It seemed to me incredible – this was even before I was old enough to go to school – that I should only include human beings in my evening prayers” (Kraus, 1944: 10).

This doctor of theology, doctor of philosophy and doctor of music left the most sought-after secure civil service position, in one of the most attractive universities of Europe, with a growing reputation, and put it all aside to serve “wretched savages” in Africa. He was convinced that “he who has been blest with joy and beauty has incurred a debt which he cannot evade. He who has been spared sorrow is under an obligation to alleviate the suffering of those less fortunate” (Kraus, 1944: 36).

He pondered much about the teachings and parables of Jesus. The parable of the rich Dives and the poor Lazarus, in particular, spoke to him directly. “Just as Dives sinned against the poor man at his gate because for want of thought he never put himself in his place, ... so we sin against the poor man at our gate”, wrote Schweitzer.

*“Moved by these thoughts, I resolved, when already thirty years old, to study medicine and to put my ideas to the test out there. At the beginning of 1913 I graduated as M.D. That same spring I started with my wife, who had qualified as a nurse, for the River Ogowe in Equatorial Africa, there to begin my active work”* (in Kraus, 1944: 3).

During his college study of theology, he sought to discover the “Jesus of history” to resurrect and reconstruct the historical figure from under the “learned exegesis” of his time. What he found was a “magnificence” of teaching that “staggered” him (Hagerdorn, 1962: 53). Kraus agrees. “His concentration on the teachings, life and sufferings of our Lord constitutes one of the strongest incentives for his work and especially for his medical missionary activities among the African negroes”; “the character and ethics of Jesus, ... constituted the dominant note in the richly endowed inner life of this remarkable man, ... the similarity of his motives to those of Jesus ... is psychologically the most remarkable factor in his whole life” (1944: 5 & 50).

Indeed one can conclude, with Kraus, that the life of Albert Schweitzer was “compassion in action” (1944: 12). The beauty of his kind of living is captured most aptly by Einstein, who observed, “In the service of life sacrifice becomes grace” (1954: 175).

### *Einstein, on the successful reconstruction of Palestine*

Even as the Jews were scattered among the nations of the globe, the dream and hope of reconstructing Palestine never faded in many of their hearts and minds. In at least one man, Herzl, this consumed anything that any Jew “dared” “to hope for”. In a very striking way, the purposeful existence articulated to Abraham was still cherished. Einstein, in support of the “Zionist movement” in the 1920s, expressed this goal: “So long as we ourselves care about this community it will continue to exist to the benefit of mankind” (1954: 177).

There was no illusion in Einstein’s mind, even at that stage, that the “problem of living side by side with our brother the Arab in an open, generous, and worthy manner” would need special care. He warned, almost prophetically, that the recuperative return of the Jews to Palestine could only be built and sustained by paying “great attention to” “relations with the Arabs, ... to prevent things from becoming so dangerously strained that people can take advantage of them to provoke acts of hostility” (Bragman, 1954: 177).

His recommendation was simple: “Our work has been, and must continue to be carried out in such a manner as to serve the real interest of the Arab population also” (1954: 177). He believed that a lifestyle devoted to ministering to the needs and interests of others was the “social ideal of our forefathers as it is laid down in the Bible”. It is in choosing this “right path” that the Jews “would

succeed and give the rest of the world a fine example”, advised Einstein, believing that “this goal is within our reach” (1954: 178–180).

Long before Einstein, Napoleon Bonaparte, whose most urgent and burning goal once was to subjugate the entire Europe world, after many great battles had to confront this very lesson regarding the insustainability of force. He is quoted (in Batchelor, 2001: 102) as having observed:

*Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires; but upon what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded His empire upon love, and at this hour millions of men would die for Him.*

This is purely the advocacy of relational principles as an antidote to human conflict. This reliance on compassionate living as a way out of human animosities was recently illustrated most graphically in a *Sunday Times* article (Farrell, 2005: 37).

The story is that of a Palestinian father and his son. Stephen Farrell wrote:

*In a land synonymous with violence and bloodshed, the fate of a 12-year-old Palestinian boy stands out as an extraordinary example of human compassion surmounting the most bitter of ethnic divides.*

The boy, Ahmed Khatib, was killed when an Israeli soldier “mistook his toy gun for a real weapon”. What followed this killing has given unassailable testimony to a father’s yearning for peace and compassionate living with his fellow humans. The story unfolds as follows:

*Ahmed’s heart is now beating inside an Israeli Druze Arab girl. His liver is keeping a Jewish child and a mother alive. His lungs have been transplanted into a teenage Jewish girl, and his kidneys shared between a five-year-old Bedouin and a three-year-old Jewish girl.*

Mr Khatib, a motor mechanic, had this to say:

*They [the Israeli forces] killed my son who was healthy, and we want to give his organs to those who need them. No one can tell me what to do. I feel very good that my son’s organs are helping six Israelis ... I feel that my son has entered the heart of every Israeli. We are doing it for human purposes and for the sake of the world’s children and the children of this country.*

Magnanimous and compassionate living as advocated by Jesus the author of Christianity, at its most gracious!

### **2.12.11 “Unprecedented” “explosion” of Christianity in Africa**

The sympathetic resonance of Christian teachings from the life of Christ cannot be doubted among Africans. In the final chapter of this study we shall focus, among amaXhosa of the Eastern Cape, on Tiyo Soga, an advocate of Christianity among his own people who lived to see that they embraced the teachings of Christ. Testifying about the efficacy of Christianity in the lives of an array of South African leaders who were inspired by the teachings and life of Christ, in the African National Congress’ online publication *ANC Today*, President Thabo Mbeki paid tribute to leaders like Dwane, Soga and Tutu, who was “so shaped by his faith that none could tell him apart from his faith, nor speak of his humanity without its integration within his beliefs or of his beliefs without their integration with his personality” (Mbeki, 2001). According to President Mbeki, these leaders “translated their faith into a passionate statement for and an active engagement in the collective engagement to free ourselves from oppression, indignity and humiliation”.

According to the Christian History Institute (2007) there has been an “unprecedented” spread of Christianity throughout Africa. Their website notes: “the Christian population in Africa exploded from an estimated eight or nine million in 1900 (about 9%) to some 335 million in 2000 (45%)”. The following statistics from that site about Christian populations in various African states illustrate the fulfilment of the Biblical prophecy (Psalms 68: 31) that Africa would stretch out her arms to God:

*Seychelles 96,9%; Saint Helena 96,2%; Sao Tomé & Príncipe 95,8%; Cape Verde Islands 95,1%; Namibia 92,3%; Burundi 91,7%; Congo-Brazzaville 91,2%; Lesotho 91%; Gabon 90,6%; Uganda 88,7%; South Africa 83,1%; Rwanda 82,7%; Spanish North Africa 80,3%; Equatorial Guinea 76,6%.*

African leaders such as Tiyo Soga, Mbeki (2001) noted, were motivated and driven in their work by their firm belief in the efficacy of Christian values, that eventually these would be the salvation out of the negative effects of colonialism.

## 2.13 Conclusion

This part of the study has purposefully sought to identify trends and dominant patterns in the manner in which ancient peoples and nations existed. It also sought to identify what has been handed down to the present, albeit remnants, from the past.

Pillaging campaigns against other nations, directed by and conducted as a service to gods; booty taken not only in the form of materials which constituted people's resources and livelihoods but also in the form of people's lives, destined for sacrifice to gods whose characters were a product of human imagination – this is one pattern of existence led by ancient leaders and their subjects.

These campaigns, which from the time of Assyrian hegemony often culminated in the establishment of colonies and the imposition of the gods on foreign people, were conducted in latter times in search of new territories for the gods. The colonies became new sanctuaries and altars under the command of gods and their oracles.

What has emerged unmistakably is the centrality of religion in the “characterised existence”, the *bios*, of ancient people. What have been referred to as myths had real consequences in peoples' lives, not an imagined impact. Commenting about the real impact of myths on Greek life, Jacob Burckhardt reflected: “the myth was a mighty force hovering above it like a near and splendid apparition. It lit up the whole of the Greek present, shedding its light everywhere” (in Kerenyi, 1958: 1).

As a direct consequence of these myths people were either deprived of or enriched with wealth in one form or the other. These myths were the content of their religion; religion being the definitive substance of their culture, the “cause of their particular genius”.

As Europe and the Near East eventually splintered into disunited kingdoms, another form of religion that had been emerging since ancient times, Judaism, gave rise to Christianity, named after its leading proponent Jesus Christ. This religion, which instituted its own brand of symbiotic relatedness among people, was to engulf the world as no other ever did.

We have observed three basic patterns of religious beliefs. The first is a pattern of belief dominated by a multiplicity of deities, characteristically intolerant of each other. The pattern is characterized

by a system of worship wherein worshipers sacrifice others and all that they are and have to these gods in order to appease the gods and gain favours for themselves. Man is a means for satisfaction.

The second pattern is an existence based on monotheism. (Indeed Christianity and Judaism are not as simple; they are based on a belief in a triune God that constitutes a godhead with a shared purpose in existence). Its efficacy is a lifestyle in which the life of each is the responsibility of the other, where each lives in a circle of mutual beneficence in relation to other lives. In this pattern is found a system of worship in which man is the end not the means.

The third pattern is a combination, an adulterated version, of the two above. The so-called pagan lifestyle dominated by a multiplicity of gods became mingled with the monotheistic Christian brand to produce a corrupted version of both prototypes. This was brought about when Constantine, without disavowing paganism, declared himself a Christian and wooed the Church into becoming a state appendage. What resulted from this compromise was an institution whose inhumanity and cruelty dwarfed that of its pagan predecessor. Nevertheless, the original Christianity forged ahead, surviving crusades of persecution and torture from those worshipping under its corrupted banner.

In all three patterns, human relatedness was inherent. On the one hand, under paganism and its compromised version – pagan Christianity – the relatedness was characterized by domination and submission. In such a relationship the dominant, holding power, remains perpetually dependent on the submissive in a symbiotic relationship in which fear is the governing motive and unity of purpose is unattainable.

The relatedness of humans in the other pattern is characterized by individuals who transcend their particular independent existence and in freedom reach out to others to share who and what they have. In such a pattern, unity becomes the product of the independent creative relatedness of each, a product of each independent and free individual's caring and responsibility.

One lesson stands out in the evolution of European patterns of humanism: The seeds of a nation's greatness and sustained prosperity have no succour in the abundance of its material accomplishments and possessions, but in the beauty of the spiritual standards its people stand under. This beauty finds its measure in the extent to which the life of a people enhances the life in its environment. Sadly, Europeans had hardly internalised this lesson by the time of their seventeenth-century encounter with amaXhosa in the Eastern Cape.

## **Chapter Three:**

### **AmaXhosa in their pre-colonial setting**

*“Let no man say, ‘The God who is, is the God of the English’. There are not many gods. There is but one God. We err when we say, ‘He is the God of the English’. He is not the God of certain nations; just as man is not English and Kosa; he is not Fingo and Hottentot; he is man who came from one God”*

(Unidentified elder of amaXhosa, in Coulander, 1975)

### **3.1 Introduction**

During the process of considering the ancient civilizations of the Western and Near Eastern worlds Africa kept projecting herself unavoidably onto our consciousness. The conviction that Greek culture and the Judeo-Christian Bible are the main sources of modern civilization has run very deep among Western scholars, none of whom “would pretend to understand his domain apart from Greece” (Moses, 1995: 5). Indeed, as noted in the preceding chapter, the English historian Roberts holds this view. For example, in reaction to painstaking research by the African scholar from Senegal, Cheik Anta Diop, who recognized a connection and unity between and among Africa’s peoples – what W.E. Du Bois called Pan Africanism – Professor Mary Lefkowitz, in a 1992 article titled “Not out of Africa: The origins of Greece and the illusions of Afrocentrists”, dismissed the conclusion arrived at by Cheik Diop (1955) regarding the centrality of Africa in human civilization as “provocation for Afrocentrism’s exile from intellectual respectability” (Moses, 1995: 11).

Findings presented by the historians of the Hebrew and the Greek people have borne testimony to the reality of the ancient African, Hebraic and Greek people having had intimate contact in both geographic and cultural terms. Whereas the previous chapter focused on Near Eastern and European ancient history in an attempt to arrive at an understanding of the European identity, from a distance, this chapter begins with a focus on ancient African history, reviewing the cultural connections that resulted from the geographic encounters of the subjects of the previous chapter with those of this one: Africans. Its main burden is to find out what various Africans in different settings used as a reference point of their being; to explore, probe and review available evidence in search for what has been identified as “African cultural unity”.

Looking at Africans through clear glasses, that is, purely from sources provided by themselves, as was the case in looking at Near Eastern people and Europeans in the previous chapter, is practically impossible. Available information regarding Africans is mingled with and entangled in foreign interpretations and experiences.

At first glance it may seem that reliance on such sources is like looking at African people “through coloured glasses”. Indeed there is little choice in this regard. Moreover this can be an advantage, in that nothing is provided from a single uncritical perspective. On a closer look, however, we shall observe that much of the material used relied upon information provided from an African perspective. Sir E.A. Budge’s history of the Ethiopians, for example, relied on the Chronicles of Abyssinian kings, jotted down and put on record by African scribes as they perceived their history; our knowledge about amaMbo, the “hordes” of the so-called “Zendjes” from Central Africa to their ancient place of residence around the Zambezi River and in Sofala, has come to us through travellers who both observed for themselves and held conversation with African informants. This was the case with Theal (1902), Fynn (1950 – written originally in 1896), Ayliff (1912) and Bird (1965) regarding amaMbo in Natal. We shall therefore “hear” the voice of African kings, elders, and intellectuals projecting their voices distinctly through the pages of European documentation.

Observation from one source will be compared with and validated against another; events in one African setting will be thrown against the light and background of what took place in the continent itself and elsewhere. In this way, this chapter will produce a reconstruction of what gave tenor to the African identity, and in particular the identity of amaXhosa.

The chapter begins with ancient Abyssinia. From there it moves through parts of West Africa, to dwell longer on East and South East Africa, particularly the Eastern Cape where amaXhosa came to settle through the ages. Although the period of reference extends as far back as the Hebrew dynasties, more emphasis will be given to the period known as the Dark Ages. What became known as European civilization, and the resulting human and economic devastation and scars that were to be inflicted on Africa, cannot be separated from the influence of this, one of the darkest eras in all human relations.

### 3.1.1 Oral tradition

As suggested, it is virtually impossible to trace the contact directly between amaXhosa and many other African people in antiquity. Painstaking review of the written literature, which is dominated by *iingcali neengcaphephe zaseNtshona* (Western experts), has proved to be an exercise in conjecture. Oral tradition or oral literature remains the dominant literature among amaXhosa. This literature, which has been described as *uncwadi lwemveli* (traditional literature) (Siwundla, 1993), which has been there since antiquity (Satyo, Zotwana, Yapi, Gxilishe & Dikeni, 1990), and which has been emphasized by Makuliwe (1995), as the “unwritten” “oral tradition” (*uncwadi olungabhalwanga*), is still strong, not only in the African continent but even among Africans in diasporas. According to Bradford (1999: 46), oral tradition “is part and parcel of African-American culture”.

Although the ancient history of *indlu emnyama* (the Black house) is *ingxuba-kaxaka* (a perplexing confusion) (Ndungane, 1992) to both African academics and others, this poses no particular difficulty to this study. Oral tradition has too often been relegated to the position of second fiddle to the written word, those who use it being regarded as less intelligent. One Western scholar, Jan Vasina, who has studied the value of oral tradition, remarks:

*Oral tradition is so rich, ... the incredible wealth and versatility of this tradition are not yet fully recognized. ... Oral traditions have a part to play in the reconstruction of the past. ... It is a part similar to that played by written sources because both are messages from the past to the present, and messages of key elements in historical reconstruction [emphasis added]. ... Wherever oral traditions are extant, they remain an indispensable source for reconstruction. They correct other perspectives just as much as other perspectives correct them. (1983: 25)*

### 3.2 The setting

The entire coastal area of land which separates the South East African inland plateau and the Western Indian Ocean has been endowed since antiquity with both natural and human wealth. It continues to be known as one of the most wildlife-rich areas in the world, with vital forests, grassland, sea-grass and lagoons, and has been occupied, as far back as the period of the Papal Crusades, by a variety of peoples. The Semitic people that had come down to the area around

ancient Abyssinia – Arabs and Jews – lived side by side with numerous Africans tribes, among whom were the Nguni (Ngoni).

Millions of people in the five mainland countries of Kenya, Mozambique, Somalia, South Africa and Tanzania, as well as those on the islands of the Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion and Seychelles, in common with many others in the developing world, despite having depended on each other and upon the area's natural resources for food, livelihood and recreation for hundreds of years, have become victims of a variety of inter-human aberrations (crime, corruption, alienation) and their habitats destroyed, through destructive fishing practices and overexploitation of other resources. Virtually the entire sub-Saharan region has suffered and continues to suffer from political instability, poor leadership by rapacious elites that mismanage the countries, borrowed and unviable models of governance and chaotic freedom (Wamba, 1992; Wiredu, 1995; Human, 1998). Southern African countries like Zambia, South Africa, Swaziland, Botswana and Namibia are the leading citadels of inequality in the world (World Bank, 2006: 39). If daily media accounts are anything to go by, the region is environmentally ravaged by droughts, soil degradation, crop failures and floods; beset by pestilences, hunger, health hazards such as tuberculosis and the HIV and AIDS pandemic that has, according to the World Development Report, rendered, in southern Africa alone, more than 12,3 million children by 2003, orphans (2006: 33).

Not surprisingly, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, the region has become one of the focus spots of several sustainable development initiatives, especially from socio-political and environmental perspectives: an \$11 million project is being implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), for example, to strengthen pollution laws, regulations and cooperation in the area. This fits into the broader United Nations' Millennium Development Goals that relate to sustainable development in general, and to poverty eradication, the provision of drinking water and hunger reduction in particular. The New Partnership for Africa's Development's environmental programme and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development also focused on this region.

One of the noteworthy observations in the previous chapter is that as nation after nation lost its hegemony under subsequent kingdoms, the consequent loss of independence often entailed their deculturization. A period of cultural dislocation (Abraham, 1962) often followed. African people were never immune from such cultural adulterations. Whether the deculturization process was complete or not is not a major concern of this study. Its particular burden is the demonstration of the

cultural influences that resulted from the ancient geographic connections made long before the second wave of colonization in southern Africa, represented by the advent of European cultural forces in the Cape in the seventeenth century.

This chapter aims to sweep aside, as it were, some of the cobwebs under which the traditional African rationale for living has been obscured, in an attempt to provide a glimpse of the pre-colonial “living being” of the people of Africa, which fixed their “countenance”, “their attitudes, their desires and aversions, and their spring of action” (Abraham, 1962: 9). This exposition begins with Ancient Ethiopia (Abyssinia). The traditional rationale and “living being” are traced through a variety of means: events, traditional intellectual ideas, behaviour and self-characterization or self-imaging by Africans themselves.

The author uses the vantage point of belonging to the amaXhosa ensemble of abaNguni families in Southern Africa to investigate and provide insight as to how these Africans perceive themselves, and how this self-perception reveals their disposition towards other people and the entire natural environment.

It has to be emphasized that behind this effort to find the pre-colonial “living being” of amaXhosa, lies a deeper desire and purpose. It is to excavate those values that actually “fixed their attitudes”, and from which sprang their action, *these values being the institutions* that were universally embraced among them as a people and constituted, directed and governed their life-world and, as articulated by Abrahams, “fixed their countenance” (1962: 9).

### **3.2.1 Ancient Africa**

There is growing conviction and consensus among scientists that Africa is the geographic site of human origin (Manica, 2005; Amos et al, 2006; Linz et al, 2007). This by itself is important, in that it draws closer to the most dominant belief held among Africans and Hebrew people regarding the the original place of humankind. According to Hebraic and African historical accounts, the first human being was created out of the dust of the earth in Africa.

The studies by Linz, Balloux and others (2007) that have strengthened the theory that genetic diversity among humans decreases in direct proportion to the decreasing distance from east Africa bears some testimony to the biblical account of the garden of Eden where Adam the first human

dwelt. The Genesis account (2: 10–14) notes: “And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became four heads. The first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah [modern Saudi Arabia, according to Bradford (1999: 66)] ... And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia [other versions refer to the “land of Cush”, “which corresponds with modern day Ethiopia and Sudan” (Bradford, 1999: 66)]. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth is Euphrates”.

The work of Ullendorf, *The Ethiopians*, is informative with regard to these rivers: “Ethiopia’s first river”, he observes, “is the Blue Nile”. This river, also called the Abbay or Bafr al-azrag by the Arabs, is called “Giyon by the inhabitants of the region”, that is the Ethiopians (1965: 24–25). Virginia Morell (1999) recently remarked: “This river inspires both reverence and fear among the Ethiopians who live along its banks ... The Gihon – to the people of these villages – was one of the rivers that flowed out of Eden at the beginning of the world.”

Another clue to locating the land through which these rivers flow is given in the Book of Genesis 10: 6–7:

*And the sons of Ham: Cush, Mizraim, Phut and Canaan. And the sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah and Sabtecha. And the sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. And Cush begat Nimrod: He began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, even as Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord.*

The suggestion by Harvard archaeologist James A. Sauer (in Caesar, 2002: 1) “that the land of Havilah through which the lost Pishon once flowed is modern Arabia” cannot be taken seriously. The reason is simple. The Mesopotamian territory proposed for the location of the river Pishon never had gold, let alone “good gold”. Given the direction of these rivers’ flow, the sequence in which they are listed and mentioned and the countries they flow through, they would appear to be (as proposed by Ullendorf, see above) tributaries of a river the source of which is situated at the south of modern Sudan and Ethiopia.

The combined effect of the above accounts, therefore, leaves us with little wonder that “practically all African peoples consider God as creator” (Mbiti, 1970: 46) and that “the idea of creation [of man] from clay is very widespread in Africa” (Baumann in Mbiti, 1970: 163). Indeed the Ethiopians, according to the ancient historian Strabo, “believe in an immortal God who created the

universe”; according to another (Diodorus, Book III), Ethiopians say that they were the first men in the world, ... and Egypt itself is a land built up by the slime and mud which the Nile brought down from Ethiopia” (both in Budge, 1928: 66–67). This fact, that the Ethiopians “were the first men in the world” is, indeed the conclusion that a keen reader is compelled to reach when studying the location of the rivers “that went out of Eden”, where the first human is described as placed by the Creator. These two rivers were in the land of Cush (Ethiopia) and in the land of Havilah (the son of Cush).

### **3.2.2 Black Africa in classical writings**

The most prevalent mention of black Africa in the classical Greek writings (Homer, Herodotus, Strabo) is of the people that inhabited it. Indeed, the Greeks called it the “land of the burnt faces”, generally known as Ethiopians. Homer spoke in his *Odyssey* of “the Ethiopians, utmost of mankind”. According to him, these were “blameless” people; some were Ethiopians of the East and others Ethiopians of the West. Herodotus, who lived from around 484 to 420 BC, came closer to providing some clearer sense of where Ethiopia was situated. Describing Ethiopia in the *Histories* (1972), he estimated the country to be the last inhabited in the southern direction. It was to him a country endowed with much gold, elephants, many kinds of trees and with taller and handsomer and longer-lived men than anywhere else. Significantly, Ethiopians practised circumcision, clothed themselves in leopard and lion skins and painted their bodies with chalk, characteristics and practices that Africans elsewhere, even amaXhosa in Southern Africa, were marked by.

Diodorus, the Greek historian who travelled to Egypt during the first century BC, wrote that the Ethiopians told him that they “were the earliest” people, “that those who live in the South are likely to be the first to be engendered by the earth is obvious to all”. They “say that Egyptians are settlers from among themselves”. They further informed him that the gods and customs of the Egyptians are “for the most part Aithiopian”; “the form of their statues and the form of their writing is Aithiopian” (in Hagg, 1996: 644–647.). “But”, Diodorus also notes, “there are other Ethiopians, some on the east and west banks of the Nile, some on the islands and some live near Arabia and some in the heart of Africa”.

Black Africa and Ethiopia were regarded by ancient Bible writers as synonymous (Bradford, 1999: 24): described as “the land beyond the rivers of Cush” (New English Bible) or “the land beyond the rivers of Ethiopia” (the older, King James Version), according to the prophet Zephania (3: 10).

[Zephania was himself a “son of Cush” (Zephania 1: 1), a “man of African descent according to Yorke” (Bradford, 1999: 23)].

Ethiopia, as described by these ancient and classical writers, quite clearly indicated the “vast tracts of country in Asia and Africa that were inhabited by dark-skinned and black-faced people”; the Ethiopians “were divided into two groups, Eastern Ethiopians and Western Ethiopians; the former lived in Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia and India; and the latter in the regions west of the Red Sea” concluded Budge (1928: 120).

It is from the Ethiopian Kingdom that a queen paid a royal visit to the Hebrew monarch Solomon, whose reputed wisdom and wealth had reached Africa. According to the Hebrew Scriptures, this was “the Queen of Sheba” who “came to test him with hard questions”; she came with “a very great retinue, with camels that bore spices, very much gold and precious stones” (I Kings 10).

The point has been made that Josephus was not technically correct in saying that this queen was from Ethiopia, and it is generally accepted that she was from Sabea in South Arabia (Whiston, 1980: 180). Despite this technicality, Josephus claimed that it was known that Sabaeans themselves were Cushites (Whiston, 1980: 31). The conventional scholarly position that Sabaeans crossed the Red Sea from South Arabia and established themselves in Ethiopia, as held, for example, in the *Cambridge History of Africa*, (Fage, 1978: 288) has been refuted in at least two studies, described below.

One is that of Harry Philby, an inquisitive English scholar who spent most of his life roaming the Arabian deserts from around 1917. In what has been described as his “serious and painstaking” research into sources of information about the Queen of Sheba, Philby came to the bold conclusion that “the tribe of Saba (Sheba) was in Solomon’s time located in northern Arabia” (1981: 130).

The other is a paper written by Jacqueline Pirenne published in 1989 by the Université des sciences humaines de Strasbourg, and sent to Graham Hancock by a professor of Egyptology “at a major British university” (Hancock, 1992). This paper, to which “members of the academic establishment had reacted with hostility”, argued that “scholars who had examined the historical relationship between Ethiopia and South Arabia had been completely wrong: far from Sabeian influences reaching Ethiopia from Yemen, as had previously been supposed, the flow had been in the opposite direction, in other words from Ethiopia to South Arabia” (Hancock, 1992: 32).

Jacqueline Pirenne had solid evidence behind her thesis. A Sabean inscription that dated to the sixth century was found in Ethiopia. It “honoured a Sabean monarch who described himself as a ‘noble fighter king’ and boasted that in the empire he had established in the north and west of Ethiopia, he had reigned ‘over Da’amat, the Sabas, and ... the BRs, the whites and the blacks’ ” (Hancock, 1992: 461). From Assyrian inscriptions, explains Hancock, Hebrews were referred to as the *Abirus*. The Sabean monarch was referring to the Hebrews, since in the ancient alphabet “a standard way” of writing the word Abiru without vowels was ‘BR’.

This confirms the presence of the Hebrews in Ethiopia as early as the sixth century. More than this, it brings an element of truth to the claim by the Ethiopians that after the African Queen had visited King Solomon, Hebrews accompanied the alleged offspring, Menelik, back to Africa, or at least, ties between the African kingdom and Jerusalem were established.

From the testimony given by Homer, we are informed that that there were Ethiopians in both the east and the west. And Diodorus also testified to Ethiopians “some on the islands and some ... near Arabia and some in the heart of Africa” (Budge, 1928: 66). Therefore, even if the Queen of Sheba was indeed from South Arabia, this does not mean that she was not Ethiopian. The “vast tracks” of country inhabited by “the dark-skinned and black-faced peoples”, as we have already noted in the descriptions given by the classical writers, included both Asia and Africa.

Lastly, we have Christ’s own words regarding the origins of the Queen of Sheba. “The Queen shall rise up on the Day of Judgment and shall dispute with, and condemn, and overcome this generation who would not hearken unto the preaching of My Word, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon” (Matthew 12: 42 and Luke 11: 31). In the words “ends of the earth”, allusion made is to the distance travelled by the “Queen of the South”. This is in agreement with Herodotus’ reference to Africa as as being at the furthest end of the world. This certainly could not have referred to anywhere in or near Arabia.

### **3.3 Africa’s early experience of colonization**

African people have experienced at least two waves of colonization. The more recent one is represented by the seventeenth century establishment by the Dutch East Indian Company of a trade station that became the springboard for the subjugation of Africans in most of Southern Africa. But

more than a millennium before this, sub-Saharan East Africans were engaged with the ancient world kingdoms, Egypt, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, as traced in the previous chapter.

Herodotus has provided clear testimony to this effect. Cambyses, king of the world-dominating Kingdom of Persia, is cited as having executed military ventures, around 525 BC, against the “long-lived Ethiopians, on the coast of the Indian Ocean”, and subdued them into becoming tribute payers. Later, under Xerxes, the Persians used them in their battles against the Greeks (Herodotus, 1954: 210–245; 467).

### **3.3.1 Africans in the Roman Empire**

The *Cambridge History of Africa* acknowledges that “the Roman Empire was far from being exclusively European” (Fage, 1978: 6). Of the empire’s four greatest cities, two are known to have been in Africa, Alexandria and Carthage. Alexandria, which took its name after Alexander the Great, was itself the greatest of the Greek kingdom’s cities. It belonged to the Romans by conquest.

Carthage had even older bonds with the Near East. According to Josephus, Phoenicians, the skillful navigators who had assisted King Solomon with timber from Lebanon and gold from sea-trading with India to build the ancient Hebrew wonder, the temple in Jerusalem, traded with this city. According to Herodotus, who wrote before Josephus, Carthagians were among the East Africans that Cambyses of Persia colonized, together with the Ethiopians (Burn, 1954: 210–211).

As evidenced in the treaties that Rome entered with the powerful Cathagians in 509 and 348 BC, the initial relations between these two powers were amicable. In 241 BC, however, Carthage went to war with Rome for the first time. It was finally conquered, notes the *Cambridge History of Africa*, and became a province of the Romans in 146 BC (Fage, 1978: 126–129).

### **3.3.2 Contact with the Hebrews and Christianity**

As noted above, there is consensus within ancient Near Eastern and Western historiography that Africa was conceptualized within the context of the “land of the burnt faces”. Though some of the dark-skinned people lived in the East, some lived “in the heart of Africa”, as observed by the classical writers.

Ancient Abyssinia (a Greek name) was among the “vast tracks of country” occupied by what the classical writers called the “black-skinned and dark-faced peoples”. Africans themselves preferred to call it Ethiopia, which is still the preferred name today.

The former size and boundaries of Abyssinia are not exactly known. Traditionally, Abyssinia “included all the country lying between the Nile and the Red Sea, and from northern Nubia to the equator or beyond. Its boundaries on the north and south varied from time to time, especially in the south” (Budge, 1928: 122).

What has always struck Western historiography as a “curious circumstance” and an “enigma” is the extensive religio-cultural harmony between the Abyssinians and the Hebrews. The visit of the “Queen of Ethiopia” to the Hebrew King Solomon gives us some reason for the Hebrew influence over the Ethiopians, but the Noahitic connection between the Cushites and the Hebrews provides an even stronger reason.

There is documented evidence of Hebrews visiting Jerusalem from various parts of the world to attend religious feasts. The Passover, which commemorates the release of the Hebrews from the historic Egyptian bondage, was among the very important feasts. During the first century AD, at the time of the recorded death and rising from the dead of Jesus, Jews were visiting Jerusalem for Passover. According to the biblical Book of Acts (chapter 2), there were Jews from Mesopotamia, Asia, Egypt, Lybia and Cyrene, which adjoined both Lybia and Abyssinia.

Jews scattered all over the world before and after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70. The Roman historian Tacitus provided a record of the presence of Hebrews in various parts of the world. According to Tacitus they settled in the island of Crete, and in Lybia, Egypt and Ethiopia (in Whiston, 1980: 653).

Josephus (Whiston, 1980: 295) wrote that it was “hard to find a place in the habitable earth that has not admitted this tribe of men and is not possessed by them”. People in many of the countries the Jews were scattered in were known to “imitate their way of living ... and grow up to greater prosperity with them, and make use of the laws of that nation also”. Strabo noted that during the period of the Roman Empire’s domination over Egypt, “in Egypt” “this nation (that is, the Jews) is powerful” (in Whiston, 1980: 295).

The biblical Book of Zephania (3: 10) also gives testimony to a cognizance among the Israelites of the presence of the worshippers of the God of Israel in the land “beyond the rivers of Ethiopia”. In this prophecy they are identified as “My worshippers, the daughter of My dispersed ones”.

One of the strongest pieces of evidence of the presence and influence of Jews in a society was the observance of the Saturday as the day of worship. M’Clatchie quotes Josephus as having remarked: “There is not any city of the Grecians, nor any of the Barbarians, nor any nation whatsoever, whither our custom of resting on the seventh day hath not come”. To this day, Sabbath observance is widespread in Ethiopia. Besides everything else, the Abyssinians themselves have their own account about their religio-cultural affinity to the Hebrew people. “The kings of Ethiopia” noted Jones and Monroe (1935: 10) “trace their line to King Solomon”.

In an account that corroborates that already given by Josephus, it was generally believed that when King Solomon met the Queen of Ethiopia, who visited him out of curiosity to verify for herself what she had heard about his wisdom and wealth, she stayed many months. The visit made such an impact on her that she decided to forsake the sun and moon worship of her people. King Solomon, on the other hand, was so impressed by her beauty and wisdom that he desired her sexually, and out of their union a son, Menelik, was born. According to the Jones and Monroe account (1935), when Menelik grew to be ruler in Ethiopia, King Solomon dispatched some officers from his kingdom to travel to Ethiopia to become his son’s advisors.

They were conscious of being the descendants of Abraham through the line of Solomon. They believed and taught that King Solomon had handed to them, as a gift, “the Ark of the Covenant” which contained the original copy of the Law, “written by the finger of God” and handed to Moses, to be observed by all the children of Israel as a condition for their prosperity as a people.

Whether the various, separate accounts of the contact and interaction between ancient Africa and ancient Israel are factual or not – and there is no reason to doubt them – of more importance to this study is how the reported contact evinces itself in actual experience. There resulted an undeniable, real impact on the Ethiopians’ living being. As Jones and Monroe observed, the contact helped them to maintain, long thereafter, their courage during many wars “against the Moslems and pagan enemies” (1935: 21) as they fought to preserve the spring from which their living being flowed.

Perhaps one ancient record that argues strongly for the reality of the Hebraic influence in Ethiopia during the first century AD is the story in the Book of Acts, chapter 8, about Phillip and the Ethiopian. Phillip, a disciple of Jesus, encountered a learned officer from the administration of Candace of Ethiopia “who had come to Jerusalem to worship”. As Jerusalem was the centre of Jewish worship, it must be supposed that this Ethiopian “man of great authority” was of the same religion.

The passage suggests something else of significance. This was the period of Roman world dominance. Christianity was just emerging and had not spread far from Palestine. This Ethiopian who “was sitting in his chariot” – a prestigious means of travel in its own right, confirming the stature of the man – was under Candace, the Queen of the Ethiopians. Both Pliny and Strabo acknowledge the existence of Candace, the Queen of Ethiopia. This “Queen Candace” ruled, according to the *Cambridge History of Africa*, from Meroe, the capital city of Ethiopia where rulers are known to have been buried (Fage, 1978: 247–249).

The Ethiopian, the biblical record notes (Acts 8: 28), was “reading Isaiah the prophet”. The specific portion he was reading was a prophecy regarding the life and death of Jesus, and it did not seem to make sense to the man. It is then that Phillip reportedly came on the scene to explain the scripture and “preached Jesus to him” (v. 35). Especially given the status of the Ethiopian as a man of influence, who parted from Phillip “rejoicing” at his introduction to and discovery of Jesus, this particular event marks the arrival of Christianity in Africa, long before it raised its head in western Europe.

It is worth observing that the Ethiopian attraction to the religio-cultural lifestyle of the Hebrew people precipitated by the Queen of Sheba’s visit to the Kingdom of Israel, and the Candaceian kingdom officer’s experience with the Christian Apostle Phillip, were consequences of intelligent choices, free from any trace of coercion.

### **3.4 Africa: The centre of Jehovah worship**

From the perspective of the creation narrative, Abyssinian Africans have claimed to be descendants of Adam, the first human being made out of the clay of the earth. From the post-deluge world they have traced themselves directly to Noah’s son Ham, who begat Cush. Cush begat Aethiopsis, “after

whom the country is called Aethiopia to this day. Aethiopsis was buried in Aksum” (Budge, 1928: 143).

Aksum, according to Ethiopian oral tradition, was made the “centre of the worship of the God of Noah” by the Queen of Sheba. It is the ancient African city to which the lost Ark of the Covenant was believed to have been after it was removed from the Hebrew temple that was erected and destroyed on the island of Elephantine in the middle of the Nile, where, notes Bezalel Porten (1968: 109), was left no less than a dozen documents that attest to “the God of Heaven” who “dwelt in Elephantine”. God’s presence there was “concretely indicated by the erection to Him of a Temple” for His worship during the reign of the merciless Hebrew king Manasseh (c. 650 BC).

The grave of Aethiopsis, after whose son, Aksumawi, the ancient city of Aksum got its name, “is known there to this day” (Budge, 1928: 143). Aksum was often referred to as the “Sion of Aethiopia” (p.125), probably as it became the home of the Ark of the Covenant.

“It is certain,” attests the Catholic Encyclopaedia, “that ancient Ethiopia was evangelized in Apostolic times by the eunuch of Queen Candace, baptized by Philip the Deacon” (Piolet, 1907). The implication of the encounter between this disciple of Jesus Christ and the influential African is that other than the Hebrews themselves, Abyssinian Africans were among the earliest to hear the story of Jesus and embrace Christianity.

Archeological evidence from graves excavated at Sesibi, in Sudanese Nubia, also indicates the presence of Christianity in Ethiopia by AD 350: “Christian graves within the same cemetery” as pagan ones, notes archeologist David Edwards (1994: 176), “contained a number of large jars and amphorae decorated with crosses. Within this context”, he concludes, “such decoration can be taken as good evidence for the arrival of Christianity in this region”.

### **3.4.1 The intensity of the devotion to and exaltation and preaching of God by Africans among Africans**

Further south, along the shores of Eastern Africa, we have ninth century documented records dating back as far as AD 880 attesting to the conscious exhortation and worship of Jehovah among the African people by their own preachers. Theal (1910) relates information gathered by a travelling

merchant called Soleyman, in a book written by Abou-Zeyd-Hassan. The Arabic original was translated into French in 1199 and published in Paris in 1845.

According to Soleyman's testimony:

*In no nation are preachers found so persistent as those of this people in their language. Among them are men who have devoted themselves to a pious life, who cover themselves with the skins of panthers or of apes; they have a staff in their hands, and proceed towards the houses, when the inhabitants come together immediately. The devotee sometimes remains a whole day until evening upon his legs occupied in preaching to them and recalling God to their remembrance, that he may be exalted! He explains to them the fate which has been undergone by those of their nation who are dead. (Theal, 1910: 129)*

Another observer of Arabian descent, Abou'l Hacan el Masoudi, travelled in Africa and recorded his observations about African people and their origins in a book he completed in AD 943 (in Theal, 1910: 130):

*When the posterity of Noah spread themselves out over the earth, the sons of Kouch (Kush), son of Kanaan – [of course Cush was not the son of Canaan, they were both the sons of Noah; but this is not the most important point here] – directed their steps towards, and crossed the Nile. There they separated into various splinter groups, among whom were the Nubians, the Bedja and the Zendjes.*

In obvious confirmation of what Soleyman had observed earlier, Masoude continued:

*The country of the Zendjes furnish skins of tawny panthers; the inhabitants use them to clothe themselves. ... The sea of Zendj and of Abyssinia is on the right side of the sea of India. ... Alone among all the tribes of Abyssinians, the Zendjes proceed along the channel which flows from the larger stream of the Nile and empties itself in the sea of Zendj. They establish themselves in this country, and spread out to Sofala (that is in Mozambique), which is the most distant frontier of the territory. ... It is there that the Zendjes built their capital; afterwards they chose a king whom they named Waklimi. ... The Waklimi has as dependents all the other Zendjan kings, and has command of three hundred thousand fighting men. The Zendjes employ the ox as a beast of burden, because in their country there are neither horses, nor mules. ... The country of the Zendjes commences at the channel which is derived from the upper Nile, and extends to the country of Sofala and of Wakwak (a country which produces gold in abundance, and other wonderful things). (Theal, 1910: 131)*

From Budge's *A History of Ethiopia* (1928: 601–617) we have a description of an ancient people of Ethiopia that had “a chief god” called *Wak*, which “adored” serpents, “practiced” circumcision, and had “sorcerers” and “rain-makers”. These were the Galla (Hamites), who belonged to two main houses: the Borana and the Barentu.

Regarding the use of oxen, Abou'l el Masoude observed that “these oxen [the Zendjez] harnessed like horses”, and they could run with the same speed (in Theal, 1910: 132). This will become of interest when we reach the description of the amaXhosa people.

On the subject of worship,

*the name of the kings of this country is Waklimi, which signifies son of the supreme lord; they designate their sovereign thus because he was chosen to rule over them with equity. Therefore if he exercises a tyrannical power and if he departs from the rules of justice, they put him to death and excludes his posterity from the accession the throne, for they maintain that by conducting himself in that way he ceased to be the son of the master, that is to say of the king of heaven and the earth. They give to God the name of Maklandjalou, which means the sovereign master. (Theal, 1910: 132)*

It is quite remarkable that these observers, writing from two different continents almost a century apart, made similar observations regarding the worship of God among the southern Africans:

*The Zendjes express themselves with elegance, and there are orators among them in their language. Frequently a devout person of the country, standing in the middle of a numerous concourse of people, addresses an exhortation to his audience in which he calls upon them to do that which is pleasing to God and to be admissive to His commands. He presents to them the chastisements they will make themselves liable to by disobedience, and cites the example of their ancient kings. (Theal, 1910: 134)*

What we have here is unmistakable evidence of the reverence of God as close as Mozambique, among African people of the same origin in Abyssinia as tribes such as the Beja, who are up to this day – as will be observed in the work of Levine, discussed below – one of the main tribes of Ethiopia and were formerly Christian before the Mohammedan wars, like the Nubians.

These Africans, Theal believes, were “Bantu”, people who are descendents of Ntu the origin of all being (Mbiti, 1969). They “were the first of their family to occupy land south of the Zambesi” (1910: 150). Given the enormous pressure of wars and especially the Portuguese-driven slave trade in the sixteenth century, crossing or going around the wide and fierce Zambesi River was a necessity.

### **3.4.2 The extent of the diffusion of Christianity in Ethiopia**

Up to the seventh century AD Christianity prospered in Ethiopia. Numerous churches were established (Budge, 1928: 153). During the late seventh and eighth centuries Muslim Arabs exerted their influence over the Christian kingdom of Aksum. “Muslim Arabs from Egypt ... moved south in large numbers ... and took possession of most of the territories that had been under Aksumite control in the north. ... In reaction the Aksumites sought to extend their dominion effectively over lands and peoples further south” (Levine, 1974: 70).

Even amidst the Muslim threat Christianity spread and penetrated southwards converting many tribes. In the late ninth century AD the Aksumite kingdom was eventually subjugated: “her churches were burnt and most of her royalty killed”. Thereafter, Muslim Arabs streamed into Ethiopia and into coastal areas occupied by the Somali. “Some of these Arabs settled and became founders of Muslim lineages” and then “moving southward along the coast and down the valleys, ... the Somali subjugated or displaced indigenous Bantu cultivators and Bushmanoid hunting and fishing people, and established their presence in the vast area of the Horn which they have occupied ever since. ... The people they conquered were killed, enslaved or forced to move elsewhere” (Levine, 1974: 71).

It is important to note the difference in the nature of the relationships that the Muslim Arabs and the Christian Aksumite kingdom had with the various strangers. While the Arabs “plundered and killed or expelled”, the Christians Aksumites on the other hand “enjoyed holding sway” over the new converts “bringing them into a single cultural orbit” (Levine, 1974: 71).

More importantly though, “the ideal of a Christian state”, which had been introduced during the zenith of the Christian Aksumite kingdom “though dimmed by the hardships encountered in the wake of the Muslim conquests and their repercussions, never died” (Levine, 1974: 71).

Under the leadership of Amhara Ethiopian kings, among whom was Yikunno Amlak and his successors, the responsibility of converting other Ethiopians “seemed to have been born by a number of remarkable monks who went as missionaries to pagan lands armed with little more than a cross”, notes Levine.

Around the fourteenth century, what was called the “Solomonid expansion” (Levine, 1974: 75) “promoted the integration of Greater Ethiopia” in at least two significant ways:

1. It became the base of a political and cultural centre identifying with the Solomonid kingdom and the Christian religion broadened.
2. *Beyond this central region, often called “historic Abyssinia”, it influenced a wide area of peripheral kingdoms and peoples by impressing them with the grandeur of the imperial centre and the power of its religion.* (Levine, 1974: 75)

At the dawn of the sixteenth century, however, another danger was posed by the Turks, who had emerged as the greatest military power in the world after the Roman kingdom. They had conquered Syria, the Arabian world and Egypt before arriving in Ethiopia. Under the fierce Ahmad or Muhammad Grafi, a “jihad”, a Muslim holy war, was launched against the Christian Solomonid kingdom. The first of a series of battles was that of Chembra Koure in 1529. In “all the battles to the east, to the west, to the north, and to the south ... they had put to the sword a great number of Christians, and taken away into bondage many youths and maidens and children of both sexes, and even sold them into the lowest slavery” (Whiteway, 1967: xxxvii). Parts of Tigray, Shoa (a cluster of Ethiopian tribes) and Amharan (another cluster of Ethiopian tribes) territories were devastated. Christian “churches were destroyed and burnt, all Christian books were defiled and burnt and the monks and clergy slain offhand” (Budge, 1928: 155). According to the Abyssinian Chronicles “nine men out of ten renounced the Christian faith and turned Moslem. Only the king with a scanty band of faithful followers maintained the struggle, eluding his pursuers in the mountain fastness of the interior” (Jones & Monroe, 1935: 83). All of this was made possible after the Ottoman Sultan Selim conquered Egypt in 1516. From there, the “sacred war” of Islam, the “jihad”, was waged against “infidels” in every country.

In reaction to the devastations of the jihad wars against Christianity, Abyssinian rulers resorted to seeking assistance from Portugal. Queen Helena wished to lead the Abyssinian nation towards embracing Catholicism and “into friendship with the Pope”. King Lebna Dengel (AD 1508–1540), who ruled after her, reluctantly “sent a letter of submission to the Pope”. By implication,

Abyssinians had not embraced the papacy and its doctrines until that time. However, when Rome discovered that his conversion was not genuine, King Dengel was forced out of his royal stronghold. In 1540, according to the Hakluyt records, he “died a fugitive with no following, practically the whole of his territory” in the “hands of the enemy” (Whiteway, 1967: xxxvi).

At the time of the arrival of the Jesuit Mission in Ethiopia, another ruler, Galawdewos (Claudius) had taken over from Lebna Dengel (after 1540). Under his leadership, the leaders and people of the Ethiopian Orthodox church refused to welcome the Jesuits into their country as they perceived their doctrines to be contrary to the “Faith of their Fathers” (Budge, 1928). We shall delve into the specific reasons later in the chapter.

### **3.4.3 The people of Greater Ethiopia**

So far, our attention has been on Abyssinia or Greater Ethiopia, which has been seen as the focal point of attempts to religio-cultural integration and at the same time as the centre of controversies that resulted in the devastation and displacement of many of its people.

From the “incursions” started in 1527 by Imam Ahmad “the left-handed”, to the series of jihad battles that started with the battle of Chembra Koure in 1529, Greater Ethiopia was distinctly split. “Victory” having “favoured the Muhamedans ... they dominated the Ethiopian church”. The Muslims’ devastations having “put to the sword a great number of Ethiopians”, many Ethiopians “abandoned the faith of their church and embraced Muhamedanism; hardly one in ten maintained his religion” (Budge, 1928: 155).

Despite having been driven into two antagonistic religious traditions owing to the “incursions” of the Muslims from beyond its borders, the people of Greater Ethiopia never stopped interacting as neighbours, through the conventional human interactions such as trading and marrying. Before and after this split, they were a distinct people with unmistakable features. They always displayed a large number of pan-Ethiopian culture traits. Ethiopia, has, consequently, been described as a “culture area” (Levine, 1974: 47). Later in this chapter these culture traits will be traced among the various tribes of southern Africa, providing unmistakable evidence of the cultural unity that connected her people.

Levine observed the following main categories of Ethiopians (1947: 47 – 55):

- 1 The **Northern Cushites**, also known as the Beja, who spoke a dialect known as Balawie. They lived in the desert lowlands near the Red Sea in northern Eritrea and south-eastern Sudan. Though they are mostly Muslim today the area used to be almost entirely Christian.
- 2 The **Central Cushites**, who spoke a dialect called Agew. These occupied most of the north-western plateau highlands. They are the Amhara-Tigrean group, the “historic bearer of Orthodox Christianity and of the Solomonid monarchy”. These traditional grain cultivators, who also keep cattle, sheep and goats, are spread over the Wello, Shoa, Gojjam, Begendir and Harerge.
- 3 The totemism-practising **Eastern Cushites**, whose main characteristic is the “democratic, egalitarian” gadaa system that divides men into ten generational groups in society. “Each gadaa is made up of all the males belonging to the tribe who are to be initiated (circumcised) at the same time” (Enrico Cerulli, 1922).

These are the **Galla** that used to occupy the Rift Valley. “According to Bates (1979: 7); Braukamper (1986) and Mohammed Hassen (1994)” (in [www.ossrea.net/ssr/workneh](http://www.ossrea.net/ssr/workneh)), the Galla “were a very ancient race, the indigenous stock, perhaps, on which most other peoples in this part of Eastern Africa had been grafted”.

- 4 The **Omoti** people, who occupy the area around the Omo River. They were influenced by Ethiopian Christianity, but most became Muslim.
- 5 The **Sudanic** people, who are scattered along the full length of Ethiopia’s Western borders. These are very ancient inhabitants of Greater Ethiopia.

The **Galla**, who prefer to be called **Oromo**, constitute, today, the majority cultural group in Ethiopia. Cerulli believes that they have become the most widely dispersed of the Greater Ethiopians and are believed to be the “largest Cushitic group and the second largest nation in Africa” ([www.oromia.org/genocide-1.htm](http://www.oromia.org/genocide-1.htm)).

“They are known” says Ras Tyehimba (in [www.africaspeaks.com](http://www.africaspeaks.com)), “to be of two major ‘houses’ (wives): the Borana being the senior house and the Barentu the junior. The Borana moved into northern Kenya in the sixteenth century after having moved from southern Ethiopia in the tenth

century ([www.kenyaweb.com/history/settlements](http://www.kenyaweb.com/history/settlements)). They comprise over a dozen tribal clusters distributed over ten provinces.

“By the first quarter of the nineteenth century, more than nine independent monarchical states emerged in different parts of Oromo lands, ... five Gibe states ... clustered together in areas bounded by the valleys of the Gojab, Gibe and Dhedheessa (Dedesi) rivers”. This river is of invaluable importance in understanding the origins of amaXhosa. Too many a historian who learnt from the oral history of amaXhosa were told about this river could never trace where it is. This is, also, where the well-known Ambo state with various clans practising totemism, a vital cultural characteristic of all abaNguni, who are well-known in identifying their origins as being “eMbo”, is. The Soboka Gadhafa, for example, venerate the lion; others venerate the python ([www.ossrea.net](http://www.ossrea.net): 3). It is with this detail that we are able to navigate the cultural web that connects Africans throughout their continent.

We shall pay more attention to the Galla nation later in the chapter.

### ***Pan-Ethiopian cultural traits***

What follows now is a list of cultural traits shared by the various Ethiopian people. These themes appear in numerous variations among the hundreds of language families inside and beyond the borders of Ethiopia. They span a wide range of “beliefs about supernatural beings, ritual practices, food taboos, the cult of masculinity, aspects of social organization, insignia of rank, and customs regarding personal status and the home” (Levine, 1974: 47). Here are some features that have been observed:

1. Virtually all Ethiopians believe in a single, supreme deity associated with the sky. Without exception all the religions are monotheistic (Mbiti, 1969; 1970; Levine, 1974).
2. They believe that evil exists among humans in forms such as witchcraft and sorcery (Mbiti, 1969; Levine 1974).
3. Serpents and certain animals are venerated (Mbiti, 1969; Levine, 1974).
4. They observe a cycle of religious ceremonies and pilgrimages (Mbiti, 1969; Levine 1974).
5. They observe ritual animal sacrifices and purification rituals (Mbiti, 1970; Levine, 1974).
6. The following food taboos are held: the taboo on pork, not only among the Judaic Falasha and most Muslims, but among many other Ethiopian people; and the distinctly Cushitic aversion to fish (Levine, 1974).

7. There is a strong system of patrilineal and patriarchal descent, mostly expressed in polygamy, which is common (Mbiti, 1969; Levine, 1974).
8. There is a dualistic pattern of stratification between high and low-ranking descent groups (Levine, 1974).
9. Customs exist relating to the attainment of personal and adult status. One such custom is the “gada system”, the highly regarded act of conferring personal names. Among the Galla men and women become known as “Father of” or “Mother of” with respect to their firstborns; among the Amhara, women are given new names upon marriage; chieftains acquire new names when they assume office. Circumcision is also required throughout Greater Ethiopia, and clitoridectomy in most tribes (Mbiti, 1969; Levine, 1974).

From the above, clearly identified characteristic patterns of living can be observed. These can be summarised as:

1. Belief in one supreme God (monotheism);
2. A worship system centred on and expressed in sacrificial activity, with certain ceremonies occurring at regular intervals;
3. A premium on physical cleanliness (connected to worship and being acceptable before the supreme Deity); and
4. Reverence for seniority (including consciousness about various stages of growth and development) and patrilineal leadership.

What is beginning to emerge here is a pattern of living daily life informed by and grounded in reference to a supreme entity. This supreme entity was unmistakably identified as the God believed to live in the sky; the source of the life of all. We have already observed, from the writings of early Arab travelers such as Masoudi, how among the Zendje people who had come down from Abyssinia to settle in Sofala (Mozambique), there were “preachers” constantly reminding people about the importance of continually remembering this supreme Being, called “the sovereign master”, “exhorting” society to do what is “pleasing to” this master and to be “submissive to his commands” (Theal, 1910: 132).

### ***Galawdewos and the 'Tchawes' defend the faith of Ethiopia against the Portuguese and the Jesuits***

It has been observed that “throughout the colonial era, the Roman Catholic Church (the largest Christian body) wielded much political power and supported the policies of Portugal with regard to its colonies” ([www.gbgm-umc.org/africa/angola/angolen.html](http://www.gbgm-umc.org/africa/angola/angolen.html); Whiteway, 1967). The history of Ethiopia, strikingly, appears to attest to this.

The Abyssinian King Lebna Dengel, in 1517, brought to an end about twenty-five years of the Arabian Chief Mahfuz's devastation over his country and people by killing him and defeating his army of Somalis. During his raids into Abyssinia, Mahfuz “drove off whole villages of men, women and children to be sold as slaves in Arabia and India” (Rey & Witherby, 1929: 1). Ten years later another Muslim, Ahmad “the left-handed”, led by his “religious fanaticism”, attempted to “subjugate Abyssinia” with the advantage of firearms. Firearms had been introduced into Arabia as early as 1515, but only into Abyssinia in 1530. Lebna Dengel could not counter Ahmad's cruelty and severity. For a whole decade, from the battle of Chembera Koure in 1529, Abyssinians were crushed; “thousands of their best men were slain, and an enormous amount of booty fell into the hands” of Ahmad Gran (Rey & Witherby, 1929: 1).

From the southern province of Shoa, all the Abyssinian provinces “fell before Gran”. Rey and Witherby (1929: 2) give the following chilling account of the pillaging that was inflicted on Abyssinia, with graphic illustrations of the plundering of their churches:

*The desolation wrought by this period of pillage is almost impossible to describe. Crops could not be cultivated, whole peoples starved; it was unsafe even to light a fire, lest a marauding party should be attracted thereby, and on this account it is alleged the Abyssinians then began the practice, which obtains today, of eating their meat raw. Their wonderful monasteries and churches were sacked and burned, irreplaceable manuscripts, as well as vast stores of weal accumulated in the sacred buildings, were destroyed or stolen. The Moslems were amazed at this work (the church of Mekana Selassie) ... They set to work with a thousand axes tearing down the gold, ... from mid-afternoon until night; each man took as much gold as he wanted and was rich forever; more than a third of the gold was burnt with the church. The church of Atronsa Maryam was pillaged from midday until the following morning. The Moslems tore out rich brocaded velvets and silks, gold and silver in heaps, gold cups, dishes and censers, a “tabot” (Ark of the covenant) of gold on four feet, weighing more than a thousand ounces, an illuminated Bible bound of gold and countless*

*riches, until they were tired of carrying their loot and loading it up. Much still remained, so they set fire to the church and the storehouses and burned everything. So stricken with grief were some monks at the destruction of their church and its accumulated treasures that they threw themselves into the flames and perished there.*

Though Lebna Dengel had sent for help from Portugal through Bermudez, he never saw it. By the time of his death in 1540, news reached him that some help was on its way.

Budge gives a detailed account of the life and times of Galawdewos, the son of Lebna Dengel, who ruled Ethiopia from 1508 and died in 1540. It is during Lebna Dengel's period that the Arabs had "made themselves masters of practically all Abyssinia"; they had characteristically – as observed in the preceding chapter – "laid waste and destroyed and burnt and turned the country into a desert" (1928: 337). After years of struggle Lebna Dengel's son turned this situation around. Believing in the prophesy of his late father, that he, Galawdewos, would "break the enemy", he went "from village to village and from town to town and preached his mission and collected men for the army he needed" (p. 338).

Determined to restore "the faith of his ancestors and country", in 1542 Galawdewos appointed Afawa Dengel as high priest. In what was clearly evidence of orthodox Hebrew influence, the "Ark of the Covenant" – researched and believed by Hancock (1992) to be still in Africa – and the holy stone tablet (the Ten Commandments) were carried into the church which had just been completed, with Galawdewos offering praises to God.

When Galawdewos returned to his palace he found that the king of Portugal had sent Goncale Rodriguez, in 1555, with presents for the king, but with the recently died Pope Julius III's objective in mind, namely converting Abyssinia to the Christianity of Catholic Rome. At the suggestion of Ignatius Loyola, the Pope had agreed to this before his death and nominated Joao Nunez Barreto as Patriarch of Ethiopia. According to the Hakluyt records (Whiteway, 1967: lxxv), "the attention of the Jesuits had been drawn to Abyssinia as a hopeful field for their enterprise" and they were determined to influence both Rome and Portugal to enforce their religion on the Ethiopians through "a missionary crusade in that country".

Rodriguez was sent to prepare for the arrival of Barreto and two other Jesuits (Budge, 1928: 345). In the Hakluyt account, "Mestre Goncalo, a Jesuit, with another Jesuit, Fulgencio Freire, and Diogo

Dias do Prestes” were dispatched to make the preparations in Abyssinia (Whiteway, 1967: xxvi). Their instructions were clear: “to sound the disposition of Galawdewos, and to discover whether he was inclined to abandon the customs of the Abyssinians, and submit himself to the Latin Church”.

Ethiopia, therefore, had three huge problems: Greater Ethiopia had become a divided country, as many had been coerced into abandoning their ancestors’ religion for Islam; there were the invading Mohammedans themselves, who had devastated the country and turned its people into slaves; and there were the Catholic Jesuits, backed by the military might of Portugal, bent on executing their cruel crusades, not only against the Mohammedans but against the Ethiopians too, if necessary.

Orthodox (Judaic) Christianity, the apostolic faith that had reached Ethiopia in the first century, was still being maintained there in the sixteenth century. It now came under attack by the Portuguese, as had Christianity in India. Gibbon painted the following picture of the Indian experience:

*When the Portuguese first opened the navigation of India, the Christians of St Thomas had been seated for ages on the coast of Malabar. ... Instead of owning themselves the subjects of the Roman pontiff, the spiritual and temporal monarch of the globe, they adhered, like their ancestors, to the communion of the Nestorian patriarch, ... they united their adoration of the two persons of Christ; the title Mother of God was offensive to the ear, and they measured with scrupulous avarice the honours of the Virgin Mary, whom the superstition of the Latins had almost exalted to the rank of a goddess. When her image was first presented to the disciples of St Thomas, they indignantly exclaimed, “We are Christians, not idolaters!” ... Their separation from the western world had left them ignorant of the improvements or corruptions of a thousand years. (1952: 64)*

When the Jesuits landed in Abyssinia in 1557, their intentions of instituting the rites of the Latin Church, among which were the worship of “Mary, the Mother of God” and worship on Sunday rather than Saturday, soon became apparent. This was especially so when the Jesuit leader Alphonso Mendez claimed to “convert” the Abyssinian monarch to the official religion of Rome. Again Edward Gibbon depicts the situation this way:

*A new baptism, a new ordination, was inflicted on the natives; and they trembled with horror when the most holy of the dead were torn from their graves, when the most illustrious of the living were excommunicated by a foreign priest. In the defence of their religion and their liberty, the Abyssinians arose in arms, with desperate but unsuccessful zeal. ... Neither*

*merit, nor rank, nor sex, could save from an ignominious death the enemies of Rome.* (1952: 64)

In 1557, the Frank Bishop Andre d'Ovedio arrived in Ethiopia with “priests and deacons, and a small number of Franks as followers, or lay members of his mission”. According to Budge (1928: 347), “his object was to make Claudius (i.e. Galawdewos), abandon his religion and adopt that of the Church of Rome”. His arrival with the Franks has deep significance.

The power of the mighty Roman Empire had been broken, it must be remembered, by various Teutonic tribes that came to occupy the Roman provinces and France. These tribes that poured into the provinces of western Europe from AD 250 to 500, eventually forming ten new nations, included: the Goths (both the Visigoths, those from the west, and the Ostrogoths, the eastern Goths), the Burgundians, the Vandals, the Anglo-Saxons, the Alamanni, the Heruli, the Suevi and the Franks. They invaded, taking province after province, until they conquered Rome itself in 409.

Clovis, the king of the Franks, whose father before him had become a devotee of Roman bishops, accepted Roman Christianity in AD 496. Thereafter, supported by the church of Rome, he fought against the other Teutonic kingdoms which had occupied the Roman provinces. His first war was against the Burgundians, whom he defeated soon after his conversion. From 507 to 508 he encountered and decisively defeated the Visigoth army. He then did the same with the mighty Gauls.

It is Clovis who brought all the invasions by the Teutonic tribes to an end, leading the triumph of Catholicism by his own conversion. In the process, he earned himself the honour of being called the church's eldest son. Thirty years after the victory of 508 over the invading “barbaric tribes”, Emperor Justinian, through his famous Edict of 532, made the papacy a universal power. From that time up to the Napoleonic era, Europe was under the period known as the Dark Ages, a time during which the papacy, in unity with the state, persecuted all who did not abide by the doctrines of Rome. Describing the persecutions unleashed by the Justinian Edict, Archibald Bower (in Wilkinson, 1997: 142) says:

*By an edict which he issued to unite all men in one faith, whether Jews, Gentiles, or Christians, such as did not, in terms of three months, embrace and profess the catholic faith, were declared infamous, and, as such, excluded from all employments both civil and military, rendered incapable of leaving anything by will, and their estates confiscated,*

*whether real or personal. These were convincing arguments of the truth of the Catholic faith; but many withstood them; and against such as did, the imperial edict was executed with the utmost rigor. Great numbers were driven from their habitations with their wives and children, stripped and naked. Others betook themselves to flight, carrying with them what they could conceal, for their support and maintenance; but they were plundered of the little they had, and many of them inhumanly massacred by the Catholic peasants, or the soldiery.*

The Franks that arrived with Bishop d’Oviedo in Ethiopia must therefore be seen in this light. These were imperial arms, accompanying an intolerant brand of Christianity, the type that supported Portuguese-driven colonialism, slavery and the economic ruin that stalked Ethiopia and eastern, western and southern Africa from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century.

After Galawdewos’ death in 1559, his brother Minas ruled for four years. At the tender age of thirteen and a half years, Sarsa Dengel or Malak Zagad took over and ruled from 1563 for thirty-four years, up to 1597. During his first year as king many in his army mutinied and joined Muslim forces.

Gradually, Malak Zagad rebuilt a powerful army, using the “horsemen and footmen of the veteran Tchawe” that he had collected from all parts of Abyssinia (Budge, 1928: 362–363). According to Budge, the term “Tchawe” meant “the king’s own soldiers”. These were formidable troops. This term excited an interest in the author for one obvious reason. Among amaXhosa the term Tshawe has been used with similar connotations. A person called “iTshawe” is one connected to royalty. Peires noted this in his study of amaXhosa. As one of his “informants”, umTipha, “discussed the history of his clan” with Peires, he reasoned that “amaTipha used to be great, together with the amaTshawe; their names were Bayeni and Tshewu, and it is said that they lived where they were also known as amaTshawe (*bakwangamaTshawe*). Seemingly aware that he could not give more detail – such as the country where this term was used and when – to this issue, the informant concluded with the acknowledgement “*silahlekwe apha*” (beyond this we cannot remember) (Peires, 1980: 23–24).

By the time of Malak Zagad’s reign his people and native priests had become demonstrably opposed to the Jesuits. Several Jesuit priests, “Antonio Fernandez, Gonzales Cardoso, Andre Galvarez, and Emmanuel Fernandez were murdered” (Budge, 1928: 374). There was a clear split

between the rulers who were loyal to the Pope and the native people who adhered to the faith of the country. Zagad, who protected many of the Jesuit priests, sent to the Pope for help with more missionaries to his country. “The native clergy declared that he was an apostate and raised the cry in 1590 that the Church of Abyssinia was in danger. ... It was asserted that the king had allowed himself to be converted to the Roman Faith” (Budge, 1928: 374).

Za Dengel, Malak Zaga’s nephew, became ruler from 1603. At first he was against the Catholic teachings. But P.F. Paez, an eloquent Jesuit who had mastered the local language, persuaded him to embrace Catholicism. Za Dengel “imparted this decision ... to Paez under the seal of secrecy”. But when he issued and publicized the proclamation “forbidding the observance of Saturday as the Sabbath, after the manner of the Jews” and soon thereafter “wrote letters to the Pope Clement VIII, and to Phillip III, king of Spain, acknowledging the spiritual supremacy of the former, and asking the latter to send him artisans and soldiers to help him in his wars, and missionaries to teach his people the new faith which he had embraced” (Budge, 1928: 378), it was obvious to the masses that the king had abandoned the “faith of the fathers and the country”. Civil strife ensued, splitting the nation under two rulers, Jacob and Susneyos, with the latter finally triumphing in 1607.

Susneyos found himself having to fight many wars against his own countrymen, especially the Galla. He also fought against the Amhara and the Agaw. By the close of his life

*his power in the country was great, and his name was respected by the neighbouring kings. But in spite of this, the greater number of his subjects were dissatisfied with him and hated his rule, and the hereditary enemies of his country felt towards him a bitterness which had been absent from their minds in bygone times. The reason for this was the fact that his wars, especially in the last half of his reign, were religious wars [emphasis added].* (Budge, 1928: 388)

Susneyos was a learned man. Impressed by the “intelligence and learning of the Jesuits priests when he compared their abilities with those of the native priests”, he accepted “the Roman form of Christianity”, and then compelled his countrymen to do the same. Like Za Dengel, he “secretly inclined to the Roman Faith and in 1621 he informed Paez that he was converted and was prepared to sever his connection with the national Religion. ... When Susneyos found that the people would have none of the new Religion, he tried to effect by force what he could not do by edict. He began to persecute those who clung to their old Faith” (Budge, 1928: 391).

Of course, true to the character of the Roman Christianity observed thus far, the Jesuit Patriarch Mendez “encouraged him in this course”. Both the king and the patriarch were men who indulged in sudden, violent outbursts of passion, and the king went so far as to “cut out the tongue of his brother Kanafra Krestos” and to “force his countrymen” to accept the Roman Faith. Being true to the religion of their forefathers, many Ethiopians “preferred to hurl themselves from the high rocks to accepting the new religion” (Budge, 1928: 391).

Such suffering by the native people for the sake of their faith is attested to by Father Jerome Lobo (1789: 121), who arrived in Abyssinia with Alphonso Mendez in 1624:

*I found the people inflexibly obstinate in their opinions, even to so great a degree, that when I first published the emperor’s edict, requiring all his subjects to renounce their errors, and unite themselves to the Roman church, there were Monks, who, to the number of sixty, chose rather to die, by throwing themselves headlong from a precipice, than obey their sovereign’s commands.*

On the battlefield in which Susneyos’ army had trampled his own countrymen, his son Fasiladas is reported to have uttered these words:

*The men you see lying dead here, were neither pagans nor Muslims over whose deaths we could rejoice, but Christians, your subjects and fellow-countrymen, and some of them were your relations. It is not victory that we have gained, for we have driven our swords into our own bodies. How many have you killed? How many more are you going to kill? Through carrying on this war, and abandoning the Faith of our ancestors, we have become a byword among the pagans and Arabs. (Budge, 1928: 393)*

These words apparently shook the king and he promised to bring religious liberty to his country. He kept his promise indeed when he publicly confessed:

*Originally we gave you the Roman Faith believing it to be a good one. But [he mentioned many known martyrs] ... even ignorant peasants ... have died fighting against it. Now therefore we restore to you the Faith of your ancestors. ... Let the people say their own mass in their own churches; let the people have their own altars, ... and let them be happy. (Budge, 1928: 393)*

This, of course did not make the Jesuits happy. Determined to introduce religious tolerance, he responded to Mendez, “who accused him of having abandoned the Roman Faith at the very moment when it was about to become the national Faith”, that:

*the people had no affection for the Roman Faith and did not understand it. Let those who accepted it remain in it, as did the Portuguese in the time of Asna Sagad. Let them eat and drink together and marry the daughters of Abyssinia; and let those who were not inclined to it follow the Faith of Alexandria (i.e. the church of the orthodox Christian Faith) (Budge, 1928: 393)*

Religious liberty was proclaimed in June 1632 (Budge 1928: 393). But it was too late for Susneyos. When the Abyssinians “saw their ancient rite of circumcision, and their customs connected with polygamy and divorce, and the Sabbath, ... set aside, they wished to overthrow the king who had permitted foreigners to bring in these changes” (Budge, 1928: 325).

When Fasiladas assumed authority in 1632, after the abdication of his father, he demonstrated his zeal for the Nestorian Church of his ancestors by burning the “books of the Franks i.e. the Jesuit Fathers, ... beheading and hanging every priest, whether Jesuit or Capuchin, and all who were associated with them. Those who fled ... were seized; ... Father Lobo was sold ... and gained his liberty by paying a large sum of money” (Budge, 1928: 398–402).

Fasilada’s fourth son, Aa’laf Sagad (1667–1682), succeeded him. His policy became “ ‘Abyssinia for Abyssinians’. He put all seaports under careful guard, making it virtually impossible for Europeans to enter Abyssinia” (Budge, 1928: 407).

#### **3.4.4 West African experiences**

Among the very early voyages carried out by Europeans to Africa were those of the Portuguese. We now know that explorers of Arabic descent, such as Masoudi, as noted in Theal (1910), were in Africa much earlier. The European voyages are often treated simply as explorations and journeys of maritime discovery devoid of any philosophical intent and purpose. However history attests to these as having been instruments of an intolerant Christendom, emerging in a Europe bent on plundering and denuding others of cultural liberty, power of choice and their own identity.

Contact between West Africa and the Portuguese took place in the 1440s and intensified until the 1500s. Portugal, “the only effective European power in Guinea for a whole century, ... remained the major European power on the coast until the 1640s” when the Portuguese were reduced to a “minor status” (Hair, 1997: 11).

From a hearing before an Episcopal Inquisition in 1570 in Mexico, we have records attesting to the engagements of English and Portuguese in the West African region of Sierra Leone (Hair, 1997). A Portuguese sailor by the name of Miguel Ribeiro gave testimony against an Englishman by the name of Robert Barrett, to the effect that they first met on the River Mytombo in Sierra Leone. Ribeiro was aboard a ship collecting slaves when Barrett arrived on a ship called “Jesus of Lubeck” with about thirty men, also in search of slaves. From the detail provided by both sides, it is clear that these men were quite religious:

*“I had the opportunity of eating and drinking with him” stated Ribeiro, “I noticed that he did not cross himself and ask for a blessing on the table, ... all he did being to cross his hands over his breast and look up to heaven when seating himself. ... Everyday when I was there, Barrett and those who accompanied him brought out a rush basket filled with books, ... and everyone took his copy, ... and they sat down in two rows and began to sing, ... Happening to take one of these books. I saw some of the Psalms of David therein, and at the foot of verses and interlined a musical notation, and so they would sing for half an hour or so.”* (Hair, 1997: 200)

The main point about this trial is that Ribeiro was accusing the English team of being pirates and, moreover, heretics. That very zone they were in was “confirmed to Spanish endeavour by papal bulls”. Both the Portuguese and the Spanish claimed a monopoly “down the coast of Africa”. The English were illegally there. In Mexico the English prisoners were being interrogated because the “Spanish and Portuguese claims to monopoly rested on similar bases, partly because at this date licences to import slaves into New Spain had been issued to Portuguese businessmen, and the Spaniards wished to forestall any claim by the English that they were acting as agents for Portuguese licencees” (Hair, 1997: 202)

Of course the English disliked this monopoly and contended that the Portuguese had rights only to certain localities. One Martin Frobisher, captured by the Portuguese on the Gold Coast in 1562, argued that the king of Portugal had no claim as he did not have any “castell (castle), forte (fort) or howse (house) of traffique upon the coastes bitwen Cap Verde and the kingdome of Binny

(Benin)”; he was effectively saying that trading was open to all. Fundamentally the English detested the fact that this trade was regulated by papal bulls. One of Queen Elizabeth’s ministers known as Cecil is reported to have remarked: “The Pope had no right to partition the world and to give and take kingdoms to whomever he pleased” (Hair, 1997: 202).

This, basically, was the framework that regulated slavery during those Dark Ages of the Inquisition. The international law for trade was laid down by the Pope.

Uppermost in the mind of the papacy, it appears, was the conversion of the Africans. In this regard, it appears, the slave-trading Roman Christian Portuguese failed. Referring to this failure, Richard Hakluyt confessed:

*“In very deed I was not able to name anyone Infidell by them (protestant ministers) converted. But as far as Sierra Leone was concerned, up to this period the Protestants had done no worse than the Catholics: though the Portuguese had been in contact with the region for over a century, and though in 1575 a Portuguese governor described the peoples as very suitable and willing to receive the law of Christ and the Word of God, the first Catholic missionary only gained the first convert there in 1603. Thereafter, however, for nearly two centuries, Catholic authorities made repeated though largely fruitless efforts to bring Sierra Leone to Christianity, while the Protestant churches ignored the area and its souls. ... the reason (being) the increasing involvement of the leading protestant powers in the Atlantic slave trade.”* (in Whiteway, 1967: xxxvi)

An example of such Christian duplicity and hypocrisy was the “slaving voyages, during the 1750s, of the English Evangelical, Captain John Newton”, who allegedly composed his famous hymn: ‘How sweet the name of Jesus sounds’, “while the slaves groaned below” in his ship (Hair, 1997: 222).

### **3.4.5 South West Africa: Angola**

In Angola the oppression started as gradually and almost as imperceptively as it would, about a century later, under the Dutch in the Cape Colony. The Portuguese voyagers that reached Angola in the late 1500s were originally “only in search of an ocean passage to India”. But they ended up subjecting Angolans to brutal colonial rule “for the next five centuries”. A class-based society was created with a few elite enjoying preferential treatment while “harsh and repressive policies toward

the majority of the indigenous population” were enforced up to the late twentieth century when revolt flared up against repression (General Board of Global Ministries, 1996)

The Jesuits are reported to have worked in Angola from the 1560s, having been established there by one Father Baltasar Barreira. Governorship of Angola was granted to Paulo Dias de Novais by the king of Portugal in 1571. The purpose, as always, was “to bring into subjection and to conquer the Kingdom of Angola ... and to extend our Holy Catholic Faith” (Hair, 1997: 174).

Like Sierra Leone, Angola was to prove “a difficult nut for the Jesuits and De Novais to crack”, concluded Hair (1997: 175).

Regarding the stance of the Catholic Church in the recent political struggle for liberation in Angola, it has been observed that: “Throughout the colonial era, the Roman Catholic Church (the largest Christian body) wielded much political power and supported the policies of Portugal with regard to its colonies. It did not support Angolan liberation” (General Board of Global Ministries, 1996).

### **3.4.6 South East African experiences**

The colonial plunder of Mozambique was a slow painful process. Political exploitation and religious manipulation existed side by side, bleeding the country socially and bringing economic ruin. Vasco da Gama was the first European explorer to reach Mozambique, in 1497.

AmaMbo kingdoms that had been there since as early as the ninth century AD, the so-called Zendjes described in Theal (1910) by Arabian travellers such as Maoudi, were to witness their country become one of the most exploited colonies in all of Africa.

*Almost every resource was taken from Mozambique, and everything that its colonizers “contributed” was simply put into place to better serve them. After plundering the country for gold, ivory and slaves, the Portuguese virtually turned Mozambique over to private companies that made profits by controlling transportation routes to neighboring landlocked countries and providing cheap (often forced) African labor for the mines and plantations of nearby British colonies. Little attention was paid to the local economic infrastructure or the skills of the country's population.*

(Mozambique history: *Early history and Portuguese influence*, undated)

At about the same time as the Roman Church was stoking the fires of civil strife, plundering Ethiopians through their own rulers, Gonçalo da Silveira, a Portuguese Jesuit missionary, visited Mwanamutapa in 1560. In a fashion similar to that used in Ethiopia the people's leaders were among the first to be made converts. The trust of King Nogomo Mupunzagato was won, and then used against his own countrymen. The native people, however, saw through this scheme:

*Fearing for their commercial position, [they] persuaded Nogomo to have Silveira murdered. Between 1569 and 1572 an army of about 1,000 Portuguese under Francisco Barreto attempted to gain control of the interior, but Barreto and most of the soldiers died of disease at Sena. In 1574, an army of 400 men under Vasco Fernandes Homen marched into the interior from Sofala, but most of the men were killed in fighting with Africans.*

*In the late 16th and early 17th centuries the official Portuguese presence in the interior was limited to small trading colonies along the Zambezi. At the same time Portuguese adventurers began to establish control over large estates (called prazos), which resembled feudal kingdoms. They were ruled absolutely and often ruthlessly by their owners (prazeros); Africans were forced to work on plantations, and considerable slave-raiding was undertaken, especially after 1650. Some of the prazeros maintained private armies, and they were generally independent of the Portuguese crown to which they were theoretically subordinate. (Mozambique history: Early history and Portuguese influence, undated)*

“By the 1760s slavery was the most profitable trade. Over a million slaves were sold to the sugar plantations in Brazil and Cuba, and to north America”, notes an Oxfarm report (2007).

### **3.5 The Creator-God reference of African being**

Ancestor worship has too often been proposed as the typical and dominant form of religious expression among Africans. Little note has been taken of the limited role of ancestors in society. Junod, and his father before him, who learnt much about this issue, provided useful insights in this regard. Briefly put, as Read (1956) and Junod (1938) came to realize, ancestors “have power only over their own family. They really exist because of the family” (Junod 1938: 131). Their role and influence in the African life-world is therefore limited to the family.

On the other hand, another Being, more supreme than ancestors, occupied a special place in the African mind. As Junod noted: “Tonga, Ila, Rotsi, Sutho, Nguni, practically all Bantu peoples,

Central, Northern, and Southern, believed in a kind of Divinity, Creator and sometimes Providence” (1938: 133).

Just as the Hebrew and their prophets regard creation as the supreme and primary act of God on our planet, so did Africans. “Common to many African societies was the belief in a High God, or Supreme Creator of the world and everything in it ... constantly concerned with the daily life of the individual and the affairs of society as a whole” (Raboteau, 1978: 8). Among Africans, as Danqua (1968) attests, God was known for His manifold characteristics, as among the Hebrew people.

Among the **Akan**, God has been known as *Onyame*, the Greater Shining One; the *Oboo-ade* who created all things. The community is of Him, the entirety of it. He is *Borebore a aboo Ade*, the great builder or excavator, who created the Thing; the “Odamankoma, the Creator par excellence, beyond whom there is nothing, the Supreme of the Thing, of all that is in being” (Danqua, 1968: 32-44). All of the names regarding God are grounded in the idea of creation.

The **Ngoni** called God:

1. Umkulumqango: The Great Deviser
2. Uluhlanga: The Original Source
3. Umkulu Kakhulu: The Greatest of all
4. UMnikazi we Zinto Zonke: The Owner of all things

In the oral literature of the **Pygmy**, a people often regarded by other Africans as the most backward, there exists a poem, according to John Mbiti (quoted in Bradford, 1999: 39) manifesting their belief that:

*In the beginning was God,  
Today is God,  
Tomorrow will be God ...*

Levi Keidel, who, according to Bradford (1999) became a Christian after many years of being incarcerated with “one of the great African prophets, Kimbagu, the founder of the Kimbaguist Church of Zaire”, has given insights into the pre-colonial conception of God among Africans, as have Danqua and Mbiti. From conversations Keidel held with Kimbagu, he was made to understand that:

*Our fathers had many beautiful names with which to describe the Creator; and all of them harmonize with what the Book (Bible) reveals Him to be. He is the only One who has been alive forever. He is the knower of all affairs. His pureness is brighter than the sun. ... God showed us things through dreams. He did the same to Abraham, Jacob, Daniel and others. Israel gave the firstfruits of their harvest to God, and were careful not to neglect widows and orphans. (in Bradford, 1999: 43)*

The **Ila** called the Creator Leza. He is the “Compassionate, the Merciful, the Besetting One, the Creator, the Moulder, the Constructor, He from Whom all things have come, the Guardian, the Giver, the Master and Owner of all things, the Leader, ... He is over all, as the sky above” (Junod, 1938: 133).

The following quote exemplifies the relative importance of the ancestors and Leza:

*In case of sickness, when after praying in vain to the ancestors, direct access to Leza is sought, the head of the household fills a place with meal and water, and pours some of it on the ground on the right side of the threshold and prays like this: “Leza, I pray Thee, if it be Thou hast made our brother sick, leave him alone, that Thy slave may go about by himself. Was it not Thou Who createst him on earth and said he should walk and trust Thee? Leave Thy child that he may trust Thee, Eternal One ! We pray Thee – Thou art the Great Chief” (Junod, 1938: 134)*

The **Barotsi** in Zambia call the Deity Nyambe. Every morning He was presented with an offering by one of the elders. A very revealing prayer, about the place of the supreme God, accompanied the sacrifice:

*“O Great King! No man can be compared to Thee. We come to Thee, because Thy favours are innumerable. Thou showest great compassion to Thy servants; we come to Thee, so as to receive Thy blessing and so as to be strengthened. Thou art a powerful King, O King Nyambe. ... Thou helpst the one who weakens and feedest the hungry one. We bring to Thee our children so that Thou mayest educate them by Thy power” (Junod, 1938: 135).*

### **3.6 The history and composition of amaXhosa**

Various accounts regarding the origin and being of amaXhosa abound, characterized by inconsistency. The meaning and reference of the term “Xhosa” itself has been given implausible

connotations by non-African scholars. The term, for example, has been interpreted to mean “angry men”, as surmised by Maingard (1934) and perpetuated by Harinck (1969) and Peires (1980), regarding those it is purported to describe – to the total rejection of African reconstructions based on oral history.

To one European historian the chiefdom of amaCirha is the “oldest historically” among amaXhosa (Noel Mostert, 1992: 462), thus making that of Tshawe, who defeated Cira his brother, the second oldest chiefdom; to another, “the installation of the amaTshawe as the royal family of the Xhosa” was the “earliest historical occurrence specific to the Xhosa” (Peires, 1982: 13).

The oral history of amaXhosa, however, does not accept this version of their past. The traditional version recorded by Rubusana in 1906 (thus making it older by at least thirty years than those of J.H. Soga, upon which Peires bases his 1980 dissertation, Theal or Tiyo Soga), reach much further into the past of amaXhosa. Indeed it is quite understandable that Peires and the other European scholars had difficulty in tracing the genealogy of amaXhosa, at least up to Xhosa, whose existence Peires rejects rather prejudicially without sufficient reason. It requires a certain level of cultural grounding and access into the tacit side of African cultural knowledge to be able to weave one’s intellectual way through and within its life-world. Being able to do this through the beautiful simplicity of those Nguni tribes such as abaThembu, amaMpondo, amaMpondomise, amaZulu and amaJwara in the language isiXhosa, makes it easier to embrace the assertion made not only by Rubusana but by other scholars too, that these people “*baphuma sinqeni sinye*” (are from the same ancient source).

“*Siqalele kuNtu ukubalisa singeqithisi*” (Our story starts, because of our limited memory, from a man called Ntu) suggests Rubusana (1906: 98). Ntu’s sons were Zulu (from the Great House) and Xhosa (from the Right House). Xhosa’s heir was Malangana. Malangana’s younger brothers were Sutu and Zizi.

Among abeSutu were tribes such as baKwena, who were believed by Ellenberger, in his *History of the Basuto* (in Bryant, 1965: 308), to be of the “same parentage as” baHurutsi and baFukeng. These were all popularly known (albeit with some contempt) to have been “baKoni” (of Nguni origin). AbaPedi, also known as abeSutu, are known to have once been neighbours of amaSwazi along the river known as uSutu in modern Swaziland (Bryant, 1965: 309). This region was, according to

Bryant, “the northernmost limit” of the “eMbo branch of the Nguni Bantu” in “about the year 1550”.

There is hardly any controversy regarding amaZizi (neighbours of the amaKuze-Dlamini, amaHlubi and amaBhele) at the “ancient residence” near the Great Tukela River to the Bushman River (Bird, 1965: 124–153). That this tribe (called an Embo-Nguni tribe), as will be seen later, was a tribe of the huge amaMbo people is common knowledge (Ayliff & Whiteside, 1912; Bryant, 1965).

The son of Xhosa, Malangana, begat Ngcwangube whose son Nkosiyané begat Nkosiyamntu. This Nkosiyamntu then begat three sons. Cira, from the Great House, was the heir. Jwara (from the Right House) and Tshawe (from a lower house) were Cira’s younger brothers.

Interestingly enough, “*amanyange asemaMpondomiseni* (the elders among amaMpondomise)” held the view, according to Soga (1937: 24), that they were descendants of an ancient ruler called Ntu, himself a descendant of Umhlaba, an allusion to the belief in having been created from the dust of the ground, a belief held by ancient Ethiopians, and indeed virtually all of black Africa (Mbiti, 1969).

### **3.6.1 The vital amaMbo connection**

The existence of both the tribe called amaMbo and a man called Xhosa, traced from the amaMbo by oral tradition, is rejected by Wilson and Thompson (1969: 87), Peires (1981: 19–20) and Harinck (1969: 152). Tiyo Soga (1937: 2-4) asserted the existence of amaMbo not on the basis of George Theal’s “mumbo-jumbo”, as claimed by Wilson and Thompson, but in agreement with the works of James McKay and H.H. Dugmore (Soga, 1937:2) – who were acquainted with the life of amaXhosa in the 1870s – backed up by the oral tradition recounted by Malgas in an *Imvo* article in 1917.

The existence of amaMbo across the western side of the Zambesi River, specifically at “Tete and Sena in 1570”, as noted by George Theal in his *History and Ethnography of South Africa before 1795*, was derided by Wilson and Thompson (1969). For Theal to deduce, without “a shred of evidence”, that the “Mumbos” who, from Portuguese testimonies, attacked them at “Tete and Sena in 1570”, were amaMbo, Wilson mocked, was “mumbo-jumbo”. This “mumbo-jumbo”, Wilson claims, was later relied upon by historians like Walker and J.H. Soga (the first to document the history of amaXhosa) as historical and factual.

Tracing the ancestry of amaXhosa and a myriad other tribes back to amaMbo, from evidence propounded by several Africans from across these tribes and by non-Africans (among them survivors of the various ship wrecks along the Mozambique, Natal and Transkei coasts), derives, contrary to Peires' view, from much more than the mere desire to bring order into the history of amaXhosa – as in this case – or of South African Africans in general. It is corroborated by both oral history, which has not always enjoyed much respect in Western historiography, and documented accounts.

Whereas Wilson and Thompson are not prepared to accept the Mumbos as amaMbo, choosing, rather to ridicule Theal, it does seem that the subjectivity in their work is revealed. They willingly accept that the “Semboes”, “Mapontemousse” and “Magosse” referred to by the survivors of the Stavenisse are, respectively, abaThembu, amaMpondomise and amaXhosa. Why they do not question this is not clear.

### **3.6.2 The Oromo/Galla–Zendje–Mbo–Bantu connection**

We noted above how the numerous Zendjes came down from among Nubians and Abyssinian people to settle as far south as Sofala. Theal believed that these were “Bantu”, the people of the great Ntu, the Creator to whom all being has origin (Mbiti, 1969) . They were the first of their family to occupy land south of the Zambesi. From several early travellers and geographers' accounts, they had been settled around the territory of Sofala “in the tenth century of our era” (1910: 150).

The Oromo/Galla are known “to be of two major ‘houses’ (wives): the Borana, being the senior house and the Barentu, the junior”; that the Borana moved into northern Kenya in the sixteenth century after having moved from southern Ethiopia in the tenth century (Oramia Briefs, undated). In Kenya they comprise over a dozen tribal clusters distributed over ten provinces.

From the route that Father Jerome Lobo traveled from Mozambique to Ethiopia around 1624, he had passed through “Melinda” “a kingdom of Afric upon the coast of Zanzibar [Zanzibar]”, which shares a border with Mozambique's Sofala region. According to Father Lobo, Melindawas was inhabited by the “Galles” (1789: 32).

The periods of the departure of the Galla from southern Ethiopia in the tenth century and that of the separation of the Zendjes from the other tribes of Ethiopia – the Nubians and the Bedja (known as the Northern Cushites) – in the 880s AD, could be thought to coincide. Theal's conclusion that these Zendjes are actually the Bantu multitudes (a word that sounds more human than "hordes" for people) that he believed constituted the "Mumbos" (amaMbo), is more than mere guesswork.

### 3.6.3 The language factor

The languages of Africans have been the subject of several studies. "From the French Cameroons in the North-West", one observer concluded, "to the Tana Valley in the North-East and right down the African peninsula to the Cape", "are peoples speaking fundamentally one language" (Junod, 1938: 13). Dr. D.W.I. Bleek and many scholars of African languages before him, noting the "remarkable resemblance between the speech" of these Africans, arrived at this conclusion. After more than twenty years of studying these languages, Dr Bleek adopted and introduced, on the basis of this similarity of language, the term "Bantu" as a classificatory tool. The term has roots in virtually all of these peoples' languages; it is used by all of them to identify themselves as "people": amaZulu say "abaNtu"; abeSotho and abeTswana, "BaTho"; Herero, "OvaNdu"; Chopi, "VaNthu"; Tsonga, VaNhu and amaXhosa say "abaNtu".

So close is the resemblance of language noted among these various tribes that Junod (1938: 16) remarked:

*The word "dialect" is not really correct. In fact all these Bantu tongues differ from each other as French does from Spanish, or English from Danish. No two of these tongues are as far apart as English and French, or French and Welsh, although all these belong to the Indo-European family of languages.*

This, together with the additional evidence of other cultural traits like "lobolo" (the custom of "cattle-marriage"), "circumcision", house architecture, polygamous sectional households (the right-hand and left-hand houses), the elaborate "first-fruit" ceremony and "totemism" (some of which are dealt with in this study), led him to the irresistible but logical assumption that these people must have descended from "a considerable body, speaking the same language"; and more boldly, that:

*the Bantu languages are known to constitute one of the largest ensemble of languages which proceed, fundamentally, from one original language. ... From the French Cameroons to the Cape, one language is spoken, a language which undergoes considerable phonetic changes, but is always obviously the same. (Junod, 1938: 16–28)*

Let us consider some examples, very briefly, using the English words *grow* and *teach*.

*Teach:*

- isiZulu: fundisa
- seSotho: ruta
- Swahili: fundu
- Shangaan: fundisa
- Setswana: ruta
- isiXhosa: fundisa

*Grow:*

- isiZulu: khula
- seSotho: hola
- Swahili: kua
- Shangaan: kula
- Herero: kura
- Setswana: gola
- Kongo: khula
- Duala: kola
- isiXhosa: khula

Ethnolinguistically, “a striking continuity” has been found to exist among Africans of the Guinea coast, from 1400, when information was available from the records of the Portuguese, through the 1700s to the present. There is a “Bantu language group of the Cameroons” called the Mbo. Not only has this name appeared in many variants in the Cameroons “in early sources from the 1540’s:” “Embours/ Ambous/ Amboas/ Zambus/ Cambo (and) Amboyzes” (Hair, 1997: 264), but still today the northern slopes of Mount Cameroon are called the “Highland of Ambo” and the area is occupied, even to the interior, by people who belong to the Mbo group, namely the Babong, Baneka, Bakaka, Balondo, Bakoko, and Batanga.

From an account of one area of the Guinea coast, given in 1508 by a Portuguese traveler called Fernandez, a small but significant detail emerges. Writing about the Africans of the Upper Guinea coast, along the River Casamance, Fernandez “stated that the ‘kingdom of Casamansa’ contained

'Falupes e Balangas' as well as Mandigo" (Hair, 1997: 38). Now this is one detail that it is just not possible to ignore in an effort to make sense of AbaMbo. About the "Falupes" and the "Mandigo" not much curiosity is raised. But with "Balangas" we are bound to sit up. For some time it was thought that Fernandez meant "Balanta", who are part of the "Flup" people of the Casamansa kingdom. But closer attention has revealed that this was not a mistake. He repeatedly referred to Balanga, not as a variant of Balanta, but as a distinct group that lived on the "South East of the Casamansa kingdom", and in the "lower Casamansa". These "Balanga", according to the study in Hair, "disappeared without a trace in the sixteenth century". But we shall note later as we deal with various groups of amaMbo, that amaLanga – also known as amaZizi – do crop up among amaMbo.

Interestingly, among the people known to have "migrated" – possibly in the 1500s – and dwelt along the Guinea coast, around Cape Mount, the "Gala" are mentioned. This information was obtained from a list supplied by a "Dutchman, [Olfert] Dapper, in 1668" (Hair, 1997: 265). With the Gala also lived the Limba and the Akan, two well-studied groups of Africans with similar religio-cultural traits to those of the Hebrew, notably the observance of the Sabbath as a sacred day of rest.

This study has not been able to give a complete account of the movement of various people called amaMbo or abaMbo. All it has been able to achieve is to produce evidence of various peoples belonging to this group from the testimonies of various observers. So, if it was possible for the Limba Africans, who were noted as one of the tribes that occupied the western African region of the Guinea coast, to have come down to southern Africa (Gayre of Gayre, 1972), and settle in Venda in what is now the Limpopo province of South Africa, as shown by Magdel le Roux (2003), it should not be surprising that amaLanga also did so.

This study therefore concludes that the origins of abaMbo or amaMbo were most likely in Abyssinia. "Ambos", which for a long time was taken to be "a corruption, perhaps, of a misplaced Portuguese toponym, or conceivably, of a wandering Abyssinian toponym" (Hair, 1997: 236), was a place rather than an ethnonym. The earliest known cartographic reference to this place was in a map of 1561, one among several to "incorporate Abyssinian toponymy, which in error stretched out to fill in the otherwise empty Southern and West-central interior regions" (Hair, 1997: 254, footnote 89). This implies that from this place flowed people who were to be called "Amboas" by the Portuguese, thus confirming the observation made in the ninth century by early Arabian travelers such as Soleyman and Masoudi (see above), regarding the Zendjes who later became known as the "eMbo-Ngunis" (Bryant, 1965: 313)..

There is still a place called Ambo inhabited by the Galla/Oromo, 38 kilometres west of Shoa, a region still known as “Oromo Land” in Ethiopia. The people of this place, who, interestingly, have the system of totemism as do just about all black people in southern Africa are referred to as the Oromo/Galla in Ambo.

There can be little doubt that the torture and havoc inflicted by the Moslem Saracenes on the Ethiopians from the seventh century and later by both the Arabs and the Portuguese (Budge, 1928) resulted in the dispersion of multitudes to several parts of Africa. It is thus not surprising that the people known as the “Mbo” and the “Gala” migrated into West and Central Africa where many are living as “Bantu” peoples today. It is quite possible that from there they migrated further, as surmised by archeologists and historians such as Mostert (1992), into east and southern Africa.

Given the enormous pressure of wars and especially the Portuguese-driven slave trade between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries in East African centres such as Kilwa and Zanzibar in Tanzania and Ibo and Quelimane in Mozambique (Ajayi & Crowder, 1985: chpt. 42), the wide and fierce Zambesi River was a difficult hurdle to cross but they had little choice to overcome.

As many of these “hordes” flowed down towards southern Mozambique, they became known to the Portuguese around Delagoa Bay as AbaMbo, confirms Bryant (1965: 7) in apparent vindication of Theal. Among these abamBo Africans were tribes such as amaZizi – also known as amaLanga - (Bryant, 1965), who brought with them Karanga girls according to Theal (1910: 163).

In the ethnographic work he conducted, Francis Fynn, an “Assistant Magistrate” who arrived in Natal in 1824, collected information about the natives from the natives themselves. He seems to have validated this information against the information he obtained from his “communications with the Portuguese of Sofala” and concluded that these people who had been in Sofala had come down to dwell in Natal. Some of these tribes included:

- amaBiya
- amaBombo
- amaDuma
- amaDunge
- amaKanya

- amaLanga and
- amaTuli (Bird, 1965: 104).

All of these were amaMbo who later constituted both amaXhosa and amaZulu. From the works of Ayliff and Whiteside (1912) and Bryant (1965), it is commonly known that the “eMbo-Nguni”, including amaMpondo who were “at the vanguard” (Bryant, 1965: 16) of their westward movement, were with the Dlamini, amaBhele, amaZizi and amaHlubi. All of these were given the name “Fingo” as they later fled from the Tshaka wars (commonly known as the “Imfecane”) from around 1824.

Information obtained from one of amaMbo’s by Bryant (who gathered his information from 1883 when he arrived in Natal) also confirms that amaMbo were indeed the “Amboas” that were identified by the Portuguese in Mozambique. According to this historian, amaMbo came from “there beyond the inKomati River”. This appears to disprove the common interpretation that has often been given (Soga, 1937; Peires, 1980) that when amaXhosa speak of eMbo, they refer to Natal or the people of Natal. Clearly eMbo was a land way beyond Natal.

The amaMbo had come to settle on the Eastern coast of Africa and became known to the Portuguese as the vaMbe and later vaMbo. According to the “old historian”, Bryant’s informant, amaMbo’s “numbers increased” and they “split up once more into several sections”. The largest of these splinter groups are amaLanga (Bryant uses the toponym emaLangeni rather than amaLanga, it must be noted). To this group belong the branches known today as: amaNgwane (amaSwazi in present day Swaziland) and “the Mtongas”, says Bryant. Other amaMbo splinter groups were amaNdwandwe, amaHlubi and amaDlamini (also known as amaLanga as indicated elsewhere, or amaZizi). Regarding another splinter group, amaMpondo, “Nongqanga (still living in 1910), son of the Swazi king Sobuza (who died in 1839), used to bear witness to an old tradition among his clansmen that the amaMpondo (of the Cape) also belonged to this same eMbo-Nguni group” (1965: 313–314).

### **3.6.4 Where are amaXhosa in all of this?**

For quite some time now and as the direct result of Western historiographic reconstructions such as those of Ayliff and Whiteside, Bryant, and Bird, cited above, various amaMbo people are treated simply as “refugees” who were absorbed by amaXhosa in the Cape (as the so-called “Fingo”). Even

today, this attitude still persists among many amaXhosa, and the connection between amaXhosa, amaMfengu and amaMbo is not appreciated. This is seen in the work of scholars such as Peires (1980), where the amaMfengu are regarded as a distinct people from amaXhosa.

The following oral history regarding Tshawe, one of the early rulers of amaXhosa, comes from Reverend Malgas in 1917. It is fundamentally the same as that researched by Peires in the late 1970s for his doctoral dissertation. Peires gave the version of the amaXhosa historian J.H. Soga (1930), whose brother, W.A. Soga, a medical doctor in Elliotdale in the early 1900s, is called “my Friend” by Theal (1910: 200). Here I give a combined version from George Theal and Reverend Malgas, which appeared in *Imvo Zabantsundu* in 1917.

### ***uTshawe and the expansion of amaXhosa***

In a pan-Africanist, traditional scheme, similar to that of the ancient Amhara and Oromo/Galla Ethiopians, oral tradition identifies Nkosiyanmtu, a polygamist who bore three sons from different houses (wives). One, Cira, was from the Great House, which made him the natural traditional heir to the throne; Jwara was from the lower, Right-hand House (*indlu yase kunene*).

The third, called Tshawe, was the son of *ishweshwe* (a concubine), not even *iqadi*, a legitimate but much lower house. As such, Tshawe had little chance of becoming a ruler. He grew among his mother’s people, amaMbo (Soga, 1937: 12), as was customary for children of concubines, away from Nkosinkulu’s kraal; in fact he was born among his mother’s amaMbo “*uvelele apho uTshawe*”, emphasized Soga.

When, after Nkosiyanmtu’s death, Tshawe returned to his father’s kraal, he did so in the company of amaMbo warriors. Tshawe himself was quite popular and respected as a fighter. In a squabble that ensued during a hunting expedition over a bluebuck caught by Tshawe and his team, of which Cira demanded a portion, Tshawe emerged the victor, through the help of amaRudulu grabbing the sceptre from Cira.

Several amaMbo tribes, unforced, joined Tshawe’s dominion. This was not an unusual occurrence then among tribes, notes Reverend Malgas. The wealth and generosity of a tribe, much more than its strength, normally attracted many weaker people. Whenever such an incident took place the receiving side would exclaim: “*ningamlandi, wokhumbula ikowabo nentsapho yakhe. Mpheni nina*

*adle, nimgcine, ngumntu wenkosi lo*”, which simply translated means: “do not bother the newcomer about the details of his genealogy/origins, lest he long to go back. Give him to eat, make him comfortable, this wanderer belongs to the king”. This attitude toward strangers and wayfarers explains how many, including European shipwreck survivors, chose to stay among amaXhosa, as will be shortly in this study. The amaMbo tribes that did so and were absorbed (*kungenelele*) included amaGiqwa, amaQwambi, amaKhwane and some of the amaJwara.

A vital point, also, that closely connects amaXhosa in close affinity with amaMbo, is provided by Dohne (1857), a man whose expert knowledge of only two among the Nguni dialects, isiXhosa and isiZulu, resulted in his being requested to produce the so-called “Zulu-Kafir Dictionary”. Any one who has a good command of either of these two dialects appreciates that it is easy to move between them. In fact, an isiZulu speaker needs no interpreter among amaXhosa, and vice versa.

We have already traced, among the numerous amaMbo people, the tribes called amaBombo and amaDunge. Fynn had seen and confirmed the existence of both these tribes in Natal by 1824. But he did not make a connection between them. However he did record that in Natal amaBombo had an “ancient residence” on a “portion of the Dlhimbiti River” (Dlimboti River) from which they were later to be “driven by Chaka”. Bryant’s own African informants provided similar information about “aba-kwa-Bombo” as having been a “sub-clan of the emaDungweni (‘the people of Dunge’) (1965:16).

Dohne, on the other hand, made a discovery that lends credence to Dr. Rubusana’s assertion that “*sigazinye*” (we are one blood). Here is the account provided by Dohne (1857), unadulterated. The conclusions he came to, as will be noted, sit amazingly well with the information supplied by Masoudi in AD 943 regarding the presence of the Zendjes and their kings in Sofala, Mozambique.

About the name “Xhosa”, basing his information on “the best authority and tradition”, Dohne believed that this was an “epithet” meaning “One who sets up a kingdom for himself”. Although this view does not recognize the equally authoritative and traditional belief that the word comes from an original ruler called Xhosa, it is more likely than the view adopted by Harnick and Peires that the word means “angry men”.

Guesswork aside, Dohne (1857: xii) relates that in 1852, while travelling in the southern parts of Natal, “between Umtwal(v)ume and Umzumbe”, he was surprised to find a tribe called amaBombo

speaking the same dialect as that spoken by amaXhosa. This convinced him that amaBombo were, as he put it, a “fragment” of amaXhosa.

Today this same tribe is still under their own chieftaincy in Qoboqobo (called Keiskamahoe), in the Eastern Cape. At that time they were ruled by Chief Mtukuteli, who had gathered them together after they had been scattered by the wars of Tshaka. Just before these wars, amaBombo had just separated themselves from living with amaDunge – a tribe clearly identified by Bird (1965), above, to be from the amaMbo kingdom.

Not much detail was obtained by Dohne regarding the separation of amaBombo from amaDunge; but the fact that they regarded themselves as a distinct tribe, in that amaDunge do not speak isiXhosa, would explain it sufficiently. This vital piece of information confirms that the amaXhosa were associated with and came down through Natal with amaMbo.

We have already satisfied ourselves that the various and numerous tribes of amaMbo had come down from Sofala, as noted by Magistrate Francis Fynn (in Bird, 1965: 104). If amaXhosa were already in the Cape by the middle of the seventeenth century (Wilson, 1959; Wilson & Thompson, 1969; Peires, 1980), and if we accept the oral history of Tshawe and the logic that amaBombo were a branch of amaXhosa that had been left behind in Natal, then we must just conclude that amaXhosa were not pushed into the Cape by the Tshaka wars, but had come down from Sofala where they had been spotted in the early seventeenth century (Lobo, 1788) with the same amaMbo tribes from which amaBombo had separated before the Tshaka disturbances.

### **3.6.5 Clue to a Galla–amaXhosa common origin**

As pointed out in the introduction, there is vehement resistance in Western historiography and similar disciplines regarding the cultural unity suggested by African scholars such as Cheik Anta Diop. Yet so strong has been the evidence that through the ages it has unleashed a lot of speculation as demonstrated in the models and theories that have been proposed regarding where in Africa the “Bantu” originated.

Since the accounts by Bleek (1862), Guthrie (1967) and Greenberg (1963), more controversy has clouded the issue among archeologists, linguists and anthropologists. In the 1980s, Jeff Peires, the respected historian of some parts of the history of amaXhosa, simply elected to avoid the issue,

even casting doubt on the actual historical existence of certain acknowledged amaXhosa figures like uXhosa.

The controversy was picked up again at the beginning of the 1990s by Noel Mostert, who continued to maintain that “Bantu-speaking peoples” originated from “Cameroon, from the region between the Cross River which flows into the sea near the Nigerian city of Calabar and the country east of Mount Cameroon”, and expanded from there owing to population pressure. From this area in West Africa, Mostert calculated, two streams – of the western and the eastern Bantu – left, to meet again and mingle after a millennium in “Northern Namibia, the Zambezi, and Northern Lake Malawi and Lake Tanganyika” (1992: 66). From Central Africa, he suggested, Bantu occupation extended through “Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and into Swaziland, Natal and Transvaal”.

Mostert attributes all of this expansion to one dominant phenomenon: “pastoralism”. It is pastoralism that “encouraged discipline and leadership skills. It developed military proficiency and in some, a certain scorn for an existence more placid and sedentary. But it also tended in others to encourage free-speaking traditions, and to value oratory, debate and consensus” (1992: 70). It is within this theory that he arrives at the conclusion that “two things therefore fostered sub-Saharan Africa’s greatest establishments of power, wealth and dynasty. One was gold, and the other was cattle-keeping and its milking traditions”. These were to be combined “uniquely in southern Africa”.

Illife (1995) has recently added to this theory of Bantu origins from West Africa. He claims that there are three theories regarding this matter. On close scrutiny, however, it is apparent that, though differing in the detail of expansionary routes, they all basically sustain the speculation that aBantu came from the rain forests area of Congo and the central heartland of Africa.

There is no point in arguing here that aBantu were never in West Africa. Indeed this study has clearly established that many peoples of Mbo descent dwelt in West Africa, around the Guinea Coast and the areas identified by Mostert and others, as demonstrated in the work of Hair (1997). We have also noted that some Galla people, whose ancient home is in Ethiopia, came to dwell there. What logic refutes, however, is the claim that West Africa was the place of origin for aBantu, of which amaXhosa are a part. We have established that Mbo is an Abyssinian toponym and the numerous “Amboas” identified by Portuguese traders and explorers, and especially the Galla peoples in Guinea had migrated there from this Mbo region in Oromia/Gallaland. One of the

reasons for this (although it may not be the only one) was the cultural persecution inflicted on the Ethiopians from the Mohammedan religious wars and invasions as early as the seventh century AD to the Portuguese-supported Jesuit crusades and more Moslem attacks during the period of the Dark Ages which ended in the eighteenth century.

This study proposes that much of this speculation regarding the origin of the “Bantu-speaking peoples” could have been mitigated. It has arisen, especially among southern African historiography, as a direct consequence of a veiled denigration, tacit rejection or reluctant acknowledgement of the importance of oral tradition of the African elders. So compelling has been the evidence of the origins of aBantu from, at least, north-east Africa, from the Sudan and Ethiopian regions, that one historian could not help but exclaim, after pondering the evidence regarding “the similarities in economy, law, ritual and symbolism between the cattle people of the north-east and the Nguni people” that she wondered “what ancient movements of people linked the Sudan with the Transkei, for it is unlikely that the whole pattern has been twice invented” (Wilson & Thompson, 1969: 85).

Through oral tradition, which they knew best, amaXhosa fathers have given clear indications about their ancient home. When they spoke about eMbo, they were referring to a home much farther away than Natal. When the ancient fathers directed the inquirer’s mind to a river called Dedesi, it was either speculated to be a “small tributary of the upper Mzimvubu River” (Soga, 1930) in Port St John’s – which is not there – or dismissed as unidentifiable (Peires, 1980: 24). As no effort seemed to have been expended to find this river of origin, it never was found.

It is because of the undeniable evidence of cultural similarities between the ancient Abyssinians and aBantu, especially amaXhosa, that for over a year the author went through almost every document he could lay his hands on regarding the Galla people of ancient Abyssinia, who were so much like amaXhosa even in details such as recreation and cosmetics. Their women were fond of smearing their body with butter, so are amaXhosa women; they enjoyed racing cattle, so did amaXhosa. I looked at the faces of their young boys and what I saw was a familiar face as if from anywhere in rural Eastern Cape, *emaXhoseni* (the place of amaXhosa). The Galla of Kenya lived in villages they called *kaya*; amaXhosa call their villages *amakaya*, too! In Sudan, in north-east Africa, the Zande have a social habit, when calling a person from afar, of changing the final vowel, and pulling it into an “o”, which is something noted by Bryant as very prevalent among amaZulu and amaXhosa

(1963: 193). Another shared social habit is that of naming a girl-child by prefixing to the name-root a further particle as follows:

Boy's name: Xolo

Girl's version: **Noxolo**

Boy's name: Mthunzi

Girl's version: **Nomthunzi**

**Table 3.1 Linguistic similarities between north-eastern and southern African aBantu**

<b>Zande (Sudan)</b>	<b>IsiZulu</b>	<b>IsiXhosa</b>	<b>English</b>
1. na	Na	na	rain (verb)
2. ru	Lunga	lunga	be right
3. ngbanga	Banga	banga	claim in law
<b>Manja (South Sudan)</b>	<b>IsiXhosa</b>	<b>English</b>	
1. nga	Nga	Near	
2. bele	bele	Breast	
3. fi	umfi	the dead	
4. noi	inyoni	Bird	
5. ngubu	imvubu	Hippo	
<b>Sango (South Sudan)</b>	<b>IsiXhosa</b>	<b>English</b>	
1. la	langa	Sun	
2. migi	ninzi	Many	
3. kaga	kaka	Shield	
4. mafuta	mafuta	Fat	
5. fa	fa	Die	
<b>Galla (Ethiopia)</b>	<b>IsiXhosa</b>	<b>English</b>	
1. deira	de	Long	
2. bala	e/lu/bala	Broad	
3. shan	hlanu	Five	
4. dubi	daba	Message	
5. ido	indawo	Place	

*Source: Bryant, 1965*

With all of these points of affinity between the north-east Africans and amaXhosa, including ceremonies and rituals like the Sabbath, circumcision and totems, the author found constant energy that took him to the Gibe States of Gallaland, where he first found the region of eMbo. This, together with the initial discovery, in the work of Budge, of a class of men called the “Tchawe”, which meant “the king’s men”, just like the amaTshawe are among amaXhosa, the conviction grew in me that I was not involved in some wild guesswork.

But it was there in the Gibe states of Gallaland that evidence emerged that confirmed the conviction that these conclusions were correct. In the work of Workineh Kelbessa among the Galla in 2001, five states in Gibe were identified: “Limmu, Guuma, Gomma, Geera and Jimma”. Kelbessa described these five states in Galla/Oromoland as “bounded by the valleys of the Gojab, Gibe and” to my surprise, “Dhedheessa rivers” (2001: 24).

At this point my conviction was sealed that this is the mysterious Dhedhesi River to which the amaXhosa ancient fathers had referred to in their oral history.

### **3.7 AmaXhosa: Documented presence and impressions in Southern Africa**

By the sixteenth century, amaXhosa are known from the studies of Wilson (1959) and Wilson and Thompson (1969), as having settled around the Umthatha River. Their southward expansion, Wilson estimated, predated the period covered by their earliest known genealogies (dating around the thirteenth century). Detailed accounts, serving as evidence of the presence and lifestyle of amaXhosa and other Nguni Africans, have been obtained from testimonies of shipwrecked travellers.

The earliest known of such accounts were from the survivors of the *Sao Joao* shipwreck, not far from Umzimvubu River, in June 1552: “seven or eight Kaffirs ... leading a cow” visited them (Wilson & Thompson, 1982: 78). In a recent paper by E. Burger (2004), of the University of Pretoria, sound reason is given that these “cafres” who actually did not exchange their cow with the Portuguese survivors were amaXhosa. This is how Burger reasons in his chapter “Using historical evidence as part of the maritime archeological research”:

*The local inhabitants are described as “cafres” and according to Derricourt (Early European travellers in the Transkei and Ciskei), this is an indication that they were Nguni not only because of the appellation, but also because the Nguni and not the San, possessed cattle. Further south, other travelers and traditions suggest that the vicinity was only occupied by significant numbers of Xhosa people.*

This suggests the presence of amaXhosa in the Cape at least a century before European settlement there in the middle of the seventeenth century.

In April 1554, the *Sao Bento*, which was reported as having been shipwrecked “west of the Keiskamma or Kowie”, actually met its doom “between Kasuka and Mthatha Rivers” according to Theal; and in March 1593, the *Santo Alberto* went down between Mthatha and Mbashe (Wilson & Thompson, 1969: 79–81). The “wreck site of the *Sao Bento*” as later calculated by Auret and Maggs (*Annals of the Natal Museum*, in Burger, 2004: 42) “is located at Msikaba Island on the Transkei coast. It is the survivors of this particular wreck who when traveling in a north-easterly direction came across what they believed to be remains from the *Sao Jao* wreckage of 1552. These survivors observed that “Kaffirs are herdsmen and cultivators of the ground; ... they cultivate millet, ground between two stones or in wooden mortars, they make flour, and of this they make cakes” (in Wilson & Thompson, 1969: 81).

*“They live in small villages, in huts made of reed mats. ... These huts are round and low, and if any person dies in one of them, the others take it down with all the rest of the village [this custom will be considered again when we focus on Alberti’s observations]; they surround the huts with a hedge, within which they keep the cattle ... Most of the inhabitants of this land, ... are circumcised, ... they obey chiefs whom they call Ancosses (inkosi).”* (in Wilson & Thompson, 1969: 82)

Survivors from the *Sao Joao Baptista*, which ran aground east of the Fish River in October 1622, begin to introduce us to the relational values held by the native people they found on these shores. Though they

*“could never understand a word these people said, for theirs is not like that of man, and when they want to say anything they make clicks with their mouths at the beginning, middle, and end ... the natives brought as a present an ox, very big and fine, and a leather bag of milk.”* (in Wilson & Thompson, 1969: 82)

The accounts of the survivors from the *Nossa Senhõrs de Belem*, which ran aground between the Mthatha and Mbashe in June 1635, throw light on some local customs and how they were perceived by new comers:

*“The men of this country are very lean and upright, tall of stature, and handsome. ... There are rich and poor among them, but this is according to the number of their cattle. ... They use sandals of elephant hide; ... their shields are of elephant hide with handles like ours.”* (in Wilson & Thompson, 1969: 83)

*“The kings have four, five, and seven wives. The women do all the work, planting and tilling the earth, ... They have maize also, and plant large melons which are very good, and beans and gourds of many kinds, also sugar cane; ... Women bring no dowry in marriage, on the contrary the husband pays the bride’s father with cattle, and they become as slaves to their husbands.”* (Wilson & Thompson, 1969: 83).

We shall see how the reading of the African household by other Europeans themselves varies from the above. While the implication of this reading above is that of an oppressed woman in pre-colonial African society, we shall see another view of the “principal” role women played in their households.

In *The Edges of War*, John Milton (1983: 11) affirms the basic framework of the world of amaXhosa:

*Everyone agreed that the Xhosa were a handsome people. The ‘men of this country’ a Portuguese castaway reported in 1636, ‘are very lean and upright, tall of stature and handsome (less accurately, he added that ‘they live two hundred years and even more in good health and with all their teeth’); ... The German doctor Lichtenstein, ... remarked (about the women) on their “very sleek soft skin, beautiful teeth, pleasing features, expressive of great cheerfulness and content, and a slender form, makes them even in the eyes of an European exceedingly attractive. ... Their skin shone a rich bronze colour, an effect achieved in both the sexes by rubbing into it red ochre – mixed with grease and aromatic herbs ...”*

In 1683, “shipwrecked men” of the English ship *Johanna*, according to the testimony of Hamilton (in Bird, 1965: 24), were shown “more civility and humanity than some nations [that I know] who

pretend much religion and politeness” by the natives who assisted them, “somewhere about De la Goa”.

In Moodie’s *The Record* we have a testimony given by “eleven Dutch and nine English” survivors of the *Stavenisse*, recorded on 2 March 1687. The wreck took place “on Terra de Natal, between the degrees of 30 and 31 South latitude” (1860: 418). In “less than 12 days” after they had sailed from the site of the wreck in a smaller boat, had arrived on the Transkei coast, in a country they described as having “elephants of an incredible size” (p. 418),

*“very fruitful and populous, and the natives friendly, compassionate, obliging, strong, and ingenious, armed with only one assegai, obedient and submissive to their King or Chief. ... In manners, dress and behaviour, they are much more orderly than the Hottentots. The women attend to cultivation; the men herd and milk the cows. They do not eat poultry because they feed on filth; still less do they eat eggs, and it makes them sick to see Europeans eat them. ... they give us much corn ... from which corn they make very well tasted and nourishing bread.”* (Moodie, 1860: 417)

From the “Extract of a Log-book” kept in a ship called the *Centaur*, on Sunday, 10 February 1688, sailors, “Dutchmen, and people of the *Stavenisse*, testified before commissioners, of having travelled for twenty-two months from the wreck”, “through the whole country” and passed through “the Magossche territory”. On the 11th February, “men of the *Stavenisse*” “related” “sufferings, hardships, and dangers which they had sustained during their journey from the wrecked ship” (in Bird, 1965: 41). Having passed through the land of “five sorts of Hottentots ... named (beginning from the place of the wreck) the Temboes [abaThembu], the Mamponentmousse [amaMpondomise], the Mamponente [amaMpondo], the Matimbos [amaZimba]”, they encountered, thereafter, as they were clearly moving towards the western Cape, the “generally kind, compassionate, and hospitable” “Magossebe” among whom “circumcision is held in high respect”. They were living under the rule of their “very friendly, good-hearted, young and active” king, “Magamma”. These so-called “Magossche”, “Magossebe” or “Magosse Africans” (Bird, 1965: 45) would have been the amaXhosa, the writers have transcribed the click with the letter g.

In Moodie’s *Record* (1860: 427), the survivors’ testimony reads as follows:

*“These tracts of land are called Magossche, and are so fertile, that if a grain of wheat is let fall on the top of the mountains, it will produce as much as if sown in the field; there are beans, pumpkins, water melons, and such like, in abundance. These Kaffirs are well formed*

*in body, swift runners and live under the gentle monarchy of their King Magamma, who is very friendly, good hearted, young, and active fellow. ... They are generally kind, compassionate, and hospitable, but lazy in their nature, for the women perform all the hard work, as digging, delving, thrashing, and making the huts, besides cooking and dressing the victuals."*

In April 1689, Commander Simon van der Stel was sent to sail directly to Rio de la Goa, to survey the country, and to form a minute description of "all the advantages offered to the Dutch East India Company by the intervening country, either on the coast or in the interior, the character of the people, their merchandize, their animals, whether tame or wild, fruits, vegetables, minerals, and other riches" (Moodie, 1860: 430).

At Rio de la Goa, they found a "very good bay, where a number of vessels, great or small, may lie in safety. ... the natives were strong and tall, crafty, and cunning (*arg and listigh*) and well armed; one of their Chiefs was fully seven Frhinland feet in height". Here at De la Goa, they found a group of three survivors from the *Stavenisse*, "Adriaan Jans, boatswain, and Jan Pieters, a boy, both of the wrecked ship". The bay was indeed surveyed by the Commander, landing while doing so in what he calls unequivocally "the country of the Magosse". The position is also unmistakable, "in the latitude 33',42" " (Moodie, 1860: 430). This is clearly near present day East London.

Here we get a description quite similar to that provided by Ludwig Alberti much later, when he arrived at Table Bay in 1802. According to him, amaXhosa "deduce their origin from a certain man and woman who grew up together out of the earth, and who taught them to cultivate the ground, ... The survivors testified to having lived among the "Magose Africans", for "two years and eleven months" and having had to obtain "their food in the kraals or villages of the Magosse Africans", in "the country of the Amagosse", and "there were very well treated". Among amaXhosa, they noted, "it would be impossible to buy any slaves", because "they would not part with their children, or any connections for anything in the world, loving one another with a most remarkable strength of affection" (in Fehr, 1968: 52 – 70).

The survivors continued in their observations of amaXhosa to note that they lived in a country "exceedingly fertile and incredibly populous, and full of cattle", preserving the corn they produce "in cavities under ground, where it keeps good and free from weevils for years" – a practice that the

author observed as practised by elders of the Dwesa and Cwebe land claimants in the Transkei in the late twentieth century.

Among amaXhosa, one need not be “in any apprehension about meat and drink” testified the survivors, “as they have in every village or kraal a house of entertainment for travellers, where these are not only lodged, but fed also” (Moodie, 1860: 431). During their stay and travelling in the country, they found, living among amaMpondo, “an old Portuguese”. He had been shipwrecked there about 40 years before, while returning from India, ... the Portuguese had been circumcised, and had a wife, children, cattle and land, he spoke only the African language, having forgotten every thing, his God included” (Moodie, 1860: 431). This is unassailable testimony of this Mbo people having been in the Cape, around the Transkei, at least by the 1650s.

It is worth noting, too, that in 1497, around the same vicinity of De la Goa, the Portuguese, led by Vasco Da Gama, arrived at what they called the “watering-place of St Blaize, ... a very large bay safe in all winds except the north. ... The country produces many large elephants, and numerous oxen, of vast size and extremely fat, ... on some of the fattest these natives were seen riding, on panels stuffed with rye straw, as is used in Spain, and having a frame of wood like a saddle” (Kerr, 2004: Section 2).

Abraham Bogaert from South Holland returned to the Cape for the fifth time, landing in Table Bay in 1702 (Raven-Hart, translator, 1971). According to Bogaert, “All the usual inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope, and those who have their abodes or villages far inland, are called by the Dutch “Hottentots” because of their clicking and clumsy speech ... These people are divided into various tribes, all having their own customs and manners of living. In their own tongue they have the names of Sonquas, Namaquas, Gorachouquas, Cochoquas, Kariguriquas, Heuzaquas, Chainouquas, and so on.”

Interestingly, for the purpose of establishing the actual whereabouts of amaXhosa at the time that formal colonization began in the seventeenth century at Cape Town, Bogaert’s observations, which have not been given any considerable attention, are extremely informative. The Chainoquas, Bogaert tells us, “*were also called* Hosaas or Sousas” (Raven-Hart, 1971: 11), obviously a corrupt reference to amaXhosa. Compared to the other tribes, “the Chainoquas are not many in number, but rich in cattle, and at one time dwelt near the region of the Cape, but later retired so far inland that no one now knows where they have settled” (Raven-Hart, 1971: 11).

It is, however, on examining the Journal of Jan van Riebeeck, 1656–1658 (Thom, 1954: 167–172) that more light is shed on the presence of amaXhosa in the Cape at the time that the Dutch settlers arrived in 1652.

It was on a “lovely, calm” morning of the last day (*Ultimo*) of October, 1657, when certain “Saldanhars” had come to trade at the fort in Cape Town, as usual since the Dutch settlers had been there. With the help and “through the medium” of Eva, a native teenage girl who had been in the “service of the Commander’s wife since the beginning”, who was “living there permanently” and was “beginning to learn to speak Dutch well”, the Commander “spent the day entertaining the Saldanhars and questioning them about various things”(Thom, 1954: 170).

It is during this conversation that Van Riebeeck first learnt, from his guests, about the existence of a “powerful lord, emperor or king” and his people, the Chobona, ruling “over all the natives of the Cape”. One of the guests himself who was relating the story was a chief of one of the Saldanhars. His wife “had lived in the house of Chobona and had been educated there” (Thom, 1954: 172).

More light on the Chobona is given in the writings of Olfert Dapper, Willem Ten Rhyne and Johannes Gulielmus De Grevenbroek (who wrote in 1668, 1686 and 1695, respectively, about goings-on at the Cape, as part of Van Riebeeck’s team there; translation provided by Schapera, the social anthropologist, and Farrington from the University of Cape Town, 1933: 22–31). The Chobonas, with another tribe called the Chainouquas, lived further away, “far inland”. These tribes’ language differed from that of the Hottentots the Dutch were used to. According to Schapera and Farrington (1933: 28), the Chobona “were not Hottentots, but the name by which the Hottentots spoke of the Bantu”.

Harry, also a native interpreter who was living with the Dutch near the fort in Cape Town, “accurately” described the Chobonas as “Black Caffres like the Guinea and Angola slaves, dressed in calf and sheep skins of which they had many”. They lived in “permanent dwellings made of wood, clay and other material and also subsist on cattle and wear clothes” (Schaper and Farrington, 1933: 28), Van Riebeeck had heard.

The Dutch writers also made mention of certain Saldanhars called the “Great and Little Karichruquas and Hosaas” who lived “in and about Saldanha Bay”. Abraham Bogaert’s account of

1702 was not very far from fact; according to his version, by the time of his writing, “the Kariguriquas” were “also called Hosaas” (Raven-Hart, 1971: 11).

Much further inland, as has been mentioned, living near the Chobonas were the Chainouquas, “under a chief called Sousoa, an old man, who had two wives”. In what identifies him as more like amaXhosa royalty, the clothing of Chief Sousoa, according to the Dutch, was “a fine leopard skin” (Schapera and Farrington, 1933: 28). So respected by the “Hottentots” were the Chainouquas and Sousoa, that, according to Van Riebeeck, they would not “dare to come to trade as long as these Chainouquas were in the neighbourhood; but they would all make way for them, and come to greet the king with presents of cattle, etc, to show the obedience they owe to him. They spoke a different language to that spoken by the Hottentots” (Thom, 1952: 176).

Worth noting about the Chainouquas is the fact that ox-riding was observed among them. This habit, which also prevailed among the Galla of Abyssinia, was also noticed by John Barrows (1801: 193) when he visited amaXhosa between 1797 and 1798.

The Dutch writers were informed that the Chainouquas, and the amaXhosa Chobonas who lived very near them, were “fully three months’ journey inland” (Schapera and Farrington, 1933: 28). Given an estimated 20 kms travelled in day, this placed the Chobonas and the Chainouquas at about two thousand kilometres from the Cape of Good Hope or the fort.

This would imply that calculated assertions such as the following by Noel Mostert were merely speculation: “It was to be the last quarter of the eighteenth century before the vanguard of the trekboer advance into the South African interior began approaching the outermost fringes of Xhosa settlement, a century and a quarter after the white man established his permanent foothold at Table Bay” (1992: 223).

If the accounts of the “Saldanhars”, Jan Van Riebeeck, Olfert Dapper and Abraham Bogaert, are to be accepted as historical fact – and there is no reason why they should not be – amaXhosa were among the inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope.

When Bogaert observed the Xhosa tribe of Chainouquas retiring, “far inland”, it seems to have been for a practical reason on the part of amaXhosa. In 1659 Van Riebeeck wrote a report in which he explained that they “attempted to expel the Dutch”.

*“The reasons advanced by them for... making war upon us last year, arising out of the complaint ... that our own people, living at a distance and without our knowledge, had done them much injury, and also perhaps stolen and eaten up some of their sheep and calves etc, in which there is also some truth; ... so that they think they had some cause for revenge, and especially, they said, upon people who had come to take and occupy the land which had been their own in all ages.”* (in Wilson & Thompson, 1982: 65)

### **Pan-Ethiopian culture traits among amaMbo**

Having established the presence of amaXhosa as far as the Cape of Good Hope at least a century before the settlement of the area by European adventurers, we now come to consider more of the cultural traits connecting the Mbo people of southern Africa with those of north-eastern Africa. Francis Fynn (1950), who conducted an ethnographic study of the tribes of Natal from 1824, not only believed that these tribes which descended from the region of Sofala included amaXhosa, called by the colonialists frontier Kafirs, it was highly probable in his mind that amaXhosa were the first to appear in the southern direction. He also, on closer examination found the resemblance of many of their customs to those of the ancient Jews as prescribed in the ceremonial law under Levitical priesthood. Considering the “perfection of their language” with which they articulated their own version of how humankind was created, and the evidence of the customs he observed, Fynn could only conclude that these Africans must have been “superior to what they are” at the time he studied them. The following “are the most striking” of what he observed:

1. War offerings (or sacrifices);
2. Sin offerings;
3. Propitiation offerings;
4. Festival of First Fruits;
5. The proportion of the sacrifices given to Isanusi (or witch-doctor, as termed by the Europeans);
6. Periods of uncleanness on the decease of relatives and touching the dead;
7. Circumcision;
8. Rules regarding chastity; and
9. Rejection of swine’s flesh.

The evidence of these traits among amaMbo, so strikingly resembling those of the ancient Abyssinians, significantly remove any doubt about the authenticity and truthfulness of the Arab

travellers' observations and records about the Zendje tribes that had come down from among the "Nubians and the Bedja" tribes of ancient Abyssinia, to settle in Sofala.

### ***Age-set system***

We have already noted the existence of the Gadaa system among the Galla of Ethiopia. Read (1956) and Cobbing (1974) observed a similar system among the south-eastern Bantu. This is the age-set system, an important element is their social structure. "In pre-European days the division into cattle-herders (*amajaha*) or pre-warriors, warriors, and post-warriors or senior men, regulated the tasks and responsibilities of boys and men in other spheres besides those of warfare." Among amaZulu and amaNdebele Cobbing observed various aged young men (*amajaha*), "grouped together" (*bebuthwa*), which is where the idea of *amabutho* came from to perform various social responsibilities or rituals (1974: 612).

### ***Totemism***

We have already noted that the historian Budge (1928: 601–617) identified at least one of the ancient peoples of Ethiopia, the Galla, as admirers of "serpents and vultures". We have also mentioned above that one of the cultural features of the Oromo/Galla people of Ethiopia, including those still known to this day as the Ambo Oromo, is the system of totemism. "Totemism" (in [www.ossrea.net/ssrr/workneh/workneh-03.htm](http://www.ossrea.net/ssrr/workneh/workneh-03.htm)) is defined as "the belief that animals have a close connection with a family group. Lion is the totem of the people of Soboka Gadhafa lineage in Ambo". Totemism has been well considered among indigenous peoples, and the conclusion has been reached that it is a system of "mutual respect" between people and animals. The Galla people still practise this system. They have "developed a detailed zoological classification and utilization of wild animals" ([www.ossrea.net](http://www.ossrea.net): 5).

Several scholars, such as Levi-Strauss (1966), have studied "the complexities of native systems of biological knowledge" such as totemism. Totemism, which displays the native peoples' "extreme familiarity with their biological environment ... cannot relate to just practical needs" (in Workineh, 2001: 5). Its main purpose, concluded Levi-Strauss, "is not a practical one. It meets intellectual requirements rather than ... satisfying needs [because] classifying ... has a value of its own". In their comparative ethnosystematics, Berlin and Berlin (1983) "confirmed the correspondence of 'folk' and scientific systems of biological classification", suggesting that Western-trained biologists have no basis for claiming a monopoly of classification, or to have invented a conceptual order for

the biological world. There is an inherent natural order there, which could only be discovered. Totemism was more than just a belief system; it offered “opportunities for the protection of wild animals”. Effectively, its outcome was the promotion of diversity and ecological stability (in Kelbessa, 2001: 5). This cultural trait from ancient times, as noted by Budge, has proved resilient. The Ambo Oromo are known to this day to be people who show kindness to animals and revere some birds. Among the animals that are revered are the lion, the leopard, the crocodile and the python.

Cardinall, in *The Natives of the northern territories of the Gold Coast*, noted:

*Everyone has some animal which is a species of an alter ego – not to be slain or eaten, an animal which is recognized as one’s friend, one’s brother. Noteworthy of these is the crocodile. ... Other totems are the python, iguana, squirrel, civet. ... Some trees are totems, notably the kapok. ... Paga people call their alter ego crocodile their dyoro, or soul. The explanation given is that the friendship and mutual assistance and coexistence warrant such an appellation. (1925: 39–44)*

With reference to the Batswana, Brown (1925) refuted the idea that these totems were tribal deities, or the result of modern ideas and the intermingling of the Batswana with other people:

*Perhaps the best explanation of the ancient idea of the totem is that given more than fifty years ago by an old Mokwena, who had no knowledge of the Christian idea of God and its relation to substitutes for Him. His explanation was an answer to a question asked by one of the younger men of his tribe while the elders were gathered together at the tribal place of meeting. The question was whether the various totems venerated by the different tribes were originally the Gods of those tribes, and the answer given by the “ancient of days” was: “Don’t you yourself, see that the different tribes venerate many different things even in your presence? Are not the Bamangwato, who venerate the duiker, of the same tribe as the Bakwena, who venerate the crocodile, and don’t they venerate it even though they are in the midst of Batlharo and Barolong, who venerate respectively the baboon and the kudu antelope now (although at one time the Barolong venerated the lion)?*

*“These things are their venerated things, some because of the ferocity, others because of gentleness, cleverness and good-heartedness, and tribes have given themselves the names of these things through trusting them, or through self-commendation, or they have had the names given to them by others. But it is not meant that they worship them. Sometimes the*

*totem may be to their praise, at other times it is an abomination to them. The Bechwana have no god who is a creature. We look around us at the events and changes that take place and we say, 'It is He (God) who brings these to pass. He Himself who is very God' ". This old man, who had no knowledge of Christianity, nor any acquaintance with the Bible, went on to say: "The Bechwana feared things and they were of the opinion that God speaks to them through the creatures and through differences in things, and through the fear of the heart. So they listen to them and exalt them. But especially do they pay heed to the heart and the body, listening also to it, dreams too are paid heed to, and fear also rules people, and so they progress, especially listening to the heart. They say the body speaks, the heart bears testimony, and is paid heed to. And the things that one does not eat are things that one sometimes has found to be less nice than the things one is accustomed to eat".*

*There are three words used to express totem – all three derive from the act of veneration, praise or surname, but no one of the three comes from this word bina (to dance); when it is desired to speak of the thing which is danced to it is necessary to express it by a phrase. The words for totem are seano (the venerated thing), sereto (the named thing, having a special relationship to the namer) and seboko (the praised thing). Strictly speaking the last two may be used for crests of coats of arms. The totems of the different tribes comprise such animals as the kudu, the eland, the elephant, the lion, the antelope, leopard, duiker, the hare monkey, the baboon the ant-bear, the snake, the lizard, the poccupine, geraph, the buffalo, the ox, crocodile and such things as iron, the hammer, and the heart and entrails. (Brown, 1925: 39–42)*

### ***Relations with the plant world***

The knowledge and management by several indigenous and ancient peoples of their various habitats has been well documented. Conklin (1961), Nimuendaju (1974) and Posey (1983; 1985) lived and studied the resource management techniques of the Kayapo Indians in central Brazil. Taylor, Wilson and Peter have produced an informative study of how the Kayapo and Yanomami Indians of Brazilian Amazonia discovered how to use their tropical forests sustainably (1988). The Indians understood their dependence on the forests for their sustenance and therefore made an effort not only to tend and cultivate them periodically through practices such as *shifting cultivation*, but also to enhance the diversity of their fauna and flora. In 1989, McEwan (in Becker, 2003) observed how, “over millennia”, rural communities have managed watersheds in coastal Ecuador.

Closer to home, Fynn observed that healing is exercised “professionally” by the so-called “witch-doctors”, *izinyanga*, among the Africans of Natal. He says:

*I have frequently purchased a knowledge of native herbs from native doctors, and embraced every opportunity that occurred of witnessing their medical practice or surgical operations. Their knowledge of medicinal plants is considerable, though not very extensive; nor is it confined to them alone. A knowledge of the virtues of particular plants, when possessed by private families, is considered their heirloom. Hence, on a native being attacked by a disease, he obtains the opinion of a native doctor as to the nature of his complaint, and is recommended to apply to a family which possesses the knowledge of the appropriate remedy – for the fever, dropsy, rheumatism, or whatever the complaint may be. (1950: 106)*

In obvious acknowledgement and appreciation of the extent of knowledge existing among the Africans in this regard, Fynn goes on to reason:

*In acquiring a knowledge of plants possessing healing qualities, it is evident that the natives would also be acquainted with others of a poisonous nature. With several of the latter description I have an acquaintance; and I am of opinion that Europeans generally do not give sufficient credence to the fact that there are many nations who possess a knowledge of poison of a most destructive character perfectly unknown to themselves. (1950: 106–107)*

### **3.7.1 Ludwig Alberti’s observations regarding the cultural traits of amaXhosa**

Ludwig Alberti’s own independent work (in Fehr, 1968) pertaining to the cultural traits of amaXhosa firmly locates this ensemble of tribes in the cultural fold of their continental countrymen. Though Ludwig Alberti never actually dwelt among amaXhosa so as to obtain a more profound and practical knowledge of their language and customs, his contact with amaXhosa seemed to have depended on periodic visits to the “Xhosa Chiefs”; for example, he accompanied Janssens to his meeting with Chief Ngqika in 1803. “His observations on these travels and information gleaned, probably with the aid of colonists who accompanied him and who were fully conversant in Xhosa, later formed the basis of his book on the Xhosa,” wrote Fehr (1968: 12–20). This most probably explains how he misjudged amaXhosa on the issue of worship.

## ***Worship***

It has been asserted by many a Western observer such as Elmslie (1901: 55) that native Africans are “devotees of passion” who “do not worship God”. This is despite a simultaneous acknowledgement that Africans have a “distinct knowledge of God as *Umkurumqango* (the God known among the Ngoni as the One who dwelt above) or *Chiuta* – as God is known among the “Tonga” (1901: 67).

Reported concepts of amaXhosa about creation and the Creator have tended to reveal the attitudes of the observers rather than the fact. Giving “evidence” regarding “native” ideas about God, before the “Native Commission” in 1852, Henry Francis Fynn, a magistrate, was “convinced that up to the period of their becoming acquainted with the white men, they had but a vague, confused idea of the Deity” (in Bird, 1965: 105). Hodgson (1982: 26), said “Xhosa had only a shadowy concept of the supreme being” and that they had no defined belief related to this “being”; that more focus was paid to “the spirits of their dead” rather than to the “supreme being”. In a similar vein Cumptsy (1980), whose interpretations about the spirituality of amaXhosa Hodgson seemed to have accepted as ‘gospel’, relegated the religious beliefs of amaXhosa to little more than a “mythopoeic world-view” like those of other “traditional Africans” (in Hodgson, 1982: 26).

True to the Western approach to religion and worship, Alberti looked for external evidence of this dimension, separate and differentiated from the secular, day-to-day life of amaXhosa. He was disappointed.

The reason for this failure is captured in what Parringer (1954: 27–31) observed: “There is no sharp dividing line between the sacred and secular such as we profess to have in Europe. Material and spiritual are intertwined, the former as a vehicle of the latter”. Herein lies part of the current problem faced in inter- and transdisciplinary attempts to find knowledge that transgresses the boundaries of disciplines. Whereas life in the Afrocentric perspective is one indivisible whole, the European, as Parringer attested, views it from a multiplicity of often conflicting, contradictory and individualistic perspectives, in increasingly complex disciplines which – as is now being perceived – may constrain efforts to realise sustainable development. This is why many a European observer would misinterpret religious expression among Africans. In the very acts of their daily living, as will be emphasized below, in practices such as *ukubuka iindwendwe* (caring for strangers) and *ukunqoma* (wealth sharing in the form of lending cows to the destitute), it will be seen how the spirituality of amaXhosa is expressed and demonstrated in the secular, practical acts of benevolence and compassion. It will be seen, indeed, how their wealth is used “as a vehicle” of their spirituality.

Despite his conviction that amaXhosa were unlike “other uncivilized races who worship the sun or other real or imaginary objects”, including the grossly misunderstood “ancestor worship”, Alberti never noticed or attested to their worship of “God, or an invisible Being, to whom they ascribe a powerful influence over themselves”(Fehr, 1968: 22). Even other European colonists would know that on this point he was grossly uninformed.

### ***Healthful living and temperance***

AmaXhosa put a high premium on physical health through temperance in eating and drinking. There is evidence that they took care to preserve the body in its best condition. Just as much as the “meat of pig and boar” was not consumed by Abyssinian people like the Galla and the Amhara, “no Kaffir”, noted Alberti, could be “induced to eat the meat of domesticated pigs, hares, geese or ducks, or any kind of fish” (1968: 50–70). The reason behind this, as he came to find out, was that these animals “eat all the dirt”. More than a century before Alberti, Grevenbroek (in Schapera & Farrington, 1933: 179) described amaXhosa as a people who “refrain from every kind of fish, even shell-fish”. In this regard they slightly differed from the Khoi who, according to Ten Rhyne (in Schapera & Farrington, 1933: 129), “eat only fish with scales” (which is quite remarkable, given the instruction in this regard to the Israelites in the Book of Leviticus).

It is not just on physical health that amaXhosa put a premium. They also appreciated the relationship between the mind and the body. This association was not appreciated at that time, not even by the “civilized” Europeans. AmaXhosa abstained from eating the meat of hares and geese because they believed that this led to mental debility (Schapera & Farrington, 1933: 129).

This whole range of animals is strikingly similar to the group that the Hebrew people were forbidden to eat by Moses in their strict dietary observations (Leviticus 11). The hare, the swine and certain kinds of fish and birds were not to be eaten because they were “unclean”.

### ***Benevolence and compassion-centred social security***

The self-sacrificial lifestyle and acts of benevolence among amaXhosa in pre-colonial times were dismissed by many a European observer, as well as Peires (1980), as an economic convenience

intended to ensure that the benefactor secured future favours from the beneficiaries; as simply a means of ensuring future profiteering.

Alberti, on the other hand, recorded:

*Just as among these Kaffirs a considerable degree of love and benevolence manifests itself between relatives, so also the subsisting feeling of those people for general love of one's fellow men, does not remain concealed from the observer. The Kaffir gladly and willingly renders assistance to his neighbouring fellow-creatures, which they may stand in need of, and appears to feel the necessity for this powerful social tie deeply. If someone is completely impoverished and asks for assistance from a strange horde, he is immediately provided with nourishment. (in Fehr, 1968: 51)*

We have already noted that European shipwreck survivors also reported this.

Alberti (in Fehr, 1968: 51) continued:

*The one who has less cattle than are necessary for the maintenance of his family, receives several cows on loan, for two, three and more years, from another who has plenty and gladly assists in this way. He then receives half of the calves from these cows, although such assistance is rendered without any reward to the lender.*

AmaXhosa call this practice *ukunqoma*. The animal itself is called *inkomo yenqoma*. The cultural importance of this practice is even embedded in the language, as in “*inkomo yenqoma yintsengw' abheka*”. The closest the author could get to giving an English translation that captures the beauty of the expression is: “One never knows when the cow you have been lent will be fetched by its owner, so make the best of it while you can”.

Similar practices prevailed among amaZulu. Chiefs had the duty called *ukusisa* towards the poor in society. *Ukusisa*, literally translated as “to take to”, meant just that; social leaders with wealth shared their resources with less fortunate households; they took cattle to them so that they could survive as other households. This was called *ukutekela*. If a household's crops failed it was the duty of the more fortunate to provide (Samuelson, 1987; Illife, 1987).

On close examination we have here a social system that ensures economic security; put in another way we have an economy embedded in society; one that relies upon ordinary, able people to pull

the poor out of the clutches of poverty through ways that do not sustain them in a perpetual state of dependency. Here we see a system in which the poor are given the responsibility to participate in extracting themselves from poverty; they can only keep part of what they have been assisted to produce. The fight against poverty is not taken away from them; they are simply equipped to continue the struggle with poverty in ways that will accelerate victory over it.

The beauty of the system lies in one very important point. Each family that had been rescued from the stranglehold of destitution and poverty was duty bound to pass on the help to others who were in a similar condition. Such a self-sacrificial mode of living has been referred to by White (1966: 96), as living based “on the law of restitution”. This is how she advised that development work among the “colored” people of the poverty-stricken southern states of America should be conducted in the 1890s:

*Those living where the work has been established on a good foundation should feel themselves bound to help those in need, by transferring, even at great self-sacrifice and self-denial, a portion or all of the means which in former years was invested ... in their locality. ... This is the law of restitution. ... One portion is worked and bears fruit. Then another is taken up, ... the new, unworked part shall receive help from the part that has been worked. Thus the work in every part becomes a success. (White, 1966: 96).*

Only through such a socially embedded system of wealth utilisation can poverty be eradicated and development sustained among people.

“If anyone has his cattle stolen, he can depend upon the energetic support in the pursuit of the thieves; one is instantly ready and anxious to recover the stolen animals, without any regard for the danger of being injured, or possibly even killed”, noted Alberti (in Fehr, 1968 : 51). He continued:

*For such a service there simply is no reward, as they are regarded purely as the performance of a duty. Altogether, one is accustomed to accept the legitimate concern for one’s fellow-being with warmth, and so look upon any offence given to him as having been inflicted on oneself. The one who has not been affected, not infrequently does more than the one who has actually suffered the offence, so as not to be reproached for having failed in his duty.*

We shall observe in the following chapters how the colonial system eroded this social beauty, first among the Khoi at the Cape of Good Hope and thereafter among amaXhosa. We shall see how

architects of the destruction of African culture such as Sir George Grey and Theophilus Shepston, through the violent “location system” and other manipulative instruments, alienated Africans from their beautiful cultural practices, sowing the seeds of the economic nakedness and destitution that has become the hallmark of their majority. From a society in which individual households are the bases of productivity; where each *umzi*, household, is an independent economic pillar of society, whole communities and towns in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape have been rendered fodder for multi-national corporations and chain stores that siphon off their wealth, leaving many a local municipality without an economic base for recouping the costs of providing basic services.

In the concluding chapter we shall also pay attention to the implication of compassion-based African social systems in current endeavours that seek to rejuvenate local economies as the state and government battle to facilitate job creation, fight poverty and crime, raise incomes in distressed communities and achieve sustainable human settlement and development.

### ***Hospitality and duty***

Hospitality among amaXhosa, Alberti came to observe, was among those activities:

*which are regarded as a duty and consequently, is exercised with cordiality, free of all self interest. The stranger finds a ready reception everywhere and does not suffer the least embarrassment in respect of food or sleeping accommodation whenever and wherever he has arrived at a habitation. ... In spite of an inclination to save, one looks upon it as a duty to share one's food with others, without distinction (in Fehr, 1968: 51–78)*

### ***Administration of law and justice***

From the accounts already given by the survivors of the various shipwrecks on the Transkei and Natal coasts, it has been noted that law and order were held in awe by the indigenous people. Alberti also attested that “the practice of unjust and devastating laws of the stronger is not tolerated under any circumstances” among amaXhosa. “No one may take the law into his hands. All legal matters must be brought before the Chief of the horde to which the offender belongs, for his decision. In important decisions the Chief will call in the assistance of his officials to help him form his judgments” (in Fehr, 1968: 51–70).

### ***War and peace***

As Europeans left their home to sail across oceans, their endurance in the midst of much suffering in the process was sustained by the hope of realizing wealth to be taken back home or taken under their absolute control and ownership. It is this cultural intent that was to explode against that of another in a phenomenon that was to be called the Frontier Wars in southern Africa.

It is worth noting Alberti's perception of amaXhosa on the issue of war, right at the beginning of a series of battles that were to last for about a century. He got an impression of a people that "cannot be really called a war-like people", but were, nevertheless, "ready to strike when it comes to defending or validating certain real or imaginary rights, and which is then done with courage and resolution" (in Fehr, 1968: 51–70).

The substance of this categorical statement will be dealt with in the next chapter, in which the reaction of amaXhosa to colonial behaviour will receive extensive attention. What is worth noting about this statement, however, is that it is aligned to the broader cultural approach already noted in amaXhosa to life and society. The cultural capital contained in the values of benevolence and compassion they showed towards both kindred and strangers underlie this perspective on war.

### **3.7.2 Observations from the *Stavenisse* survivors**

#### ***On religious worship and creation***

Some of the survivors from the *Stavennisse* that ran aground in 1686 on the Transkei coast, having lived "two years and eleven months" among amaXhosa, during King Togu's reign, "were unable to discover amongst them the slightest traces of religion", but unwittingly testified to the creation belief among amaXhosa when they remarked: "they deduce their origin from a man and woman, who grew up together out of the earth" (in Bird, 1965: 45).

#### ***On orderliness and respect for law***

Some basic tenets of international administrative law and justice, such as meting out no punishment against a person without a hearing, are confirmed to have been in practice among amaXhosa. In this regard the *Stavenisse* survivors, who lived for about four years among them, remarked: "Revenge has little or no sway among them, as they are obliged to submit their disputes to the king, who, after

hearing the parties, gives sentence on the spot, to which all submit without a murmur” (Wilson & Thompson, 1969: 122). Disputes were tried publicly in the chief’s or king’s court where “every adult man had the right to attend and speak” (Kuper in Wilson & Thompson, 1969: 122). Kuper also noted that even a Chief among AbeNguni was “traditionally below the law, and could be tried and fined by his own privy council”.

This was also attested to by Dr Van der Kemp during his stay among amaXhosa in King Ngqika’s period. He noted about the king:

*He has his own counselors who inform him of the sentiments of his people, and his Captains admonish him with great freedom and fidelity when he abuses his authority to such a degree that there is reason to fear that the nation will shew him their displeasure. This is done when he treats the admonition with contempt, not by way of insurrection, or taking up arms against him, but most effectually, by gradual emigration. (Wilson & Thompson, 1969: 122)*

### ***On social etiquette and orderliness***

The Stavenisse survivors (in Moodie, 1860: 431), as we have already noted, observed among other features, that amaXhosa:

*are very civil, polite, and talkative, saluting each other, whether male or female, young or old, whenever they meet, asking whence they come and whither they are going, what their news, and whether they have learned any new dances or tunes.*

In the Chronicles of Basutoland, a “running commentary on the events of the years 1830 to 1902 by the French protestant missionaries in Southern Africa”, compiled by Robert Germond, some informative observations about how amaXhosa conducted themselves in society and about their general appearance are captured. Germond observed the following (1967: 125–129):

*[AmaXhosa men wear a] large bullock hide which is thrown over the shoulder and which reaches down to the knees. ... Their cloaks reminded us of the robes of the ancient Romans as they figure in our museums.*

*Whenever we paid them a visit we received a most cordial welcome. ... A dozen women approached the tent with little rush baskets filled with sour milk poised on their heads. It is this way that the Kaffir woman are accustomed to carry loads of every description, and they*

*balance them so perfectly, but seldom do they need to support them with their hands. This is the secret of the most light and graceful gait they develop.*

*A few hours later the fair began. ... The soldiers snatched the wares with amazing eagerness, and, in exchange, gave the Kaffirs small hatchets, knives, and buttons for, with the exception of the few who lived on the colonial borders, the value of money is unknown to them. [Money had not yet fully been embraced into their economic system.]*

*Captain Freud had provided us with a sentry to guard our wagons in case anything was stolen from us, but the greatest order prevailed throughout and we witnessed none of the shocking brawls which so often disgrace our large fairs in Europe.*

### **3.7.3 From the “Loss of the Grosvenor” Narrative**

In “A Narrative” regarding the loss of *The Grosvenor*, which was wrecked on 4 August 1782, George Carter provided an informative picture regarding the lifestyle of the natives of “Caffraria” and their environment:

*The Caffrees ... are a humane and quiet people... They are extremely fond of dogs, which they exchange for cattle, ... if one particularly pleases them, they will give two bullocks in exchange for it.*

*The men have great pride in their cattle; they cut their horns in such a way as to be able to turn them into any shape they please, and they teach them to answer a whistle.*

*From what I observed of this country, I am induced to believe that it is greatly superior to any other known part of Africa. The woods produce a variety of arborous plants, and some of a great size ... There were also a variety of beautiful birds and butterflies;*

*The men are more particular in decorations than the women, being very fond of beads and brass rings. ... Caffree women care little for ornaments. Indeed they are well made, and pretty ...*

*Industry is a leading trait in the character of the Caffrees. Some arts are taught indeed by necessity, a love of agriculture, with a few religious dogmas ...*

*Circumcision, which is generally practiced among them, proves that they either owe their origin to an ancient people, or have simply imitated the inhabitants of some neighbouring country of whom they have no longer any remembrance.* (Carter, undated: 72–87)

The travellers' impressions, however, were not all as rosy as depicted above. In their judgment, for example, native women “perform all the hard work, as digging, delving, thrashing, and making the huts, besides cooking and dressing the victuals, whilst the men do nothing but milk the cows and make the kraals” (Bird, 1965: 42). Without having cared to find out how amaXhosa's laws stipulated against some social aberrations, they also observed that “they are thieves and lying, though hospitable”.

From these accounts, given by various travellers, emerges a clear picture. At least a century before the formal colonization of South Africa, the natives they came across along the Eastern Cape and specifically amaXhosa, were consistently described as having displayed beautiful human-to-human relational values. The display of hospitality was not erratic and accidental but consistent and an unmistakable characteristic of these people.

#### **3.7.4 The accounts of John Barrows and Henry Lichtenstein**

These two authors wrote of the area in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries respectively (Barrows, 1801; Lichtenstein, 1812). Their accounts are supplemented in this section with corroborating comments made by Theal and Milton.

##### ***Physical appearance, health and love of beauty***

Dr Lichtenstein's assessment (1812: 241–301) is that amaXhosa were in physical stature “from five feet six to five feet nine inches high; some even considerably taller, as for instance their King Geika (Ngqika); but few indeed are less. ... They hold themselves exceedingly upright; their step is quick and dignified; their whole exterior denotes strength of spirit.”

John Milton, writing about how amaXhosa struck Europeans, as already noted above, with their physical beauty, noted:

*Everyone agreed that the Xhosa were a handsome people. 'The men of this country', reported a Portuguese castaway in 1636 'are very lean and upright, tall of stature and handsome' (less accurately, he added that 'they live two hundred years and even more in good health and with all their teeth'). ... The women though shorter than the men, were no less handsome. (1983: 11)*

The relative longevity of the people is attested elsewhere:

*Under natural conditions, the Bantu were a longer lived people than the Europeans. The friar Dos Santos found several women at Sofala who perfectly remembered events that had taken place eighty years before, and modern observers in other parts of the country had noticed the same circumstance. (Theal, 1902: 29)*

Theal also noticed, regarding the people's love of beauty, that "more attention was bestowed upon the hair than upon any other part of the body. Each tribe had its own fashion of wearing it" (1902: 88).

Regarding their general state of health Theal observed further:

*A very extraordinary circumstance which I had to remark among these people is, that I never knew one of them sneeze, yawn, cough. Or hawk. I do not rest this entirely upon my own observation; the very same thing was remarked by our whole party. They never have colds or catarrhs, and it may be presumed, according to their appearances, that they are equally free from the spleen and ennui. (1902: 88)*

Impressed with the "muscular, well-made, elegant figures" of amaXhosa men, Barrows observed that this had largely to do with their dietary habits. "They are exempt, indeed", he learnt, "from many of those causes that, in more civilized societies, contribute to impede the growth of the body. Their diet is simple; their exercise of a salutary nature; their body is neither cramped nor encumbered by clothing; the air they breath is pure; ... they are free from those licentious appetites which proceed frequently more from a depraved imagination than a real natural want; ... they eat when hungry and sleep when nature demands it". He concluded, "With such a kind of life, languor and melancholy have little to do. The countenance of a Kaffir is always cheerful; and the whole of his demeanor bespeaks content and peace of mind" (1801: 160–170).

Regarding the women of amaXhosa, Lichtenstein, also made the following observations:

*The Koossa women have a great deal of decency and modesty in their behaviour. Their clothing covers their whole body; only their face, arms and feet are uncovered. They avoid carefully every unnecessary exposure of their persons in suckling their children or in wading through a river, and never appear before strangers with their heads uncovered.*  
(1812: 200–301)

### ***Division of labour***

While Dr Lichtenstein (1812: 241–301) observed that “No woman thinks of mixing in public business”, he also wrote:

*The woman’s influence in household affairs is proportionally great; they are directed almost entirely by her. Even in the manner of disposing of the common property, the wife has the principal direction, and the husband submits to her opinion so unconditionally, that even after closing a bargain in the way of trade, he not unfrequently recedes, because his wife refuses her consent to it.*

Thus was the individuality of women securely guarded in society and this arrangement posed no threat to men. They accepted this division of household responsibility without a murmur. The woman’s intelligence in her areas of responsibility was not questioned, her identity was stamped on her work. This is, again, in striking similarity with what the Israeli writer and philosopher-king, Solomon described as the “virtuous” woman: The heart of her husband safely trusts her, ... provides food for her household, ... considers a field and buys it, ... she perceives that her merchandise is good, ... she is not afraid of snow for her household, ... strength and honor are her clothing; she watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed” (Proverbs, 31: 10–31). The impact of the work of a woman among amaXhosa was reflected in the quality of the children she first trained, before they were passed on for further training by her husband and the state in later years. Here was no room for competitive power relations. This trend permeated the whole of society, as the chiefs and king themselves had no monopoly of power over society, as indicated above.

### ***Industry, artisanship and recreation***

The industrious inclination of women among amaXhosa was manifested within household affairs, both within and between households, as is often the case during social festivities such as weddings. Next to nursing, the leading activities of women were the rearing and training of children and the cultivation of the ground, as John Barrows observed. There was also the manufacturing of clothing and a variety of household utensils, including “baskets with the Cyperus grass, earthen pots for cooking, making of cloaks from animal skins” (1803: 160–176)

Men, on the other hand:

*could not be pronounced deficient of talent; ... they are no contemptible artisans. Though they have no knowledge of smelting iron from the ore, yet when it comes to their hands in a malleable state, they can shape it to their purpose with wonderful dexterity. Every man is his own artist. ... Many of the ornaments of copper and iron, with which they adorn their heads, are far from being void of taste. The article that furnishes their dress is prepared and put together with some degree of ingenuity. Calves' skins only are used for this purpose. ... [They are dried, softened and] cut into proper shapes, and sewed together exactly in the same manner that the shoemakers of Europe stitch together two pieces of leather, and the thread is the fibres of the tendons of the long dorsal muscle taken from various animals. (Barrows, 1803: 160–176).*

Regarding their pastimes, Theal remarked that “horned cattle”, while comprising “the principal wealth of the Bantu, and ... a convenient form of exchange”, were also a source of recreational joy: they were trained with much skill and well looked after. “They were taught to obey signals, as for instance, to run upon a certain call or whistle being given”. In what strongly suggests another connection between these people and the Galla of Ethiopia, Theal observed:

*Every man of note had his racing oxen, and prided himself upon their good qualities, ... horns of the animals were trained into the most fantastic shapes, and were often divided into two, three or more parts, which was often effected by splitting them as soon as they appeared on the young animal. The intelligence displayed by some of these oxen was as wonderful as the patience and skill shown by their trainers. ... Ox riding was connected with all kinds of festivities. (1902: 84)*

### *Observance of the laws of nature and the administration of justice*

Dr Henry Lichtenstein observed that amaXhosa believed in a “great Being” who created the world. There were obvious devotional services such as the sacrifice of oxen that he was informed about by Coenraad Buys whom he found living among amaXhosa, but he never understood what it stood for. It is also quite remarkable that neither he nor his informant, Dr Van der Kemp, ever saw a correlation between this belief and the following range of attributes among amaXhosa.

#### *Honour and respect for the elderly*

Dr Lichtenstein noted:

*The Koossas have a very laudable respect for their parents, and their relations, who are advanced in years. A father, when unable, on account of his age, to attend any longer to his affairs himself, gives up his whole property indiscriminately to his sons, and is sure of receiving the utmost care and kindness from them for the rest of his life. Any one who should fail in respect for his father, or shew any neglect of him, would draw on himself the contempt of the whole horde; there have been instances in which want of filial duty has been punished with infamy and banishment. During his whole life a father must be consulted in all his son's undertakings; and after his death the uncle or older brother, as his representative, must be the counselor. All persons advanced in years have particular respect shewn them, their advice is always listened to, and if they become sick and helpless, everyone is eager to afford them assistance (1812: 240).*

#### *Sanctity of marriage*

Marriage among amaXhosa was a respected union for life between a husband and his wife. Dr Lichtenstein noticed that “most of the Koossas have but one wife” (1812: 240–300). John Barrows, too, attested to the fact that polygamy was not the norm, as was so widely and commonly understood about Africans. It was allowed, but was “confined almost to Chiefs”, he noticed. King Ngqika himself, he witnessed, “had one wife only”. Barrows also observed that “instances of infidelity are very rare ... and when they occur, are accidental rather than premeditated” (1801: 160–170).

#### *Restitutive justice*

The justice system of amaXhosa revolved around the preservation of society, and minimizing the suffering and loss incurred by members of society. Systemically, every facet of life was embedded

in society. Economic practices and wealth in general, as noted above, was used more transformationally than transactionally, to maintain society in harmony and in peace.

The justice system of amaXhosa fell within this approach to life in society. Fines were more a means of restitution than the punishment of the guilty. Against infidelity, unpremeditated murder, and most anti-social behaviours, a fine was imposed on the wrongdoer. For theft, in particular, Barrows observed, “there is no other punishment than that of restitution”. AmaXhosa, he realized, “know nothing of the practice of imprisonment for any crime” (1801: 160–170).

#### *Early child education and development*

Dr Lichtenstein paid some attention to the manner in which amaXhosa raised their children. “It is very remarkable,” he noted:

*how nicely attentive they are in many respect to the little decorums of life; ... they are particular in training their children; ... a little boy, who once in Vander Kemp’s presence transgressed in some way, was immediately sent out of the door.*

*Till the children are about seven or eight years old, they remain entirely under the mother’s care, who keeps them. As soon as they are old enough to be employed in any kind of service, perhaps to look after the calves, they are taken entirely under the father’s tuition; the girls remain with the mother, and are trained up to little household occupations.*

*All children above the age of ten or eleven years old are publicly instructed under the inspection of the Chief; the boys in the use of arms, and other things wherein strength of body is required; the girls in works by the hand and household services. (1812: 200–300)*

What is obvious here is a system in which little room was allowed for idleness during the formative years of a child. The necessary disciplinary training at home inculcated a disposition in the child to obey authority, guarding them from the dangers of injurious associations that would weave “cheap, perverted ideas” “into the texture of the characters” (White, 1948: 65) while their characters were still highly susceptible to influence.

#### *Independent, self-supporting, entrepreneurial households*

Among the responsibilities invested in the society were household-based national defence and household-based economic security. Boy-children, from as early as ten or eleven, were made aware

of and prepared for national defence; they were trained for an important duty towards the state and also society at large.

Training in defence, as could be expected, followed and built upon the discipline that children had already acquired from household-based training in economic responsibility as noted above. Each boy was trained to take care of the wealth of the home, largely consisting of the livestock. “The boys”, observed Dr Lichtenstein, “are early taken to join the occupation of their fathers in tending the cattle, and, as pay, have some of the young ones awarded to them”(1812: 240-500). Thus were children taught to earn their livelihood while simultaneously being prepared to run their own future households. This was practical training in economic independence and self-employment.

Knowing that according to tradition they would build their own families on the basis of the wealth they were being trained to take care of, the children treated the wealth as theirs, thus ensuring its perpetuation and continued growth. This is the business philosophy that Oriental corporations (especially in Japan) are successfully built on. The employment of skilled business experts in corporations, it has been realized, is not adequate to ensure corporate success, nor are ethics such as integrity. Relational values such as a sense of belonging, honour for family wellness and enthusiasm are deeper values that money cannot buy and that business schools are ill-equipped to teach.

#### *Attitudes to war and peace*

Even before Ludwig Alberti had observed that amaXhosa “cannot really be called a war-like people” John Barrows had come to a similar conclusion: “War is not made by them for extension of territory or individual aggrandizement” (1801: 160–176). Contrast this, for example, to what the King of Portugal had made explicit to Da Gama before sending him to explore India and the African continent in the fifteenth century. Barrows, like Alberti, emphasized that amaXhosa were prone to go to war “for some direct insult or act of injustice against the whole, or some member, of the community” (1801: 160). Here, again, is the dominant socio-cultural trend confirmed. The good of the entire society was held supreme; the defence of the right to life necessitated going to war. There was a preparedness to shed life to preserve life, whenever necessary, and this was done “with courage and resolution”.

From here, the conclusion can already be drawn that it is the contact of these two cultures, profiteering and gain, on the one hand, against benevolence and compassion, on the other, that

shaped the history of southern Africa. Right here, the conclusion arrived at by Noel Mostert that “gold” and “cattle-keeping and its milking traditions”, “fostered” “sub-Saharan Africa’s greatest establishments of power, wealth and dynasty” (1992; 224), I suggest, must be accepted, but only as a superficial reading of the actual motivation behind the greed for power or respect for society.

AmaXhosa utilized wealth to express their culture (as defined above), to give expression to their most cherished values. Wealth, in its varied capital forms, land or cattle, and in its intangible forms, hospitality, unity and peace, was extended to others and shared for the mutual benefit of all in society.

### **3.8 Association with the natural world**

In the study conducted by Workineh Kelbessa among the Galla/Oromo people of Ambo in Ethiopia, he revealed that this indigenous group of people practiced totemism. The Galla, he said, traditionally showed “kindness to some wild animals on cultural, economical and religious grounds” (2001: 5). Indeed, he acknowledged that “poverty has compelled peasant farmers to avoid traditional conservation practices by cutting down trees and killing some wild animals beyond the limits or in violation of their indigenous ethical codes”. The traditional system provided opportunities for the promotion of “the diversity of wild animals and ecological stability” (2001: 3).

Workineh conducted another study in 2005, for the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), among the Galla people of Kenya and Ethiopia. In this study he paid attention to the Galla people’s belief system and its impact on their attitudes towards the natural environment. He concluded that “the Oromo and other African people have fostered belief systems and social norms that encouraged or even enforced limits to the exploitation of biological resources” (2005: 3).

Central in their belief system was *Waaqa*, God, the only Supreme Being, “who is before everything else”; *Waaqa* is also attributed with being *Umaa*, “a Creator of everything in the world”, *hundaa beekaa*, omniscient; and *hundaa tolaa*, omnibenevolent and kind. He is “intolerant to injustice, crime, sin and all falsehood” (2005: 6). Their monotheistic belief in the only Supreme God who created everything and that all humans “are members of one human race” led them to see the world and “the universe as a single whole” (2005: 6) from one Creator.

Totemism is widespread among aBantu in southern Africa, as already noted among AbaTswana (Brown, 1925) and AbaNgoni of Nyasaland (Elmslie, 1901; Read, 1956). It is also prevalent among amaXhosa. We have clans calling themselves after a wide range of animal varieties and Chiefs assuming names related to the natural world, as demonstrated below among the Hegebe people of Mqanduli in the OR Tambo district municipality of the Eastern Cape.

Various parts of nature were places where the spirits of the departed (*amathongo*) hovered. From these parts came a plethora of *ubulawu* artifacts of healing. From *emlanjeni* (river), *ehlathini* (forest), *elwandle* (the sea) and *ethafeni* (open field and grassland), as attested by the anthropologist Manton Hirst (2005) who did a lot of work among amaXhosa, the healing came. AmaXhosa and their diviners therefore treated nature with the utmost respect.

The graves of several Xhosa kings, from Sikomo's in Ntabankulu near the Umzimkulu River to that of King Tshiwo in Mbashe, strewn on a rich trail of savanna grassland, lavishly endowed with sub-tropical forests, are indicative of and provide testimony to the downward eastern movement of amaXhosa towards the Western Cape.

Among the places amaXhosa kings settled were Gcalekaland and Bomvanaland situated in what is now the Mathole district municipality of the Eastern Cape. These two areas were named as such by colonialists in their habit of keeping Africans tribally divided. They were separated by the river uMbashe. AmaBomvana, according to J.H. Soga (1930: 363) were "an AbaMbo tribe, and related to the Pondos", who as we have noted through the Chief, Dr Rubusana, were themselves of amaXhosa descent. The grave of King Ngconde (son of King Togu) in Buntingville in Pondoland attests to and connects amaMpondo strongly with amaXhosa. There in Pondoland, in the place called eNgqeleni, is the grave of Togu, another Xhosa king. It was King Phalo, his great-grandson, who crossed uMbashe, leaving the grave of his father, King Tshiwo, in Bomvanaland at Ngcwanguba Village, and settled in Gcalekaland – so called after Gcaleka, his son.

On both sides of the river Mbashe are administrative areas composed of numerous villages of isiXhosa-speaking people. In pre-colonial times, the indigenous inhabitants here dwelt inside and close to two indigenous forests that have come to be known as Dwesa and Cwebe.

The author encountered and intimately interacted with the people of Dwesa and Cwebe when he led and participated in an ethnographic research project in 1996 and 1997. The people had lodged a

claim with the Eastern Cape Commission for the Restitution of Land Rights, to regain the rights they lost in those indigenous forests. Together with Linda Faleni, now the Regional Land Claims Commissioner in East London, the author spent many days in the area with some elders, probing all that we could pertaining to their traditional and historical engagement with the indigenous forests, so as to support or recommend rejection of their claim. These findings were documented in a report titled “An ethnographic study on the Dwesa-Cwebe land claim” (1996), which the author has been struggling for years to obtain access to. The information below has therefore been gleaned from the material that the author scribbled in his own notebooks.

The elders of Dwesa and Cwebe included, among others, Mangakeva, Khonza, S’nandile, Tywetywe, Somdaka, Dilikhaya and Ntuli. The most striking thing about their relationship with these forests is found in the saying *Savela nawo la mahlathi* (“We emerged/grew together with these people” or “We came into being with these forests”). This expresses a bond between them and the forest as strong as that among family members. At the time when the forests were re-demarcated by government to “state forests” in 1927/28, many of the elders we interviewed were in their teens and conscious of their environment. Before this re-demarcation, several areas of the Transkei had been “annexed” and brought under the control of the Cape Government between 1878 and 1894, but at that time the forests had not been brought under the forest laws of the Cape.

The destruction of the forests started shortly after the 1878 to 1894 annexation, reasoned C.C. Henkel, the forester responsible for the Transkei areas:

*The destruction of the once magnificent, large and valuable forests of Tembuland and other parts of Transkei ... is a lamentable fact. The havoc made by the Dutch and Hottentot sawyers, who came over to this side of the Kei river ... exceeds by far that made by the ... various clans and tribes of the amaXhosa, who ... blame the sawyer for the destruction of the forests, as having commenced on their arrival. (1888: 63)*

Most of these “European sawyers” assisted by “Hottentot sawyers” were from nearby King William’s Town. They took advantage of the fact that the forests were not covered by Cape laws, and “streamed in” and “enjoyed unbridled liberty” in abusing the forests for commercial profiteering. All they needed to do was to buy monthly licences that cost five shillings. All that the local communities had used the forest for was “grazing, removal of dry firewood, thatch grass and monkey rope for their own use” (Henkel, 1888: 63)

C.C. Henkel in 1888 and J. Starr Lister in 1892 recommended that these forests be brought under the Cape laws. The recommendations were implemented in 1903. African families living inside the forest were expelled. The report noted that:

*A number of Gcaleka families had occupied a strip of coast land between Cwebe forest and the sea. Their lands were eating into the forests, others were encroaching upon the northern perimeter and destruction was thus caused by fire and also by the cattle and goats which were allowed to wander about the forests. This matter was reported, ... with the result that the removal was sanctioned (compensation being made to them for their huts, kraals and lands to the amount of sixty pounds). The same is being done with the natives occupying the coast strip below the Dwesa forest. (1888: 65).*

It was known all along by the state officials that made these recommendations that it was not forest “protection” that they had in mind when recommending the removal of the local people. C.C. Henkel himself noted in an earlier report (1888: 63) that: “It appears when the sawyers, through their careless and wasteful way of felling, had cut down large patches of virgin forest, the grass fires which annually occur ... get into these cut out portions of forest and everything is consumed by the flames.”

Another report that followed the dispossession revealed the actual motives of the colonists: “The government has by these means acquired most valuable areas in a sub-tropical climate for the cultivation of sugarcane, coffee, tea, arrowroot, mangos, bananas, pawpaws and pineapples” (Henkel, 1888: 65).

The removal, it became clear, was simply a pretext for this exploitation. It was done to control African environmental activities and movements more stringently, contended Tropp (2002). The households that participated as informants were adamant that they had lived in and protected the forests for years, as the forests had been an important source of their livelihood. The researchers were taken through the forests where the elders pointed to a variety of herbs, trees and fruit that their indigenous forests had provided. Each tree that they harvested, they claimed, it was common practice to replace. They were adamant that the destruction started when the Cape Government took the forests away from them.

With global warming upon us and the urgent and critical need of our time to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, we have become more aware of the wisdom inherent in the relationship that

amaXhosa elders of Dwesa and Cwebe had with their indigenous forests. These were not the monocultural, commercial forests we have become accustomed to, which are not only “poor habitats for wildlife”, but “absorb less carbon” than the indigenous forests which have “a natural mix of species” (Pringle, 2001: 37).

### *Affinity with nature among the Hegebe of Mqanduli*

Towards the last quarter of 2004 and early in 2005, I had the privilege of visiting the amaHegebe, a tribe of abaThembu, led by Advocate Chief Patekile Holomisa, *Aah Diliz’ intaba! / Hail the one who levels mountains!* (then still a member of the South African Parliament). The author interacted with them more closely during the second visit, when all the headmen, headwoman and elders of the tribe were assembled together at what is called *inqila* – a regular day, occurring at least once a month, in which important tribal issues and disputes, if any, are considered.

I found several things impressive during the visits, and more detail will be given in another chapter; what fascinated me more during the *inqila* proceedings were the various names of the headmen. These reveal a deep admiration, enshrined in their language, for the natural world of animals. What J.L. Dohne once said rang vividly true: “In the study of language, ... the philosophical object is the attainment of an insight into the character of a people, by means of an accurate acquaintance with the form into which its thoughts are molded” (1857: vii).



*Author with some of the Hegebe traditional leaders, Mqanduli. March 2005*

I give here the names of the headmen with the best English translation that I can muster:

<b>Name of village</b>	<b>Headman's name</b>	<b>Meaning of name</b>
Zangci	Ngub'eramba	<i>Blanket of a python</i>
Tungwane	Dabul'amanzi	<i>One who divides waters</i>
Ngcanasini	Gweb'indlala	<i>One who condemns hunger</i>
Mhlungulu	Ngang'omhlaba	<i>One who is as wide as the earth</i>
(Advisor)	Bovulengwe	<i>Whisker of a leopard</i>

### **3.8.1 Religious belief and practice of amaXhosa and other Africans**

#### *On God, creation and worship*

John Knox Bokwe, in his account of the Prophet Ntsikana, has provided some perspective on what he called the “Condition of Ama-Xosa” at the time of the arrival of Christianity among them. “While in their heathen state”, amaXhosa, asserts Bokwe, “believed that there was a God”. (Obviously, the use of the word “heathen” is relative to the acceptance of the Christianity as presented by the Europeans. It certainly has nothing to do with belief in God.) In confirmation of Alberti, he continues: “*They had no idol worship*” (emphasis added) (undated: 2–3).

“In view of the wild assertions sometimes made about African belief, or lack or belief in God” (Parringer, 1954: 37), there is ample evidence confirming a traditional belief in God throughout Africa. Among the Lulua African of Zaire, noted Vernon Anderson in his 1942 doctoral dissertation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, was the “belief, as most African traditionally believe, that man was created by God. The origin of all mankind, then, is God” (quoted in Bradford, 1999: 51).

### ***Evidence of ancient belief in a Creator-God among Africans: Sabbath keeping***

The recognition, belief and observance of the Sabbath among the Hebrew was given extensive attention in the preceding chapter. It was projected as the supreme sign of allegiance between their Creator-God and themselves. There is no ignoring the possibility that the presence of the Hebrew people in Africa in antiquity had an influence on Africans regarding their consciousness of God. In an amazing statement the well traveled Jewish historian Josephus, writing at around AD 70, noted the extent to which Jews had been dispersed and the Sabbath was observed. He says, “There is not any city of the Grecians nor any of the barbarians, nor any nation whatsoever whither our custom of resting on the seventh day hath not come” (Whiston, 1981: 636).

It is worthy to remember, on the other hand that the Sabbath itself was established, according to biblical records and practice, prior to the existence of the nation of the Israelites (see Genesis 2). Noah and his sons (among whom was Cush, the ancestor of Cushites – Africans) were worshippers of Jehovah, who rested on the Sabbath, and set the day aside as the memorial of His creative power.

A closer study of the Hebrew records, as found in the Bible, reveals something more than just a celebration of rest from human labour. In the Genesis account of creation it is noted that: “God saw everything that He had made, and, behold it was very good”; God then set the seventh day apart: “God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it” (Genesis 1: 31; 2: 3).

All of this seems to have taken place long before the Flood phenomenon in which God destroyed the world with water because of the wickedness of humans. Some time long thereafter, Abraham is called from among the Chaldeans and through him God designed a new nation called Israel. The nation falls into bondage in Africa, and on its way to the “promised land” after it is miraculously

liberated from the mighty Egyptians, a commandment, grounded in law, is given that they should “remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy”.

Regarding the significance of the Sabbath day, White (1958: 182–183) has suggested, from the experience of ancient Judah and Israel, that: “The Lord designed that by a faithful observance of the Sabbath command, Israel should continually be reminded of their accountability to Him as their Creator and their Redeemer”. Significantly, White points out: “In calling the attention of Judah to the sins that finally brought upon them the Babylonian Captivity, the Lord declared: ‘Thou hast ... profaned My Sabbaths’ (Ezekiel 22 vs 31)”.

By implication, therefore, the Sabbath was some kind of cultural shield of protection; the command that was given the Hebrew to “remember the Sabbath-day” was designed to assist them never to lose sight of the Creator’s power and ownership over all creation, of which all humans are a part. Sabbath observance was the sign between God and those who acknowledged Him as the power behind creation. Its being embodied in law, side by side with other commandments such as not to lie and not to kill, was significant in its own right. It meant that this was to be a sign “forever” (Exodus 31), making it an “imperishable obligation” to all who would appreciate creation (White, 1898: 283).

Even from a “mythopoeic” perspective, the creation-Sabbath consciousness, the purpose of which is to perpetually remind humans of God’s power and ownership over all creation, has profound implications for human-to-human and human-to-nonhuman relationships. This very creation-Sabbath phenomenon has propitious implications, particularly for the evasive sustainable development our planet is yearning for.

Such a conceptualization of God as Creator was prevalent among Africans. The Akan people of Ghana referred to God not only by the name *Odamankoma*, the Creator par excellence, but also *Onyankopon Kwaame*, the God of Saturday or “He whose day is Saturday” (Danqua, 1968:30–40). Other Ghanaian names and conceptions of God include: *Nyame*, “the Shining One” whose functional other names are *Amowia*, “the Giver of Light or Sun”; *Amosu*, “the Giver of Rain”, and *Amawomee*, “the Giver of Repletion”, that is to say, “Sufficiency of Good”; there is also *Totorobonsu*, “He who causes rain to fall copiously and makes waters (rivers) overflow”; (Danqua, 1968: 40), and *Nyankonpon* “whose day is Saturday”, a description that entitles Him to the most supreme honour, reverence and worship. *Nana*, to all Gold Coast people, is “the begetter, root, seed,

who is head of the head, the Ultimate Ancestor of the contemporary ancestors”. These titles are all related to the Hebraic concept of God as Jehova, JHW, the Provider of all Needs. In the people’s maxims God’s greatness and functions are enshrined (Danqua, 1968: 40)

*“All men are Onyame’s offsprings.”*

*“The earth is wide but Onyame is Chief.”*

Among the South and East African Bantu, as “discovered by Westerman, Edwin Smith Cullen and Young” notes Danqua (1968: 22), God, the Supreme Deity and Creator, has this “same significance” and this dispels the myth of ancestor worship among aBantu. Throughout the region, He is the “High Father” who “begat the life of the community and of those who participate in it”. He is not conceived, as in Western Europe, as an “Absolute Omnipotence”, a monarch “absolute in His own right” or, as by Moslems, as a “sultan”, “external to His own creation”. Such conceptions of God are foreign to the African, notes Danqua; they place God and us human beings “in a polarity of subject and object”, which would “leave quite a lot of suffering and inequalities in man’s society absolutely unexplained”. In these non-African conceptions, God has become a benevolent king. Africans, on the contrary, conceive of God as a participant in their lives. He is to them “an ancestrol creator and head of the very real and near community, continuous with the past, present and the future of His relations of blood” (1968: 22). God therefore also feels their pain, is compassionate.

In a separate study, Owusu-Mensa, another Ghanaian scholar (in Bradford, 1999: 27), arrived at the conclusion that “the Akan peoples of Ghana worshipped the Creator on Saturday long before the first Portuguese ship anchored off the coast in 1471”.

In the Abyssinian experience, we noted in Chapter 2 how Pope Julius III, at the recommendation of Ignatius Loyola, appointed Nunez Barreto Patriarch of Ethiopia. Barreto, a Jesuit, arrived at the king’s camp in May 1557, “and his object was to make Claudius (Galawdewos) abandon his religion and adopt that of the Church of Rome”. Thereafter the king engaged the Jesuits in debates about religion and worship. Budge notes: “he confounded them in argument and showed the falseness of their doctrines” (1928: 347).

It should be remembered that during this same century, around the same period, Martin Luther, was going through a similar experience against the Church of Rome in Germany. In central Europe, the Waldenses, who “believed in the perpetuity of the Law of God, and observed the Sabbath of the fourth Commandment”, were locked in a bitter life and death struggle to “maintain their allegiance

to God, and to preserve the purity and simplicity of their faith”, which was “founded upon the written word of God, the true system of Christianity, and was in marked contrast to the errors of Rome” (White, 1898: 576–577).

Bekele Heye (in Bradford, 1999: 26) quotes Galawdewos as having responded to Europeans who had attacked him and his people in keeping the traditional Saturday Sabbath as follows: “We do celebrate the Sabbath, because God, after he had finished the Creation of the World, rested thereon: ... who will suffer heaven and earth to pass away sooner than His Word; and that especially, since Christ came not to dissolve the law but to fulfill it. It is not therefore in imitation of the Jews, but in obedience to Christ, and His holy apostles, that we observe this day”.

In Nigeria, to the Yoruba people, noted Awoniyi (undated: 17), “the seventh day of the week is a day when no work, no marriage, no festivities, should be performed. It is known as the forbidden day”.

Sabbath observance clearly has deep roots in Africa. It is estimated that the “continent has the largest concentration of Sabbath observers in the world. As many as 20 million people hold some measure of allegiance to the Sabbath” (Bradford, 1999: ii).

### ***Connecting creation to the brotherhood of man***

Bradford has suggested: “Sabbath is a time to enhance relationships, with family, and community, ... or reflection on human dignity. ... Our distinctive identity and status are established by creation; the Sabbath is our seal of acceptance. Racism, classism, and sexism fly in the face of the Sabbath’s true meaning” (1999: 57). There is no doubt that even in pre-colonial times amaXhosa’s view of God and His creation included this conceptualization.

### ***AmaXhosa-God “of all flesh”***

Pre-colonial understanding of God among amaXhosa was also manifested when a man of this same nation reprimanded a missionary “for failing to deal seriously with traditional religion”. Henry Callaway (in Coulander, 1975: 440) who relates this incident, received the following reproach from him:

*We had this word before the missionaries came; we had God (Utikxo) long ago; ... The God, who is now, is the one who was from everlasting, before the missionaries came. Before*

*they came we spoke of Kamata [Qamata], and we spoke of Tiko [God]; the word Kamata means Tiko [Thixo]. ... So we say there is no God who has just come to us. Let no man say, 'The God who is, is the God of the English'. There are not many gods. There is but one God. We err when we say, 'He is the God of the English.' He is not the God of certain nations; just as man is not English and Kosa; he is not Fingo and Hottentot; he is man who came from one God". (in Bradford, 1999: 39)*

To this day, amaXhosa, like almost all other southern African native people, abeSotho, amaNdebele, etc., call Saturday “*UmGqibelo*”. This carries the concepts of stopping and completion. It is captured in the people’s language that this is regarded, traditionally, as the final day of the week. In what I found to be extremely informative, two informants in the same interview session held in the township of Atteridgeville, Pretoria, one a Swazi national and the other Zimbabwean, told me that the introduction of Sunday worship by the European missionaries resulted in this day incurring the name *iSonto*. The notion inherent in the word is that of “twisting” and “strangling”, they told me. Despite widespread worship on Sunday, there is a plethora of indigenous African churches that still keep Saturday Sabbath worship. The “amaSirayeli”, with headquarters in Komani (Queenstown) under the leadership of Bishop Ntloko, is one such example and evidence of the Sabbath remnants among amaXhosa. Nor is this unique among amaXhosa. It also prevails, for example, among the Bemba of Zambia.

### **3.8.2 Tiyo Soga and other amaXhosa on the lifestyle of amaXhosa**

In his 1937 work *Intlalo kaXhosa*, Soga has provided amaXhosa with a documented account of the people’s cultural heritage from the people’s own perspective. The account was produced through the instigation, patient encouragement and scrutiny of a company of excellent cultural leaders, guides (including chiefs) and intellectuals of Xhosa descent. Among those that Soga acknowledges as having contributed and also vigilantly scrutinized the book’s substance are:

1. The grandson of King Kawuta, Chief Ntsimba Mdingi, a skilled traditional historian; a deep well of amaXhosa historiography;
2. Ntsikana ka-Gaba, the highly influential prophet and spiritual guide of amaXhosa;
3. Ntotoviyane Mdoda, an orator and councillor of Chief Sigidi of Idutywa;
4. Zaze Soga, a councillor of King Sandile;
5. Dr Walter Rubusana, a chief, theologian and well-known teacher from eMonti (East London);

6. George Tyamzashe, a skilled craftsman in the use of the English language from eQonce (King William's Town);
7. UMfundisi D. Malgas, a respected commentator on the history of AmaMbo, a member of the amaHlubi clan;
8. Irvine kaMos of the amaZangwa clan in Gcalekaland;
9. Krune Mqhayi, the national poet of amaXhosa and an "expert regarding their issues"; and
10. The author's own son and amaXhosa historian, John Henderson Soga.

Surrounded by this prestigious group of informed witnesses and desirous to make sure that in describing the culture of amaXhosa he is also alluding to a much broader family, Tiyo Soga asserted that amaZulu and amaXhosa are from the same ancestry, the former from the heir born in the Great House and the latter from the Right-hand House. Their ancestor was himself of the Mbo genealogy, with all the so-called "amaMfengu" (Anglicised as the "Fingo"), fundamentally Hamites, whose original father was Noah. Like Mfundisi Malgas, Soga believed beyond doubt and asserted on the strength of cultural evidence that "UXhosa nguMbo and thina baMbo sitsho", translating as, "amaXhosa and amaMbo are the same people. So say those of us who are AmaMbo" (1937: 4).

What follows is a traditional account first documented by Chief Dr Rubusana in his *Zemk' iinkomo Magwala Ndini*, first published in 1906. The genealogy is also described by A.T. Bryant (1965: 143), who first observed the innumerable Mbo tribes when he arrived in Natal in 1883. AmaZulu recognize among themselves that there was in their antiquity Zwide the father of Mbulali, father of Injanya, father of (1) Malandela, from whom came abaThembu, (2) Mpondomise, from whom came amaMpondomise, and (3) Malangela, father of Xosa. Malandela is also the founder of amaZulu, according to J.H. Soga (1930: 450).

Senzangakhona, the father of King Tshaka of amaZulu, "was the eighth in line from this Malandela," claims Soga. This makes sense if Xhosa, the son of Malangela, was circumcised in 1535. It places Malandela himself at around the year 1500. Dr Rubusana – whose sources were different – could not be far from the truth in this because he is supported by A.T. Bryant, whose sources were far from Dr Rubusana's, in Natal. According to Bryant, the "Tembu relationship with Mpondos of the Cape was generally recognized as distinctly close", for their common descent (surely, through Malandela) "was then still easily traceable" (1965: 241).

This Xosa, who was circumcised around 1535, according to T.B. Soga (1937: 28), fathered Amampondo (Rubusana, 1906: 92) and Malangana, father of Ngcwangubo. This Ngcwangubo was, according to Rubusana (p.65), the father of Nkosiyanane, who was the father of Nkosiyamntu. Nkosiyamntu fathered three sons, Cirha his heir, from the Great House, Jwara from the Right-hand House, and Tshawe from *iqadi*, a minor house. Soga notes that Tshawe, now generally accepted as a king of amaXhosa, was the son of a concubine, *ishweshwe*. He grew up among his mother's people, whom he simply identifies as abaMbo (1937: 11).

From Tshawe (who was circumcised around 1610), came Ngcwangu, the father of Sikomo, who was the father of Togu (who according to Soga, died in 1687, a date which agrees with that of the *Stavenisse* shipwreck survivors who identified this Togu soon after their misfortune in 1686). Togu was the father of Ngconde of Tshiwo (who died in 1702) of Phalo (who was born in the year that his father died) of Gcaleka of Kawuta, whose grandson Chief Ntsimba Mgidi, is one of the informants of Tiyo Soga regarding the life and times of amaXhosa in the past.

Soga wished every reader to be aware, given this genealogy, that the following cultural features of amaXhosa are indeed the features of all of abaMbo.

***“Umzi Ontsundu – Abantu Ababegcinene Kakhulu” – The black house, people who took good care of each other***

Soga emphasized that black people were nurtured deeply, taught and had it in their blood to take care and look after each other: “Ngabantu abebeyifunde nzulu into yokuncedana imihla ngemihla”. This culture was evidenced in several practices:

- *ukunqomana* (an economic practice of lending a cow to the poor, setting them up for a life of productivity. The cow would be lent to until it produced a calf on which the assisted household would build their wealth);
- *befukulana* (literally uplifting each other, bearing each other's burdens);
- *babebolekana* (lending to one another);
- *bencedana* (helping one another); *abazityebi befukula amahlwempu, abanezinto bethwala abasweleyo* (the rich carrying the poor, those who had possessions carrying the destitute).

The sort of premium put on this approach to life and living was illustrated in a speech rendered by King Sandile himself during the wedding of one of his daughters.

*On this day of parting, hear the words of your father. ... Live not in plenty while [others] live in want. ... Should scarcity come over the land, and your pot is small, prepare it not in private to eat it in secret. ... Be liberal and generous with your substance. Your husband's people are your children. ... Be not selfish. ... Should you be asked to give away what you would keep, say not it is not yours. ... God created me (Brownlee, 1896: 26).*

Here the King displays his belief in the God as Creator, despite the fact that in moving humility he was aware that he declared himself to be “a sinner and not a Christian”. In conclusion, he admonished that she should “cast not away the teachings of the son of Soga” (who taught people the Christian message of love), “if you love and serve God He may comfort you and help you in this land of strangers” (Brownlee, 1896: 26).

King Sandile was apparently deeply hurt by the fact that his people had turned away and abandoned their culture of benevolence. The extent of his grief at this point was evident. The observer noted that at the end of the exhortation, “Sandile, being at this point overcome by his feelings, covered his head with his blanket and wept” (Brownlee, 1896: 28).

### ***Marriage a communal affair***

Marriage in the African setting has often been regarded by Europeans as a human transaction involving the exchange of women for wealth, reasoned Soga. In their eyes this is merely an encounter in which love plays no role, a coercion of women to a lifelong subservience to a man she feels nothing for. They boast (*bagwagwisa*) about love, fun and happiness:

*uthando, uyolo nolonwabo ... bade balibale ukuba nakubeni kunjalo ikwamininzi imitshato yabo nabo ngokwabo ngenx' ezininzi, zimbi ezihamba noselo nobuhlwempu, loyiswe olothando, ide nayo maxawambi iphelele ekuqhawulweni nasekwahlulweni benziwe (kude kwakho nomthetho wale nto) bondlane: They forget that theirs are marriage ties that are very often ravaged by much suffering in many ways; whatever love was there wanes and divorce follows. It is an amazing thing that they are even forced – by law – to sustain and support each other after their love has ended. (Soga, 1937: 22)*

Love, Soga above asserts, is not the principal determinant in African marriage. The ceremony, far from being the transaction it is mistaken to be, is a social building and transformation exercise. Among amaXhosa it is often viewed as the building of friendly relations (*ukwakhiwa kobuhlobo*). It

is not simply limited to the feelings and whims of two people. The whole thing is founded on the rationalistic nature of African society; it is oriented to the future, premised not on what is and is being felt now, but on what is desired in the future; it is about making the best of human nature for the improvement of the whole society.

In such a worldview, therefore, everybody becomes interested in who marries whom. The contract assumes and is founded on the rationale of social transformation. The obligation of social wellness supercedes the sentimental interests of two individuals. The betrothal encounter, therefore, is part of the bigger pursuit of integrating and sustaining society, and driven more by duty to society than by the right to personal love and joy.

Here, against a wide backdrop of observers from the outside, as it were, we have the testimony by umXhosa, attesting to the centrality of the principle of self-sacrificial living that pervaded African being, defining its spirituality. On deeper reflection, the practices and beliefs were, in themselves, not lone acts of religious expression, but part of their whole existence, but in sum, a seeking after the ideal of the Supreme Being whose main attribute is compassion, putting the joy of others before one's own.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has been an exploration of the distant African past and mind, and of some valuable features in the life of Africans in general, and of amaXhosa in particular. The study has projected amaXhosa who are now concentrated in the south-eastern corner of the continent as part of amaMbo multitudes now residing in virtually all of sub-Saharan Africa. More than that, this people whose roots and cultural unity with ancient Abyssinia have been vindicated as more than mere imagination have had an active role to play in world affairs. AmaXhosa, therefore, have been presented as a transnationally relevant people. It is hoped, therefore, that this will not be simplistically reduced into a "territorialized identity" (Mbembe, 2002: 257) of a people that have had unassailable influence in the course of world civilization.

This study has taken the approach of "situat[ing] the human misfortune and wrongdoing" experienced by the African multitudes "in a singular theoretical framework" (Mbembe, 2002: 239) of relational values that transcend "territorialized" identification and any "racialized" geographic confinement. Even these valuable features that have been identified are institutions traceable

beyond just themselves as a racial and a culturally united group. This study draws attention to and describes an alternative basis for the social reconstruction of life on the African continent in particular and the entire globe in general. It proposes a standard for developing the continent from the inside out, through African agency, rather than keeping on the tedious path of attempting to base the continent's development on corrupted, dehumanized and borrowed models of being such as the entire human race has been subjected to through the loss of aesthetic relational values.

Indeed the people of the African continent can look back with pride to their past. They can, with introspection, dig deep into their being and touch, buried under the rubble of strange foreign cultural elements, a heritage treasury of values, values that have been almost entirely abandoned as the continent's socio-cultural outlook became blurred by centuries of fear and repression.

These values are still discernable in the people's language, ceremonies and rituals. All of these are symbolic of a relationship with a Being of supreme regard among Africans connected to one Abyssinian diaspora. The "Creator", "Moulder" and "Giver" of all life, was conceived as "Compassionate", "Merciful" and a "Guardian". These values and beliefs are the essence of a notion of African being that connects the diaspora.

The over-explored and now, somewhat, shallow idea of "ubuntu" does not provide a complete understanding of what is meant by this vital reference point of African being that is known by so many names. One is only truly human with reference to those values that characterize the Creator Himself. An African can claim to be a genuine human being, "umntu" / "motho" / "vuthu" / "umuntu", only to the degree that he or she is able to display graciousness, generosity, mercy and a host of other values towards other people and other entities in the environment that owe their being to creation.

It must therefore be our conclusion, as it was Danqua's (1968: 26), that here in the south, life among people was characterized by "active good doing, the give and take of beneficence, and not any one-sided activity of charity or grace".

*Life, human life, [was] one continuous blood, from the Great Source of that blood. The continuance of that blood in the continuance of the community [was] the greatest single factor of existence. It is an idea worshipful in itself, and the purpose of community is that the value of that life should be continuously kept abreast of the dignity of the ancestor. Anything*

*short of that ideal makes life a degradation, a contradiction of what men of the ancestral blood, one in the Great Ancestor, should be inspired by. (Danqua, 1968: 26).*

Little wonder that one elder of amaXhosa had to tell a missionary (in Coullander 1975: 440): “He is the God of all flesh”.

It is only with such consciousness about creation and relationship to the Creator that the ceremonies such as *inkxwala/incwala* or *ulibo* – as amaXhosa referred to the first-fruit ceremony and the old-as-creation Sabbath observance, a “memorial” of the creative power of Qamata – become vital in African life. These, collectively, can help forgetful humans to preserve this consciousness. It ought, therefore, to be no mystery why Sabbath worship on the continent is again on the ascendancy among Africans, who are increasingly finding European symbols to be broken cisterns unable to satisfy their thirst for a wholesome and sustainable life. The disappearance of many ceremonies, especially the Sabbath, from human consciousness, just as many Israeli teachers, like Moses had warned, has contributed to the myriad socio-economic aberrations that have come to beset all humanity: “wasting disease and fever shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart” (Leviticus 26: 16); and the degradation that has engulfed the natural environment: “Your land shall be desolate and your cities waste” (Leviticus 26: 33). It is in this state, ironically, that “the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths”, warned Moses, “as long as it lies desolate” (Leviticus 26: 33 – 35).

As observed by Ludwig Alberti among amaXhosa and confirmed by Abrahams (1962), personal rights are as important among Africans as duty towards the well-being of others. The emphasis and premium put on duty towards the environment that surrounds umXhosa is founded on these values. These were, fundamentally, the institutions that provided the identity and governed the *restitutive development* life-world of amaXhosa.

King Sandile, early in the encounter between his people and European colonialists, began to decry the erosion of these institutions. We have seen this cultural guardian and leader agonizing and shedding tears during his daughter’s betrothal ceremony. This leads us to the subject of the next chapter.

## **Chapter Four:**

### **AmaXhosa: Colonial contacts and responses**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The last two chapters traced and described the historic and cultural forces that fashioned and moulded the continents of Europe and Africa in their separate settings. Writers have attributed the moulding of the histories of these continents to a variety of forces. Most of the proposed theories have been economic in their approach. Roberts, in his *History of Europe*, for example, has suggested the factor of geography. He proposed that “European history took its own direction because the continent occupied a position and had a particular configuration” (1996: 2); Mostert (1992) also concluded that African resources and endowments like gold and cattle in sub-Saharan Africa collectively fostered the rituals and culture of the Bantu-speaking people who burst into the southern Cape around the tenth century.

This chapter shifts from the focus on the cultural unity that connected the African families whose origins were traced to north-eastern Africa. It pays attention to the various contacts that these families had with Europeans and the experiences accompanied by the contacts; but more importantly, it seeks to emphasize the centrality of the cultural values cherished by the Africans, especially amaXhosa, in the nature of their responses to these contacts.

We have suggested in the preceding chapters that the cultural values cherished in the past by the people on various continents were the “spring of action” that shaped their history. More importantly, these values were a reflection of the characters of the various nations’ and peoples’ imagined and self-crafted objects of worship. In the pantheistic worship systems of ancient Europe, from the times of ancient Assyria, Babylon, Mede, Persia, and Greece, up to the last hegemonic control of ancient Europe, and the then known world by Rome, we beheld a system of worship wherein the gifts brought as sacrificial to propitiate the deities were obtained by plundering other fellow humans; we beheld a plethora of gods whose relationship with each other was characterized by bitter and murderous competition for personal power and glorification, whose appeasement consisted of beholding and cherishing human suffering. These objects of worship and admiration became the source of the values held by the people and their rulers. People related to each other with the same destructive self-aggrandizement with which their gods related with each other, using

each other as means for self-centred prosperity. The form and substance of what people worshipped has a direct relation to the quality of their daily lives and transactions.

From the Near East, we saw the rise of another kind of worship that existed in stark contrast to the dominant pantheism that covered ancient Europe and the East. A nation called Israel arose that worshipped one God who in their belief system created the heavens, the earth and everything in them. This God, according to the Israelite chronicles, was the source not only of life but also of joy. This is a God who serves rather than being served. His disposition toward all of His creation is marked by values such as mercy, self-sacrifice and compassion, and a string of other similar relational values which constitute His glory. Because of this glory, God requested that they build Him a house, a “sanctuary”, a “tabernacle”, a temple, so that He might dwell among them. This house was not to be built for the exclusive worship of the Israelites, but for all nations under the sun. And at the centre of this relationship was the Sabbath institution whose purpose was to give the Israelites a perpetual reminder of YHW as their Creator, Keeper and Sustainer.

This same God, the “Sky-God”, known by Africans under a variety of names that are a reflection of how they perceived His character, came to inform the way they related to each other and to strangers, non-Africans included. Their faith in the “Sky-God” informed their reasoning and acting in daily living; faith was an integral part of daily life, their economic, political and social relations. As such, among Africans faith did not stand outside and in opposition to reason. Faith and reason were not alternative notions. Faith informed reason. From the observations and testimonies of various “travellers”, in different times and under different situations, we have come across the Mbo, an umbrella body of innumerable African tribes that spread from north-east Africa to its western and southern parts, worshipping the unmistakable “Sky-God”.

In the unfolding of European and Near Eastern history, we have witnessed *the mingling* of the two and the production of a counterfeit Christianity. Orthodox Christianity was subjected to a process of compromise by church fathers who desired to win power such as was held and exercised upon the world by the mighty Roman Empire. Pantheistic and monotheistic systems of worship were fused and the outcome was the emergence of the phenomenon now called the Roman Catholic Church. This entity, in obvious rejection of the characteristic humility and simplicity of orthodox Christianity, desired, coveted and inherited the secular power of the Roman Empire including the baggage of pantheistic cultural influences that the Romans had imbibed from the Greeks and their deities. William Gildea (1894: 809) paints the transformation this way:

*The Catholic Church took the pagan philosophy and made it the buckler of faith against the heathen. She took the pagan Roman Pantheon, temple of all gods, and made it sacred to all martyrs; so it stands to this day. She took the pagan Sunday and made it the Christian Sunday. She took the pagan Easter [in honor of Ishtar] and made it the feast we celebrate during this season ... The sun was the foremost god with heathendom ... hence the Church would seem to say, 'Keep that old pagan name [Sunday]. It shall remain consecrated, sanctified.'*

From ancient Babylon, Europe and the East inherited two of its foremost deities, Baal and Ishtar. Their worship included fire and the sacrifice of humans, especially infants, thereon, and fornication. Ishtar, the goddess of “life and love”, has been known in various countries by a variety of names: Ashteroth, Astarte, Isis, Sybil, Venus, Europa and Hora – from which the word “whore” was derived (Mann & Lylwe, undated). Providing clues to the values and culture propagated from her temples, Herodotus explained: “Babylonian custom ... compels every woman of the land once in her life to sit in the temple of love and have intercourse with some stranger. ... the men pass and make their choices. It matters not what the sum of money; the women will never refuse for that were a sin.”

The whole of Europe, as Roberts asserts, “drew interest on the capital Greece laid down”; this “Greek heritage” was the “fundamental agency” which “shaped the culture of a new sort of civilization” (1996: 37), leaving ineradicable signs of their influence on the history of Europeans and of Europe.

The Roman Catholic Church, especially from the period of the Dark Ages, had gained extensive influence and fashioned the human institutions of Europe. The pope, “openly claimed the power to ‘create the Creator’ ” (White, 1998: 50) and the title, “Vicarius Filii Dei”, “Representative of God on earth”. With this assumed authority, the Church effectively introduced anti-Christian doctrines such as the immortality of humans, image worship and Sunday worship, which were in direct opposition to the orthodox Christian Law; in particular it prohibited the individual reading and interpretation of the Scriptures. Freedom of conscience and choice was no longer enjoyed anywhere that the Church had its reach. Europe was immersed, for centuries, in a moral and intellectual darkness that was to find *partial rejection* during the Reformation by a variety of independent thinkers – foremost of whom were the Waldenses – in various countries of Europe. Kings, rulers

and governments of Europe came under the control of and bowed down to the dictates of the Church, becoming unquestioning advocates of its institutions.

When Europe made contact with Africa it was with a specific micro-physicality (spirituality), and with a mind-set in which she projected herself as the cradle of culture and civilization. But Europeans did not find Africa in a cultural vacuum. Africa had its own micro-physicality and mind already formed, which directed their intercourse with each other and with other human beings they came in contact with from time to time. This chapter covers some of these contacts and responses but primarily focuses on the contact and responses of amaXhosa, in the southern African “contact zone” of the Eastern Cape, and the results of that contact.

Though some of these contacts have been positive, benefiting both the African people and their guests from a different continent, the continuing suffering of the African continent, which is in one way or another traceable to its contact with the “outside world” and in particular Europe, tends to overshadow the gains that have been received. We have already drawn attention to the havoc and hardship that were inflicted on African people by the Moslem Saracens from the Near East, forcing them, through sheer military coercion, to abandon their culture for the teachings of Mohammedanism. This was followed by another, equally intolerant religio-cultural force from Western Europe, led by Roman Catholic Jesuits and supported by Portuguese military might.

The 90 or so group of strangers from Europe that landed under the leadership of Jan Van Riebeck in April, 1652, among the “Capemen”, to establish a fort near the southernmost tip of Africa, were not merely an economically driven force. They were, as will be shown, in their own right, carriers and vehicles of micro-physical (spiritual) forces that were sweeping Europe in an age known as the Enlightenment. Their dealings and attitudes toward the variety of Africans they came into immediate contact with, the so called “Cochoquas”, “Saldanhars”, “Gorachouquas”, “Goringuquas”, “Karichuriquas”, “Chainouquas” and a host of other tribes, sprang from a particular belief system.

These “Capemen” or Hottentot tribes were not simply neighbours to amaXhosa. As observed by Schapera and Farrington (1933: 28), they spoke of the “Chobonas” (as amaXhosa were called by the Hottentots, presumed Mostert (1992: 154), “from the Xhosa salutation ‘Sakubona’ ”), and their king who “ruled over all the Cape natives”, in terms of marvel and respect.

As we review the several contacts between African and extra-continental people, it must be remembered that European state and church influences have often been depicted as descending on helpless victims of colonization. The view of what was only a damaging expansion of the European state and church is projected, with little or superfluous attention to the responses of the colonized, as if the colonizers themselves emerged unscathed from the contact. The preceding chapter has already demonstrated that this notion is a false one. In the north-eastern African experience Africans stood their ground against sweeping Catholicism and Mohammedanism. They never surrendered without a fight, both in intellectual and physical terms. The “civilizing mission” whose aim was to save Africans from “heathen abjection in degrading tribal conditions”, backed as it was by military and cultural coercion, was met with determined responses by Africans bent on keeping their identity and undermining imposed “civilizing colonialism” (De Kock, 1996). It cannot be denied that “the reality of hundreds of millions of people” (Said, 1993: 11), has been touched and conditioned by the imperial past and European colonialism.

The main burden of this work is to establish the contact and the conditioning that accompanied colonialization against the cultural reality that directed, particularly, the lifestyle of amaXhosa; and to argue, ultimately, that there are still pervasive remnants of this culture that are potent with capabilities for enabling an evolution, from a post-apartheid conflict and instability to a sustainable transformation of state and society.

We shall, also, include in this review a brief glance at an important time, the period of the Enlightenment in Europe and the cultural forces that shaped the thought patterns and behaviour of the Europeans simply to cast a backdrop against which to contextualize, analyze and understand the encounter that amaXhosa were to experience not long after the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck’s mission.

## **4.2 Ancient colonialism burst into Africa with violence**

After the Babylonians, Persians became world rulers, during which time they invaded Africa in colonial fashion. Their impressions about Ethiopia, as noted in the comments of Herodotus, were that it was “the furthest inhabited country towards the south-west”, a place where “gold is found in great abundance, and huge elephants, and ebony, and all sorts of trees growing wild; the men, too [being] the tallest in the world, the best-looking and longest-lived” (Burn, 1972: 250).

Driven by the desire and motive to conquer and control Ethiopia, simply as an economic resource, King Cambyses of Persia mobilized a campaign against it in the last half of the final millennium BC. This was before King Xerxes used Ethiopian forces in his army, described by Herodotus (Burn, 1972: 467) as wearing “skins and lion skins, [carrying] long bows made of palm-wood, ... to shoot small cane arrows tipped not with iron but with stone worked to a fine point, ... with spears with spearheads of antelope horn and knotted clubs”.

The very first spying campaign by King Cambyses appears to have been a failure. When the spies appeared before the King of Ethiopia with the message: “Cambyses, King of Persia, wishing to be your friend and guest, has sent us here, ... and these gifts he offers,” the response from the Ethiopian king, who knew that the men were spies, was to give them a glimpse of the culture – the soul and character – of these Africans:

*The king of Persia has not sent you with these presents because he puts high value upon my friendship. You have come to get information about my kingdom; therefore, you are liars, and that king of yours is a bad man. Had he any respect for what is right he would not have coveted any other kingdom than his own, nor made slaves of a people who have done him no wrong.*

*So take him this bow, and tell him that the king of Ethiopia has some advice to give him: when the Persians can draw a bow of this size thus easily, then let him raise an army of superior strength and invade the country of the long-lived Ethiopians. Till then, let him thank the gods for not turning the thoughts of the children of Ethiopia to foreign conquest (Burn, 1972: 211).*

This response articulated by an African leader in the last millennium BC not only defined the attitude and “mind of Africa” towards the wealth and possessions of others, it stands in stark contrast to the purposes that were the “spring of action” amongst European powers: “They covet other peoples’ kingdoms, and make slaves of people who have done them no wrong”, reasoned the African monarch (Burn, 1972: 211).

Indeed, this was to be the fate of millions of Africans, first under the Portuguese, and later under many other European plunderers, from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth, going right into the twentieth century in southern Africa. Black people and amaXhosa in particular were to attest to

these prophetic words in their experience of a series of battles that spanned a period of just about a century, defending their rights, as a duty to African society, from a covetousness that was to inflict well-nigh irreparable damage on the quality of life of amaXhosa.

The earliest record of the advent of Christianity into Ethiopia, as already noted, is that of the “influential” Ethiopian, the accountant from the palace of Queen Candace, who sought help from the Apostle Phillip in understanding a scripture referring to Jesus.

As attested to by the archeological evidence of “post-Meriotic and Christian Burials at Sesibi, in Sudanese Nubia”, Christianity was already widespread in Sudan and ancient Ethiopia by the fourth century (Edwards, 1994).

In an “Eighth century Arabic Letter to the King of Nubia” in Dongola, from the Muslim Governor of Egypt, Musa Ibn Ka’b, is found further evidence of the entrenchment of Christianity in Africa. The letter, beginning with a common Moslem salutation, “In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful”, the Governor expressed his dissatisfaction with the status of relations between the Nubian government and his. “You do not bring to us that to which you are liable, ... on the basis of ... agreement made with you; nor do you return those of our slaves who run to you” he complained (Plumley, 1975: 6). Ironically, it is to these very Ethiopians that their Prophet Muhammed had advised that they should run for safety centuries before. Ibn Hishan, in the biography of Muhammed known as the *Sira*, reported that Muhammed “advised his followers who were being persecuted by the Quarish in Mecca that ‘if you go to the Abyssinians you will find a king under whom none are persecuted. It is a land of righteousness where God will give you relief from what you are suffering’” (Spencer, 1965: 4).

Such accolades regarding Ethiopians and their rulers were apparently commonplace among historians of antiquity. The Greek historian Diodorus Siculus commented that the Ethiopians had been “first to institute religious worship, ... and their sacrifices were the most acceptable of all to the gods”. Lactianius Placidus said: “[Ethiopians] are loved, ... because of justice and the equity of their customs. For the Ethiopians are said to be the juster men”. Regarding Sabacos, the first Nubian ruler over Egypt, Herodotus remarked that Diodorus mentioned him as “one who exceeded all his predecessors in showing homage to the gods and kindness to his subjects” (Levine, 1974: 4–5).

The Muslim Egyptian Governor, demonstrably cognizant that the African king and his people were indeed of this kind disposition, Christians, and influential, continued: “You make manifest to the people of your persuasion belief in Him who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them; you believe in Jesus the son of Mary and his book”, “and you manifest to them justice and the doing of what is right” (Plumley, 1975: 6).

The growth of Christianity among Africans, however, was to be interrupted by the contact with Islam. Budge (1928: 153) analyses the consequences of this disturbance thus:

*The conquests of the Arabs gave new life to the pagan cults, ... and Christianity fell into disrepute ... its essentials were forgotten and its characteristics lost. Under the influence of the all-conquering Arabs the cult of Judaism increased, and many people abandoned the Christian religion and all that it inculcated.*

Up to 1270, Christianity was not revived publicly in Ethiopia.

### **4.3 The 16th century north-eastern African contact with Europe**

Just as the rise of Christianity in the Middle East and Europe had taken place amidst a vast sea of cruelty and corruption, that experience was to be repeated in north-east Africa with the advent of a Catholic brand of Christianity. From Emperor Nero’s era, through to the rise of the papacy – and the Reformation Movement that rejected it – up to the late 1700s that witnessed the temporary silencing of the Pope by the French, orthodox Christianity was to undergo what was to become an undeniable fulfilment of the prophecy of its author.

Christ had foretold: “In the world ye shall have tribulation. They shall lay hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake” (John 16); “Ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinfolks and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death” (Luke 21). Millions of lives, indeed, were lost. According to Lecky (1910: 32), “no Protestant who has a competent knowledge of history” would ever question the fact “that the church of Rome has shed more blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind. ... It is impossible to form a complete conception of the multitude of her victims, and it is quite certain that no powers of imagination can adequately realize their sufferings”. The period known as the Dark Ages, observed Ellen White (1911: 85), experienced an intolerance that “consigned men and women to prison, to

exile, and to death”; under the guise of the Christian religion itself, between AD 538 up to around the time of the French Revolution in 1790, the papacy, backed by the state, displayed a spirit “which conceived the exquisite torture of the Inquisition, which planned and executed the Massacre of St Bartholomew (in France), and kindled the fires of Smithfield” (White, 1911: 85).

Africa was not left untouched by the papal Inquisition, which began in 1229. During a period when German princes were defending Christianity and Martin Luther, the arch-enemy of papal Rome, when France was experiencing at least three Huguenot wars (1562–1570), and when the Catholics, led by the Jesuits, were attempting to wipe out Protestants, these same Jesuits, the leading ambassadors of the Papacy, landed in Africa.

This was the period of the Papal Crusades. The Roman Catholic Church waged war, intent on annihilating every country and branding people that opposed its teachings as heretics. These Crusades are aptly painted by Henry Treece (1967: viii) as follows:

*There was so much courage and so little honour, so much devotion and so little understanding. High ideals were besmirched by cruelty and greed, enterprise and endurance by a blind and narrow self-righteousness; and the Holy War itself was nothing more than a long act of intolerance in the name of God, which is the sin against the Holy Ghost.*

White (1998: 56) has written that “in lands beyond the jurisdiction of Rome, there existed for many centuries, bodies of Christians who remained wholly free from papal corruption”. These believed in the perpetuity of the law of God, and observed the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. White then notes that “churches that held to this faith and practice, existed in Central Africa” (1998:56).

When help against the marauding Islam was sought by the Abyssinians from Portugal, it was indeed given. But, unbeknown to them this help was to unleash among them a venomously intolerant challenge against its orthodox religion, Christianity, which was regarded by the masses as the “Faith of the Fathers”. According to Budge (1928; Vol 2: 339), it was during the “reign of Claudius (Galawdewos)” that “many of the Abyssinians who had apostatized returned to the Christian religion, and these were joined by many Muslims, who were discontented with the rule of Ahmad (“the Left-handed”) and that of Sem’on his Wazir. These and the soldiers of Claudius frequently attacked the Arabs, with varying success. At this point the chronicler says that Claudius was helped by “the sons of Tubal” (see Genesis 10: 2), who practically saved his force from annihilation. These

“sons of Tubal” are known to be the four hundred Portuguese soldiers led by Christophe da Gama, and accompanied by Jean Bermudez, who arrived in Abyssinia in June 1541.

These Portuguese forces were not entirely successful against Ahmad Gran and his Muslim forces. In 1542 they were utterly defeated, “da Gama was captured and decapitated, and many of them slain by the soldiers of Gran” (Budge, 1928: 339). But the Abyssinians continued to fight on their own and gradually gained victory, which gave them a new sense of ability and pride. “They came back to their villages and towns and began to follow their trades and professions once more. They were able to feed and clothe themselves better, and ... to produce food in abundance for man and beast”. The Arabians were finally defeated in the Battle of Wagara, 1543.

#### **4.3.1 “We have driven swords into our own bodies”**

Portugal, on the other hand, continued to provide unsolicited help. In May 1555, a mission from Portugal, led by Gonzale Rodriguez, arrived in King Claudius’ palace, in his absence. His mission was clear (Budge, 1928: 345):

*Pope Julius (who died in 1555), wishing to convert Abyssinia to Christianity, agreed at the suggestion of Ignatius Loyola [founder of the Jesuit order] to allow Jesuits to go there and make the attempt; and in February 1554 he nominated Nunez Barreto Patriarch of Ethiopia. In order to prepare the way for the new Patriarch, the ‘Viceroy of the Indias’ sent Rodriguez and two other Fathers to Abyssinia bearing two letters to Claudius, one from the king of Portugal, and the other from himself. ... Rodriguez wished the king to abandon his religion and to attach himself to the Church of Rome.*

The king made it abundantly clear to Rodriguez and his team of learned Jesuits, in several discussions about religion, “firmly and freely that he was determined to abide in the faith of his ancestors and country”, despite the unilateral decision taken in Portugal to send “a company of priests to Abyssinia” (Budge, 1928: 345).

Right up to the reign of the learned King Susenyos, the Roman Catholic Church never relented in its efforts to convert Abyssinia to its brand of Christianity. In 1621 the king, who by then had sensed the risk of resisting the church’s efforts, “secretly inclined to the Roman Faith and in 1622 he informed Paez that he was converted and was prepared to sever his connection with the national Religion” (Budge, 1928: 389).

With the arrival in 1624 of the “narrow-minded and intolerant” Jesuit Alphonso Mendez, and Jerome Lobo in 1625, Susenyos, his son and official were made to swear allegiance to “His Holiness the Pope”. Thus was disaster unleashed into the country. The people would have nothing to do with the new religion. Susenyos resorted to the tactics of his unwelcome intruders. “He tried to effect by force what he could not do by edict. He began to persecute those who clung to their old Faith” (Budge, 1928: 391) and was encouraged by the Jesuits in this.

Civil war ensued. Malkea Krestos, the king’s brother, easily raised an army of 25 000 and went to war against the king. Susenyos met force with force. Thus was set brother against brother, a king against his own, in a civil war more bitter than a conflict with aliens would have been.

When over 8 000 soldiers who opposed Susenyos had died in battle, he and his son went to view the sad spectacle of men who had died for the “Faith of the ancestors”. There on that battlefield, Susenyos’ son, Fasalada, is reported to have remarked:

*The men you see lying dead here were neither pagans nor Muslims over whose deaths we could rejoice, but Christians, your subjects and fellow-countrymen, and some of them were your relations. It is not victory that we have gained, for we have driven our swords into our own bodies. How many have you killed; how many are you going to kill? Through carrying on this war, and abandoning the Faith of our ancestors, we have become a byword among the pagan Arabs. (Budge, 1928: 390)*

Fortunately, these grave words brought about a change of heart in Susenyos. He returned to his palace to declare in June 1632:

*Hearken, Hearken, Hearken. Originally we gave you the Roman Faith believing it to be a good one. But Yolos, Gabriel, ... have died fighting against it. Now therefore we restore to you the Faith of your ancestors. ... As for me, I am old, ... I nominate Fasiladas to succeed me as king. (Budge, 1928: 392)*

Soon after this declaration of religious liberty, during the reign of Fasiladas, the Jesuits were expelled from Ethiopia in 1633.

### **4.3.2 What constituted “The Faith of the Ancestors”?**

The Ethiopian masses refused to abandon the standards of the original Christianity, chief of which included the observance of seventh-day Sabbath, the memorial of God’s Creatorship. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, doctrines “which contradict an article of faith defined by the Catholic Church”, such as the Sabbath being kept on Saturday instead of Sunday, were heresy; it was the duty of the Jesuits to exterminate heretics.

Abyssinians were adherents of orthodox Christian teaching. This finds illustration in the instance of an “Abyssinian legate” going to defend their Christian beliefs “at the court of Lisbon” (Portugal), in 1534 (SabbathTruth, 2007a):

*It is not therefore, in imitation of the Jews, but in obedience to Christ and His holy apostles, that we observe the Sabbath.*

Interestingly, a few years after the expulsion of the Jesuits from Ethiopia in 1633, many in Europe believed that the Holy Scriptures did not sanction the change of the Sabbath day of worship, including King Charles I in England, who remarked, “it will not be found in Scripture where Saturday is no longer to be kept, or turned into the Sunday wherefore it must be the Church's authority that changed the one and instituted the other” (SabbathTruth, 2007b).

### **4.3.3 Meanwhile in Europe**

While Africa was struggling to resist and push back Moslem and Catholic religio-cultural forces that sought to efface their own identity in the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, up to the time when the Jesuits were finally expelled from Ethiopia, Europe itself was experiencing religious upheavals in the form of the Reformation and its Protestantism. This was a time of bitter opposition to a variety of beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church.

Among the foremost opponents of Catholic doctrines and teachings were the Vaudois (the Waldenses) of Piedmont. Claiming to be the converts of the Apostle Paul and accepting only the Bible as the authoritative Word of God over their life and conduct, the Waldenses believed that “the Catholic Church is not the church of Christ but the enemy of Christ” (Reaman, 1964: 21).

The Waldenses underwent thorough training in missionary work. Besides this they were well-trained artisans in a variety of trades. Their work spread to almost every part of Europe: England, France, Bohemia, Hungary, Italy and Germany.

Fourteenth century England saw the rise of an influential academic from Oxford University, John Wycliff (1300–1384). This theologian and teacher, after an intense personal study of the Bible, became critical of many practices of the Catholic Church. His teachings spilled over to popular revolts.

Wycliff's teachings and influence spread beyond England. In the University of Prague, Bohemia, a philosopher John Huss became acquainted with the work of Wycliff, who, in Roberts' analysis was a "thinker rather than a man of action" (1996: 170). Soon thereafter a national movement of the Hussites, which enjoyed "strong popular support" of "fellow-countrymen who felt that the papacy was a foreign and unfriendly institution" (Roberts, 1996: 226) was started. At first Huss received some state support but when the Pope intensified his condemnation and persecution against the movement and Huss, the state backed off. In 1415 Huss was burnt at the stake as a heretic.

The early sixteenth century saw the beginnings of Protestantism. Protestants stressed the degenerate behaviour and conduct of Catholic Church leadership as the main reason behind their uprisings. Other observers looked at the sheer human suffering precipitated by the Church as the main reason for Protestantism.

At about the same time as the Ethiopians were refusing to abandon orthodox Christian beliefs such as the Sabbath, the people of Sweden, as noted in the *History of the Swedish Church*, adhered to the original Christian Sabbath:

*We can trace these opinions over almost the whole extent of Sweden of that day – from Finland and northern Sweden. In the district of Upsala the farmers kept Saturday in place of Sunday. About the year 1525 this religious tendency became so pronounced in these countries that not only large numbers of the common people began to keep Saturday as the rest day, but even many priests did the same. (SabbathTruth, 2007c)*

Even in Russia people were being persecuted for keeping the Saturday Sabbath as the day of worship. The Russia Council in Moscow, 1490, reported as follows:

*The accused [Sabbath-keepers] were summoned; they openly acknowledged the new faith, and defended the same. The most eminent of them, the secretary of state, Kuritzyn, Ivan Maximow, Kassian, archimandrite of the Fury Monastery of Novgorod, were condemned to death, and burned publicly in cages, at Moscow. (SabbathTruth, 2007d)*

## **4.4 The Cape of Good Hope contact: Among the Khoi people**

### **4.4.1 Eastern prelude to the Cape experience**

Some kind of a prelude to what was to be the African experience at the hands of the Dutch and the Dutch East India Company was played out in the lives of the people of Asia after the Dutch had gained their military victory and ousted European competitors such as the Spanish, the Portuguese and the English. From 1607 local trade became their monopoly after establishing headquarters at Bantam, Java (the present day Jakarta).

The Dutch empire's oriental trade flourished under one ruthless Jan Pieterszoon Coen. He became the company's governor general from 1618 to 1623 and again from 1627 to the time of his death in 1629. His sole aim during this period was to gain complete control of the pepper province of Sumatra.

The natives of the Great Banda island, where nutmeg was in abundance (present day Pulau Banda Besar in Indonesia), resisted Coen's exploits in 1621. He reacted by wiping out 2500 of them. Of those who escaped this massacre, 800 were forcibly taken to slavery in Batavia.

Even the natural environment suffered. No less than 65 000 clove trees were destroyed in the Moluccas simply so that trade would be restricted to a place the colonizers could control. By 1656 the Moluccas were reduced to a virtual desert.

A trading fort was established in Taiwan in 1633. Soon thereafter the deer upon which the aboriginals had relied for livelihood became the object of a lucrative trade between the Dutch and the Japanese. The Taiwanese aboriginals were at first lured to barter deer with the Dutch. However as the deer population started to dwindle the natives became cautious and sought to hold back their wealth. Animosity grew against the Dutch and the latter adopted a policy of punishing those villages that were opposed to them while entering into alliance with those who had shown less

opposition. Expeditions wiping out villages were undertaken. An entire population of 1100, for example, was annihilated on Lamay Island, with 336 people trapped in a cave and suffocated in fumes and smoke pumped into the cave by the Dutch. Men were forced into slavery and their “women and children became servants and wives for the Dutch officers” (*Taiwan under Dutch and Spanish rule*, 2007).

It is under these circumstances that the young Jan Van Riebeeck had abandoned his profession as surgeon and perfected his ability and efficiency as a master merchant for the Dutch East India Company, whose “language of successful trade and material gain” (Thom, 1952: xxiii) he understood so well.

What the Taiwanese aboriginals experienced under Dutch rule, was also tasted by the aboriginals in Netherlands New Guinea and Tobago, the Maroon people of Netherlands Guiana and the Asante of Ghana.

A similar experience awaited the Cape aboriginals.

#### **4.4.2 Calvinist Holland and the Dutch East India Company**

Calvinist Protestants were driven into exile by the French wars of religion, 1534–35 and 1562–70, the tragedy of the *St Bartholomew’s Night Massacre* in which over 12 000 Protestants were annihilated by Catholics in 1572, and the last war of 1610–29. These “Huguenot refugees” as they were to be called “streamed into Europe’s great Protestant cities – Geneva, Berlin, Amsterdam, and London – where they created large urban exile communities almost overnight” (Butler, 1983: 1).

Huguenots arrived in exile steeped in Jean Calvin’s teachings and beliefs as propounded in his *Institutions of the Christian Religion*. In this work Calvin had shown that he had never been a threat to law and order in society. Whereas Martin Luther had upheld liberty in Christian living, perhaps owing to his training as a lawyer, Calvin taught and emphasised a Christian life characterised by discipline and order. One of the methods he recommended to ensure that Christians observed order in society was the imposition by Christian princes of “their authority in ecclesiastical matters, provided it was done to preserve the order of the church, not to disrupt it. For since the church does not have the power to coerce, and ought not to seek it (I am speaking of civil coercion) it is the duty of godly kings to sustain religion by laws, edicts, and judgements” (*Institutions of the Christian Religion*, Chap. 12, para. 16).

Thus Calvin worked towards the realization of a civil government that enforced Christian order and discipline. It was a significant departure from the liberty of conscience that Luther had advocated. Calvin advocated the enforcement of doctrine so as to bind society into a community of particular Christian belief from which deviation was not to be tolerated. As summed up by Maurois (in Reaman, 1964: 47): “Calvin’s tenets were harsh. ... Servetus, a heterodox Protestant and Spaniard whose views of the Trinity were unacceptable to Calvin, was publicly burnt to death on Calvin’s orders”. Insisting on ordering society along certain Christian norms, through state intervention, principally put Calvinism under the same banner of intolerance as the papacy. Calvin harboured against those who differed with him in doctrine the same resentment with which the Roman Catholic had driven Protestants out of France, and gave vent to it in callous acts of cruelty, effectively blurring any difference between Calvinism and Catholicism.

Many of Calvin’s followers had fled to Holland. There, Protestantism remained in conspicuous opposition to the Catholicism that had driven Calvinists out of France. The king, parliament, nobility and the market protected, defended and enforced a Christian ordered society. This ordering is graphically illustrated in the *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* that Calvin drafted around 1541. These were far-reaching in their social impact.

In the Ordinances, Calvin recommended the selection of twelve elders to govern the city. This was a council equivalent to today’s municipal council in South Africa. The actual appointment of the elders was made by magistrates. The duty of the elders was, according to Calvin’s Ordinance, “to have oversight of the life of everyone, to admonish amicably those whom they see to be erring or to be living a disordered life, and, where it is required, to enjoin fraternal corrections”. As John Dillenberger concluded, these elders “were to keep an eye on everybody” (in Holt, 1995: 25). The entire society was therefore regulated in Holland as had been recommended by Calvin in Geneva, as a particular “community of belief” enforcing Calvinist Christian discipline and order. This is the nature of the Calvinists that constituted the Dutch trade mission that arrived in South Africa in the seventeenth century.

Having accepted the proposal made to it in 1649 by Janssen and Proot, to establish “a fort and a garden” at the Cape of Good Hope (Leibbrandt, 1899: 1), the Dutch East India Company made a commitment to establish another European frontier right at the edge of Africa. The Cape of Good

Hope fort became an addition to the many “forts and stations” that the “Company” already had in other colonies, such as India, South America and St Helena, “in sufficient number”.

We turn our attention to the experience that the so-called “Capemen” or “Hottentots” were to go through with the European frontiersmen. In many ways it reveals much about what amaXhosa were to taste a little later, when the frontier was extended. This particular contact immediately preceded the sustained encounter that amaXhosa were to have with colonial administrators and missionaries from Europe.

It is worth taking a brief closer look at the quality of men that landed at the Cape and their endogenous relations as they unfolded among them. This will enhance our understanding of the attitude and treatment that the “Capemen” were to incur on coming to contact with these Europeans. Right there at the Cape de Boa Esperance, among themselves, in an unfamiliar territory, the true character of the Europeans, congealed under the garb of Christian Protestantism, was to be revealed. AmaXhosa have an expression: “*Isisila sehobe sibonwa xa ligquthayo*”; literally “hardship tends to reveal a person’s true colours”. This indeed was to be the case, at least during the first six to seven months of the Senior Merchant and Commander Van Riebeeck’s experience with his men at the Cape of Good Hope.

#### **4.4.3 Endogenous relations: Endemic lack of compassion and trust and disunity in the community of believers**

The 181 or so Calvinist Protestants that landed at the Cape with Commander Jan Anthonissen Van Riebeeck professed a belief in and loyalty to Jesus, the Author of Christianity. The Sunday Sabbath was kept through regular worship services, evening prayers and the Lord’s Supper, a symbol of the humility and self-sacrificial living that Christ had enjoined His disciples to imitate. Protestant dogma such as predestination taught by Jean Calvin, that each person’s destiny is predetermined by God, that everything happens because God wills it, revealed itself in their language. They were a community of believers that had purposed to “reach the land of Cabo de Boa Esperance in the name of God” (Thom, 1952: 18).

Not long after their arrival during the first week of April 1652, the Cape weather proved hostile to the company’s main purpose of establishing a refreshment station there. “Dirty, rainy and windy weather” and “violent stormy weather” became the order of their early Cape winter days. “Red

flux” and fever began to take their toll on the soldiers and labourers; “labour forces [were] considerably weakened” (Thom, 1952: 20).

By June disappointment had started to sink into the settlers’ minds. They had been “unable to obtain from [the] natives more than one cow and a calf – and that at the beginning. Life was becoming “sad and miserable; daily one after another [fell] ill ... many [were] dying”. Fear grew every passing day; they worried that “If it does not please the Almighty to deliver us from [the] plague, we see little chance of completing our work, as many of our men are dying and the rest are mostly sick in bed” (Thom, 1952: 43). The night before the morning of the 12th June, “strong winds with extremely heavy showers of hail and rain” delivered a crippling blow. “All our young cabbage and many other Dutch vegetables and fruits which were thriving beautifully [were] blown to bits and completely ruined”, noted an entry in the Van Riebeeck diary (Thom, 1952: 43). The hoped-for refreshment station was fast becoming a death trap.

Whatever appearance of unity and loyalty was there, by September of that very first year there was evidence that it had started to disintegrate. Their characters and the nature of their relationships soon began to emerge under the test of hardship. The labour force had begun to murmur in their hearts, over unbearable working conditions, “continual difficult work on the fortifications and the digging of the lands, also at the food they [were being] given, as the supply of stockfish was [getting] exhausted” (Thom, 1952: 62).

Van Riebeeck woke up on the morning of 25 September to learn that the first cracks in the community had emerged. “4 men had absconded”. No one seemed to know where they had gone and what their intentions were. Four soldiers, Willem Huijtjens, Gerrit Dirckssen, Jan Verdunck and Jan Blanx (who kept a diary of the desertion “in the name of Jesus Christ”), absconded “in the hope of reaching the Fatherland by travelling overland”.

Mistrust and suspicion immediately deepened within the community of believers. To those men who remained behind “placaats” were read, warning “against desertion on pain of punishment”. Settlers were encouraged to spy on each other with promises of lucrative monetary rewards. Exemption from guilt and promotions were held out as the prize for successful spying.

#### **4.4.4 “The anchor is gone”**

The absconding had demonstrated one sure thing: the initial hardships experienced by the settlers in their first few months of arrival at the Cape had revealed the vulnerability of their community of belief to individual interest and self-preservation. The investigations that followed revealed that even those left behind had cherished the desire to escape as did the four. There was a belief going around that they simply had nothing to profit from the Company that subjected them to so much hurt and pain, so far from the Fatherland.

The morning after the night of escape, interrogation revealed that one “harquebusier” stationed on land had remarked: “The anchor is gone, the cable will soon follow” (Thom, 1952: 130- 140). This was an object lesson. The sailors were familiar with this metaphor – anchors and cables were the tools of their trade. The anchor of unity had been replaced by mistrust. Not long after, the profit-seeking Company found itself in competition with its employees with individual agendas of self-enrichment.

Unfortunately the escapees could go no further than 24 miles, owing to the rugged terrain. They decided to return and hand themselves over to the mercy of the Council at the Cape fort. On their return they confessed their wrongs and acknowledging that they had gravely erred, begged for pardon and compassion. But these were values that the Council had neither knowledge nor appreciation for. They were detained separately, kept in irons in prison and questioned. The conceiver of the desertion was shot, one received hundred and fifty lashes, and two were imprisoned for two years, working as slaves.

This kind of violence against their own people, however, did not bring about any positive transformation. With time, the mistrust escalated into the blatant abuse of company property, negligence and internal corruption. The situation became chronic. The men got to the extent of not caring “in the least what punishment or promise” was given them. “Time and again,” noted the Journal, “when one thinks that now one has a careful man in charge of the cattle, one finds oneself disappointed; it has almost become necessary to go personally to keep a watch over them [the men] night and day.” “No matter how the men are punished, we do not seem able to make them do their duty properly,” it was remarked (Thom, 1952: 129–141).

In January 1653, after a few months in prison, Willem Huijtjens, Gerrit Dirkssen and Jan Blanx were released. It soon became apparent that prison had had no corrective effect on their attitudes. Some of the cattle that were so difficult to obtain from the Capemen were disappearing. Though inclined at first to blame this on the Khoi, the Dutch leaders were forced to admit that some of the losses were inflicted from inside the community of believers. It was discovered that a calf that had gone missing from the herd on 20 January 1653, “had not been lost but was slaughtered by Jan Blanx and Willem Huijtjens”; “cooking places” were found littered with sheep’s feet “in the bushes on the dunes behind the Lion’s Mountain”. They were not alone in this. They had been doing this for some time “with the knowledge of the cowherds and the shepherds”.

The anchor of trust was, indeed, gone! The response of violence proved impotent in stemming the tide of negligence and corruption. Greed constrained the company employees to leave. Behind them was a torn community, bankrupt in spirit.

#### **4.4.5 Exogenous relations: Repulsion, loathing and covetousness against the Cape savages**

In the proposal made by Janssen and Proot to the Dutch East India Company regarding the establishment of a fort and garden for the “convenience and preservation of the Company’s ships and men” (Leibbrandt, 1899: 1), it is clear that there was already among the Dutch an impression of the natives of the Cape as being “brutal and cannibals, from whom no good can be expected” (Leibbrandt, 1896: 12). Indeed, from the very first week of their arrival at the Cape, an entry in Van Riebeeck’s journal noted that “2 savages” had come on board one of the ships, “one of whom could speak a little English”, whose “belies” they “generously filled” with food. This native who could speak some English was Harry, the leader of the “Strandlopers who sit outside our tents”, notes the 10 April diary entry, “with their wives and children everyday” (Thom, 1952: 12).

The very language of the Dutch-Europeans, from reading their descriptions of the new environment they entered and its people, was embedded in a configuration of Europe as a superior power, duty bound and destined to save African brutes from the degradation of their own lives. The making of the current South Africa cannot be adequately understood, as is the convention, as simply an outcome of materialist relations involving power and resources (forces of production). In his seminal work on the life of a South African sharecropper, Ramabonela “Kas” Maine, the social historian, Charles van Onselen, makes this point very vividly: “without prior compassion, dignity,

love or a feeling of trust – no matter how small, poorly, or evenly developed – there could have been no anger, betrayal, hatred or humiliation. The troubled relationship of black and white South Africans cannot be fully understood by focusing on what tore them apart and ignoring what held them together” (1997: 4). Politics and economics have been given an attention that has overshadowed the role of cultural values, consciousness and projected identities.

The historian Mary Anderson (1992) has made the point that the “meaning” given to a particular situation determines the way it is understood and the experiences that ensue. Meaning imposed is followed by particular experience. Experience is first shaped in the mind. As will be demonstrated here, the language of the European observer projects a superiority on the European self and an inferior savagery on the African “others” that had to be subjugated. The Europeans that landed in Cape Town with Van Riebeeck regarded themselves as a community of believers coming face to face with unbelievers leading a repulsive way of life. Being Dutch, as David Tappen observed in 1682, was regarded as equivalent to being Christian, while being “Hottentot was regarded as being “arch-heathen” (in Raven-Hart, 1971: 241). “All the Kafirs or Hottentots”, one Olfert Dapper, in 1668, wrote in his *Accurate description of the African regions* (in Schapera & Farrington, 1933: 45), “are people bereft of all science and literature, very uncouth, and in intellect more like beasts than men”. In Tappen’s words, the Hottentots had “piggish manners”, “stink greatly” and “can more easily be smelt than seen”.

The very land in which these people lived was regarded as inferior. It is “little blessed with crops”, William Ten Rhyne wrote in 1686 (in Schapera & Farrington 1933: 93); “its mountains tower up to heaven, but are barren and very unfriendly to man, ... the mountain which is continuous with Table Mountain is always vomiting forth a gale, and is hence called Devil’s Peak”.

Often, the newcomers were forced to confess some evidence of the African people’s superiority. “In generosity and loyalty to those nearest them, they appear to shame the Dutch”, Dapper once noted. “For instance, if one of them has anything he will willingly share it with another; no matter how small it may be, they will endeavour to share and divide it amongst themselves in a brotherly manner”.

Much later, around 1809, Dapper’s observation was corroborated by Abraham Bogaert, who spent three years studying the people called Hottentots by the Dutch colonists at the Cape. These people, who showed “thankfulness to a Godhead which they believe grants them rain, fine weather and

whatever they have need of”, showed “love and loyalty to one another”. They were governed in their social relations by laws similar to those boasted about by Christians: murder, adultery, incest and theft were severely punishable offences. “These people”, he observed, “hold freedom very much to heart, and are very jealous of it. ... Their mutual love and tenderness is great, and their helpfulness no less” (in Raven-Hart, 1971: 490).

If we must agree with Sen and view “development as freedom” (1999: 3), in contrast to the conventional “narrow views of development such as ... growth of gross national product, or with the rise in personal incomes, or with industrialization, or with technological advance”, then we must accept that the Khoi were able to guard the freedom they had held so “very much to heart” and guarded so jealously, and thus sustain the development it produced by insulating the community from being corroded by “unfreedoms” such as theft, greed and covetousness. These were regarded as robbing society of its vitality, producing the sum of all “unfreedoms”, the bondage of poverty.

A close reading of the colonialists’ observations reveals a strong influence by the philosophical trend of the time on their thinking and attitude toward others. We see, in stark contrast to the mind observed above by Bogaert, another devoted to the worship of self; thankful only to itself for its achievements; a consciousness in which, using the Apostle Paul’s articulation (2 Corinthians 10 : 12), people “use themselves to measure themselves” and others. The Cartesian influence was prominent among these trends. Let us take a brief look at this.

#### **4.4.6 The Cartesian influence on the settler mindset**

Rene Descartes was a devout Roman Catholic, educated at the Jesuit College at La Flèche and the university of Poitiers. His scientific development was founded on the Roman Catholic teaching and belief in the immortality of the human soul and its distinctness from the human body. In his *Meditations* (1641), for example, he expresses this dogma in skilful Jesuit fashion:

*We have faith that the human soul does not perish with the body, and that God exists, but it certainly does not seem possible to persuade infidels of any religion, or of any moral virtue, unless, to begin with, we prove these two facts by natural reason.*

*The deceiver can never cause me to be nothing so long as I think I am something. So we must conclude that: I think, therefore I am, is necessarily true each time I mentally conceive it ...*

*This is surely an attribute that belongs to me; it cannot be separated from me. Could it be the case that if I ceased to think, then I would cease to exist?*

*Putting aside all which is not necessarily true, then I can accurately state that I am no more than a thing which thinks, that is to say a mind or a soul, or an understanding, or a reason.*

*I am the I whom I know exists ...*

*Things are not known from the fact that they are seen or touched, but because they are understood.* (in Hughes, undated)

This aptly captures the sense of high self-regard that characterised the Jesuit personality. The Jesuit mission and reason for existence was to convert infidels and heretics to accept Roman Catholicism. This was effected by a compromise that appealed to their system of worship, diluting it with orthodox Christianity. The Jesuit order itself was established to raise a militarily trained and highly educated body of men to accomplish their mission. The cited passage clearly demonstrates that Descartes was acutely conscious of the need to meet infidels, who believed in reason, as was embodied in the worship of pagan gods like Apollo – the god of reason – hence his recommendation that an appeal be made to their reason, as a method of conversion and intellectual persuasion.

In 1618 he entered the service of Nassau, a leader of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, a body that was influential in the establishment of the Dutch East India Company; there he also studied mathematics under the Dutch scientist Isaac Beeckman. In 1628, at about the prime age of thirty-two, at the height of his intellectual life as a mathematician and philosopher, he moved more permanently to Holland.

The Jesuits that educated him laid much emphasis on the method of knowledge creation above all else. The substance of the knowledge was itself not as important as its manner of acquisition. Believing that only mathematics is certain, Descartes was convinced that the visible world could best be understood on a mathematical basis, through the methods of algebra and geometry. In his attempt to find a unified science of nature and to bring mathematical precision to all aspects of human existence, he reasoned that all doubt can be overcome by the certainty of individual

existence and a thinking entity. His most famous phrase, *Cogito, ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am), best illustrates Descartes' elevation of human reason into a belief in individualistic existence. The individual's own perception about reality precedes whatever is traditionally known: the shared truth. Each individual can trust the evidence of his/her own senses, irrespective and independently of the sensed. Truth is what the individual self perceives.

#### **4.4.7 Postmodernism: an echo from the past**

Interestingly, the model or “imaginary” of postmodernism (Agger, 1996) is based on just this Cartesian quality of thinking. In its claims to foster “dialogical democracy” and the “demystification of totalising intellectual and political systems”, postmodernist theory is a “critique of foundationalism of first principles and assumptions that intend to elude interrogation and critique” (Agger, 1996: 37–46). It is argued in this study that aesthetic relational values are such “first principles”. But they are far from “eluding critique”. The very efficacy of these graces in the lives of people in a variety of settings, as described in this work, testifies to there being “shared truths” against which there are no laws. Whereas these graces are positively transformative in their impact, postmodernism is stuck in the realm of “talk” and academia in the mere recognition that “the good is talk and all talk is good” (Agger, 1996: 46).

But if this cyclicism is all that there is to post-modernism, the theory pales into little more than licence in which each individual is free to determine their own destiny. It becomes a mere indulgence of individual reason. The results are widespread before our eyes: a bewildering confusion of normlessness. Our world is steeped in a Babel-like confusion, from marital feuds in the privacy of homes to inter-tribal feuds, from ideological feuds such as those between Islam and Christianity, capitalism and socialism, to the bloodbath of September 11, 2001. Postmodernists, especially in academic circles, offer little hope out of this quicksand. Each is self-absorbed, in search of an unshared destiny. As such, our centres of learning become part of the problems, rather than sources of solutions to constraints to human development.

The Cartesian philosophy, *Cogito, ergo sum*, against which post-modernism is, fundamentally, no new thinking, was, itself, no novelty in the Catholic context. It was the enthronement of the human intellect as sufficient and supreme in itself, as capable of independent self-existence. The claim, for example, by the papacy of ultimate supremacy and power on earth was the ultimate demonstration of this idea. The papacy applied it in various acts, such as the skilful introduction of pagan rites

under the guise of biblical figures for the sake of winning people to the church. Durant (1950: 775–746), noted:

*The belief in miracle-working objects, talismans, amulets, and formulas was so dear to ... Christianity, and they were received from pagan antiquity ... The [Catholic] Church found that rural converts still revered certain springs, wells, trees, and stones; she thought it wiser to bless these to Christian use ... Pagan festivals, dear to the people, reappeared as Christian feasts, and pagan rites were transformed into Christian liturgy; ... ancient divinities dear to the people were allowed to revive under the names of 'Christian saints' ... Gradually the tenderest features of Astarte, Cybele, Artemis, Diana, and Isis were gathered together in the worship of Mary.*

Harnack, writing in 1898, pointed this out long before Durant:

*Pictures of Christ, Mary, and the saints, had been already worshipped from the fifth century with greetings, kisses, prostration, a renewal of ancient pagan practices. In the naïve and confident conviction that Christians no longer ran the risk of idolatry, the Church not only tolerated, but promoted the entrance of paganism ... A brisk trade was carried on ... churches and chapels were crowded with pictures and relics; the practice of heathen times was revived. (in White, 1998: 70)*

Portaying the degree to which Catholics elevated the worship of Mary, Pope Pius XII is quoted by Carrol (in White, 1998: 131) as having stated: “Mary is Queen by grace, by divine relationship, by right of conquest and by singular election. And her kingdom is as vast as that of her Son and God, since nothing is excluded from her dominion.”

This is, particularly, evidenced in the act of changing the moral law of the Supreme God of the universe, especially demonstrated in the change of the Sabbath, the memorial of God’s supremacy, creatorship and ownership of the earth. The following claims begin to give the reader some clue regarding the Catholic Church and its leadership’s sense of self-importance.

In the *Encyclical Letter of June 20 (1894)* Pope Leo XIII (in White, 1998: 99) wrote: “We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty.”

The *Catholic National*, in July 1895 (in White, 1998: 99) noted: “The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ Himself, hidden under the veil of flesh.”

The Corpus Juris Canonici recorded in 1555 (in White 1998: 99) that: “Christ entrusted His office to the chief pontiff ... but all power in heaven and in earth has been given to Christ ... therefore the chief pontiff, who is His vicar, will have this power.”

In the *Prompta Bibliotheca* (1772 – 1777, Lucius Ferraris (in White, 1998: 99) noted: “The Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth and of the lower regions [infernorum; the fiery place].”

The claim has made it abundantly clear that the Church can do as it chooses, therefore. The Brotherhood of St Paul, in the “Clinton Contracts”, asserted (in White; 1998: 259):

*We Catholics, then, have precisely the same authority for keeping Sunday holy instead of Saturday as we have for every other article of our creed, namely, the authority of the Church ... whereas you who are Protestants really have no authority for it [Sunday sacredness] in the Bible, and you will not allow that there is authority for it anywhere else.*

This – changing the law of the Creator – was the most direct evidence of the enthronement of the supremacy of the human self; the very direct dethronement of the God of the Creator that Africa had clung to in defiance against the violent Catholic crusades that had reached central Africa. Africans preferred death to dethroning the supremacy of God in their life. This fact of the claimed power to change God’s law is attested to in the words of a Catholic priest. In *An abridgement of the Christian doctrine* (undated: 58), Henry Tuberville was asked, “How prove you that the Church hath power to commend feasts and holy days?”, he replied: “By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of [by observing it], and therefore they fondly contradict themselves, by keeping Sunday strictly”.

In the Harvestime Books version of E.G. White’s classic, *The Great Controversy* (1998: 260–261), nineteenth century quotes are provided from each Protestant denomination testifying to this fact (see Appendix I).

The Apostle Paul’s summation, as noted above, of those whose mindset, is that of “measuring themselves by themselves” has devastating implications in inter-human relationships. Its impact can be detected in the fact that the existence of other churches was not tolerated by the Roman Catholics. Volume XIV of the Catholic Encyclopedia once claimed that “the true [Roman Catholic]

Church can tolerate no strange churches besides herself” (in White, 1998: 120). The Bronson’s Review emphatically pointed out that “Protestantism of every form has not, and never can have, any rights where Catholicity is triumphant” (in White, 1998: 120). The Roman Catholic journal *America* stated in January 4, 1941 (in White, 1998: 120): “In themselves, all forms of Protestantism are unjustified. They should not exist.”

This ethos and European thinking exists to this day. It is attested to by a plethora of nature-based religions such as Druidism, Wicca, the New Age Movement and evolutionary cosmology, and is characterised by the notion that embeds in individuals the power to do as each thinks and pleases. Within the Cartesian perspective “everything [is] seen into” the observer’s “frame of reference to the exclusion of any other” (O’Sullivan, 1999: 133). It creates a hierarchical order between the observer and the observed, leading to what has been called the “dominator culture”, a term coined by Riane Eisler (1988). European colonialism and imperialism was fed by this culture of domination; it subjugated, subordinated and victimized the native in Africa and the East (Said, 1993). In Spivak’s perspective, Europe projected “itself as a sovereign subject by defining its colonies as ‘Others’ ” (1999: 199). The dominator culture, thus, becomes a breeding ground of “violent” and exclusionary perspectives such as social racism, sexism, class, “environmental racism (the systematic degradation of land or people which follows from the process of systematic racism)” (O’Sullivan, 1999: 151–153).

Lately, the impact of this mindset does not illustrate itself more graphically, as noted in the introductory chapter, than in the ecumenical movement. The desired objective of having all faiths coming together in a sisterhood of equality, is proving a huge struggle. This is essentially so because of the claim made in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Stage (EEA3) Ecumenical Encounter in Lutherstadt in 2007. Regarding the position of the Roman Catholic Church, in relation to others, a paper was read making the claim that the “reality and enlightenment of Christ’s light which shines upon the whole world and at the same time is the Church, offers the ultimate meaning of the whole creation and of all the human being’s history”.

The reaction by others to this was encapsulated by that of the Moderator of the World Council of Churches, Aram I, in an event marking the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Joint Working Group (JWG) of the Roman Catholic Church – WCC relations within the ecumenical movement. Aram I found it regrettable that the Catholic Church “refuses to ‘drop’ the concept of ‘return’ (by other churches) to the ‘fullness of truth and unity that subsists in the Roman Catholic Church” (2005).

Clearly, the Catholic Church still measures others by itself. The observation we earlier referred to by the historian, Roberts, seems valid, still, lying dormant but effective in the papal system, as it did ages ago. The system still claims the “right of lordship, jurisdiction and dependency” (1996: 240).

Wilhelm Ten Rhyne, who arrived in the Cape of Good Hope on 10 October 1673, observed, in a remarkable display of the Cartesian belief and attitude of an observer’s superiority over the observed, “Their native barbarism and idle desert life, together with a wretched ignorance of all virtues, imposes upon their minds every form of vicious pleasure. In faithlessness, inconstancy, lying, cheating, treachery, and infamous concern with every kind of lust they exercise their villainy” (Schapera & Farrington, 1933: 123).

This attitude is a graphic illustration of the mindset of the “Christian” settlers towards the Khoi person. It betrays a morality and self-conscious superiority towards others founded on distrust and deep disrespect.

In their self-absorbed superiority the Dutch hurt and angered the Khoi. Grevenbroek, in his account *The African Race*, was informed by the Khoi themselves of their version of the creation story. His informant said they worshipped a Supreme Being “Khorrou or Thikkwa”, who created “Noh the first man and Hingnoh his wife. This pair, the ultimate authors of his race, had taught his ancestors to marry wives and rear children, to practice polygamy, peace and concord, to hurt no one, to give to each his own” (Schapera & Farrington, 1933: 193). The Khoi, Grevenbroek came to learn, had certain sacred spots where they performed religious acts. For example, there was, as related to him by:

*a certain Dutchman, ... a certain rock a mile or two from his farm, ... the natives who accompany him pluck a branch from some shrub or tree hard by and strew it upon the ground as a sacred offering. Being asked the reason for this act they replied, without further explanation, that it was the custom of their ancestors from old and in use among them, and that they took ill that our countrymen should foully insult their worship by disburdening their bowels in their sacred spot* (Schapera & Farrington, 1933: 193).

Clearly, therefore, these Calvinist Protestants were victims of what Frye (1983) called the “arrogant eye”. Everything they saw around them, every perspective they had about the natives was informed by a Cartesian superiority that left little or no room for an “inclusive” regard of the “other”, in this context the Khoi.

Not only did the Europeans despise the Khoi people, they expressed a disdain for their culture and belittled what was clearly a creation-based system of worship, without the remotest attempt to understand it. The result was “a determined ignorance”, an “impoverishing ignorance” (Frye, 1983: 118–119) regarding the Khoi. The disadvantage of this haughty disposition, the extent to which it impoverished them, is illustrated in a very pronounced manner in the experience they had of “savage Harry”, the Chief Strandloper’s interpreter.

For the entire year, 1652 to the next, Van Riebeeck and his men had been struggling to get the Saldanhars (as some of the natives were called), to trade their cattle with them, to the extent that they would have like them to. “They were reluctant to part with their cattle” (Thom, 1954: 137). In their effort to find the reason for this reluctance they noticed that it was more difficult to obtain any of the natives’ cattle in the presence of Harry their interpreter. “We are in some doubt,” noted the Journal (Thom, 1954: 119), “whether he faithfully interprets our words to them, for we have often been able to trade more successfully without him than in his presence”. The remarkable thing about all this mistrust and suspicion-riddled situation is the fact that the settlers made no effort to learn the language of the Khoi. They kept a cultural wall and distance, as symbolized by their fort, between the natives and themselves. There was neither the desire nor the inclination to mingle with and to be part of the native society or to develop an understanding of how it worked. Despite their need for the wealth and possessions of the Khoi, which was much more than what the Khoi needed from them, they stoically held on to their “impoverishing ignorance”.

#### **4.4.8 Concealed Dutch self-interest**

The settlers had hope that soon after their arrival they would be able, through pretended kindness, to dispossess the natives of their wealth for their own subsistence and well-being. Commander Van Riebeeck, in his reaction to the Janssens and Proot proposal, had given as his opinion that the natives of the Cape “are not to be trusted, being a brutal gang, living without conscience”. He suggested, therefore that their outlook must be characterised by veiled aggression, that is, defensiveness: “the fort, therefore, must be strongly defensive” he recommended (Leibbrandt, 1899: 20). He realised, however, that to accomplish the purposes of the Company, they would need, against their loathing and abhorrence for the native person, to project an air of friendliness, “so that enough cattle would be obtained from them” (Leibbrandt, 1899: 24).

By design, the whole mission was premised on the motive of self-interest and driven by self-preservation. Furthermore, Van Riebeeck suggested quite shamelessly that the self-enrichment be implemented simultaneously with reconstructing natives of the Cape after the Dutch manner. “The statement that the natives or their children are able to learn the Dutch language is important”, he noted, “and a very good thing, but of greater moment is the furtherance of our Reformed Christian Religion, about which he appears to be sanguine”. Thus was articulated “the policy of giving Christianity with one hand and ensuring military [and, indeed, cultural] superiority with the other” (Spivak, 1999: 216).

They realised with resentment, not so long after their arrival, that from these “Strandlopers” who are “provided with nothing but lean, hungry bellies” which they filled by begging for “bread and other food everyday”, they could obtain no cattle. They had allowed them to draw close to their tent dwellings solely for their own purposes. This is revealed by the Journal entry of 8 May 1652: “we often give them this [food] to make them all the more accustomed to us and in due time to extract as much profit as practicable for the Hon. Company” (Thom, 1952: 90).

Trading with the wealthier Saldanhars was not as easy as they had imagined. For a piece of copper wire they could obtain a huge beast or several sheep; and the Dutch knew that this was an unfair trade practice premised on promoting the interests of the Company at the expense of the native people; all was for the Company’s narrow gain. They found out that the natives were not as gullible as they had thought they were about the copper they used to barter for cattle. “Every now and then they would offer a lean, inferior beast and a sheep or two for sale”, very unwilling to part with more of their cattle. It was as if the Khoi were able to see through the Europeans’ hypocrisy, as treating them “with all the friendliness in the world” could not persuade the natives to part with their wealth (Thom, 1952: 112).

Soon after their arrival in 1652, they had had an amazing, as it were mouth-watering, sight of Khoi wealth:

*We saw on the slope beside the Table Mountain the pasturage and the country all around covered with sheep and cattle like grass on the veld; these the said [Khoi] captains pointed out and gave us to understand were theirs. They also intend bringing their huts and settling down close to us, and want to bring their wives to-morrow to see our houses and wives. We said this would be good and would give us pleasure ... we would have preferred not to have them make their abode so near to us. (Thom, 1952: 107).*

Later, the following remark was also recorded:

*The large party who appeared to be the real Saldanhars and had a particularly large number, yea, countless cattle and sheep, were most friendly and by no means of a begging disposition.* (Thom, 1952: 305)

It was not long before the collective mind of the settlers entertained other means of obtaining the wealth of the natives. They realised that they had had many an opportunity “of depriving them of 10,000 head of cattle had we been allowed to do so”; they reasoned, “if one can not get the cattle from them by friendly trading”, then force would be justified; “this would only be necessary once” (Thom, 1952: 112). After all the natives were thieves in their own right! “With 150 men” they imagined, “ten or twelve thousand cattle could be captured without a blow as they always come to us unarmed; they could then be sent to India as slaves”. This would not have been a novelty in the Cape; dealing in slavery was the Company’s method of heartless profit making as was the trend in all of Europe.

Gradually, therefore, their real and concealed intent and purpose was coming up to the surface. After some time they could not keep it under control, it was consuming them; the hypocrisy was soon to burst into open violence.

About two years after the arrival of the settlers, the natives started showing signs of asserting their ownership of the Cape and a growing opposition to the expansion of the settler mission and gradual incursion into their grazing land. It was reported that on the night of 10 February 1655, “about 50 natives wanted to put up their huts close to the banks of the moat of our fortress, and when told in a friendly manner by our men to go a little further away, they declared boldly that this was not our land but theirs and that they would place their huts wherever they chose” (Thom, 1952: 293).

By 1658, many of the Company’s workers had been allowed to be on their own as “free burghers” and “freemen”. No matter how harsh the rule and punishment had been against absconding Company men, this problem had escalated until the decision was taken to allow those who wanted to be free. This was to put more pressure not only on the Company but the wealth of the natives and, consequently animosity between the settlers and natives escalated.

No sooner were the freemen on their own than anti-competition rules emanated from the Company. Out of no concern for the environment the freemen “and all who were within the Company’s dominions” were forbidden to cut down any precious woods such as yellowwood; no-one was allowed to “sell bread except licensed bakers” and these bakers could only “buy their corn from the Company”; anyone found to have “played or tossed with male or female slaves or any other vile persons” risked being “cast in a dark hole on water and bread” and trade with the aboriginals in cattle was strictly forbidden (Leibbrandt, 1899: 450–458).

The plethora of rules and regulations governing these “freemen” were met with defiance. In a letter of 28 October 1658, the Commander and Council noted that not only was trade between the natives and freemen taking place, some were forcibly dispossessing the natives of their wealth. One freeman in particular, Jan Reiniertsz, who lived “on the thoroughfare” to the fort, was known not to “hesitate, contrary to all enactment”, to “detain the natives expressly at his house”, and “often by force” to obtain cattle from the natives (Leibbrandt, 1899: 453).

Huntsmen were often accused by the natives of shooting their cattle, to which the huntsmen responded by saying they “had fired over the heads of the natives into the air and could not have hit any cattle” (Thom, 1952: 369). Accusations between the Kaapmans and the Dutch grew by the day. Other natives, reportedly the Saldanhars who were avowed enemies of the Kaapmans, urged the Dutch to take punitive action against the latter.

It was not long before the natives started to retaliate. In understandable revenge, they started to invade the free burghers’ farms to repossess their cattle. The Khoi, who were known for their civility, had often returned to the fort cattle that had wandered back to them after they had been sold, at no cost to the settlers at all. They were known to frown upon any kind of theft.

The Khoi’s repossession apparently took place to such an extent that in May 1659 the “free farmers, fishermen [and] burghers”, who could not endure the competition in “theft”, brought a request to the Commander to allow them to “revenge ourselves thoroughly on the Kaapmans, and make good our losses, since they have so reduced our stock that we no longer have enough animals to pull our ploughs” (Thom, 1958: 38). The situation had become such that it was no longer possible to say who the real aggressor was. One thing was obvious, though; the free burghers ultimately had enough excuse to demand the forceful dispossession of the Kaapmans of their wealth. This, anyway, as evidenced in their records, had always been their secret desire.

These very petitioners included men who were robbing not just the natives but the Company itself of its cattle. “Some persons are so wanton” noted a letter from the Commander and Council, “that they do not hesitate to make gaps in the pega-pega or hedge lately planted with great trouble and expense for the general public”, to protect the cattle from being stolen. “Some did not hesitate to dig some pits wide and deep in the neighbourhood of and among the thickets of Table Mountain, where the best and finest pastures for the draught and [milk] cattle lie, and to cover the same with loose rush, so that the cattle which frequently graze there, ... fall in and ... [are] killed, ... and cannot possibly be recovered”. These freemen were known to steal fish and fresh produce from each other; “and to steal clothing from the ship’s Company” – a habit that was to backfire on the natives, later, in heavy losses. They used the natives to steal, so as to buy “from them for a very small sum the stolen things” (Leibbrandt, 1899: 474–510).

One Doman, a native who had been taken on a trip to Batavia and was conversant with the settler language, became a rebel leader among the natives. He knew how to use firearms and had become “far too smart” and “obnoxious”. Doman had become allied to the Kaapmans who were accused of stealing from the fort and the free burghers.

On 19 May 1659, a resolution was taken in a Council meeting called by the Commander (Thom, 1958: 48), to “take the first opportunity practicable to attack [the Kaapmans] with a large force and, if possible, take them by surprise. We shall capture as many cattle and men as we can, but shall avoid, as far as possible, all murderous bloodshed. The prisoners we shall keep as hostages, so that we may restrain and bring to submission those who may evade us. By this means we hope to restore peace, the more so because we feel sure that the true Saldanhars, enemies of the Kaapmans, will care as little about their fate as they did in Harry’s case, but will more freely come to deal with us in more greater security than before, since the Kaapmans have always been found to be the chief hindrance to this”.

This was the first open war to be declared by the settlers. Eva, the girl interpreter who had been taken in by the Commander to look after his wife, was “dismayed when she saw all the preparation” for war against her people. She feared for her people the Saldanhars. She was glad when after several efforts by the Dutch to use her people against the Kaapmans, their chief, Oedaso, of the Cochoquas, refused to participate in the war. This led to Oedaso being regarded with suspicion.

It was to be discovered later that the Chief was a protector of the Dutch enemies (Thom, 1958: 100). In the course of that war Eva had left, apparently because she also knew the truth about this. Yet out of concern for her adopted family she had warned them: “be on guard everywhere, so that [you] may protect what still remains of [you]”.

Here was a soul divided between the people she loved and those she wished to protect.

Doman, Harry, and other Khoi, realizing the military dominance of the settlers, finally decided to hand themselves over and to conclude peace. Commander Van Riebeeck (in Moodie’s *Record*, 1860: 205) reported their reasoning regarding the war as follows: “They dwelt long upon our taking everyday for our own use more of the land, which had belonged to them from all ages.”

The Dutch seemed to have understood and found the Khoi justified in the war that the Khoi people had been forced to respond to:

*it was for no other reason than because they saw that we were breaking up the best land and grass, where their cattle were accustomed to graze, trying to establish ourselves everywhere with houses and farms as if we were never more to remove, but designed to take, for our permanent occupation, more and more of this Cape country, which had belonged to them from time immemorial.* (Moodie, 1860: 186)

#### **4.4.9 The Cape of immoral sexual entertainment and abuse**

Having declared contempt and disdain for the Khoi persona, the Europeans relegated them in their imagination to objects of derision and entertainment. David Tappen reveals this in the following manner: “As we had nothing to do, we went out into the country among the savages who are called the Hottentots, to amuse ourselves” (Raven-Hart, 1971: 238).

Khoi women were objects of sexual intrigue and jest, which revealed more about the immorality concealed beneath the pretended virtuousness of the Europeans than the supposed shamelessness of the natives. Tappen (in Raven-Hart, 1971: 238) shares his own nakedness in this regard.

*I had often heard that if one said to them Kutykum they at once lifted the sheepskin and showed their little under-parts. It happened early one morning, ... I said Kutykum: she stretched out her hand and said Tabackum, at which I went and got a scrap of tobacco, ...*

*when she had it in her hand she asked, Kutykum? I said Yes, and therewith she raised her sheepskin high up and let me have a good look, and then she laughed and went off.*

In another incident involving a Dutch woman's curiosity about the "privities" of the Khoi women, Tappen observed:

*She wished to examine a Hottentot woman, ... and she lifted the [Hottentot] woman's skirt up to her navel, and we watched this amusement through a window; and when we could not contain our laughter the woman heard it and perceived us and went off, but the Hottentot woman laughed. (in Raven-Hart, 1971: 240)*

In Grevenbroek's judgement, the settlers had "become the lords of a domain vaster than the whole circuit of Holland" (in Schapera & Farrington, 1933: 278). Overnight poor whites became land barons. "I know a thrifty farmer who arrived here from Europe in the year 1672. He was then as poor as a church mouse" wrote Grevenbroek in 1695, "without bite or sup, or a penny in his pocket. He was made a burgher and is now owner of three or four farms of his own, capable of supplying every need ... he is now overflowing with wealth". Indeed being a farmer at the Cape was most gainful. There was "solid gold beneath every farm", as illustrated by Grevenbroek.

Yet, surrounded by all this wealth, farmers there were "for the most part quite unscrupulous" observed Grevenbroek. "More dishonest than the Carthaginians or Loamedon; both eager and blind in their pursuit for gain" (in Schapera & Farrington, 1933: 279). It is on these very farms that the exploitation and abuse of Aboriginal women's labour was rife. "Their wives and their daughters make reliable washerwomen and busy chars. They wash plates and dishes, clean up dirt, ... light up the fires, cook well, and provide cheap labour for the Dutch. ... I tell you that I have seen a Hottentot woman, who in return for a day's labour had been given some scraps in a platter by a Dutchman" (in Schapera & Farrington, 1933: 273).

#### **4.4.10 The life and experience of Krotoa, also known as Eva**

The life of Krotoa, the young Khoi girl taken in by Commander Van Riebeeck to look after the needs of his wife and to act as a communication medium between the settlers and her people, has to be regarded as most illustrative and an object lesson regarding the typical dilemma facing aboriginal people in South Africa. As expressed by Mostert (1992: 143): "She reflected in her person the

larger nature of the dilemmas, confusions, crises and pain that were accumulating for people and their descendents”.

Krotoa had joined the Van Riebeeck household while in her early teens. It is not clear under what circumstances this had taken place. She was related to Chief Oedaso. She became “Christian” and in 1664, owing to the scarcity of Dutch women in the Cape, was married to a Danish surgeon called Pieter Meerhof. The dependency of the settlers on the aboriginals was not just economic; the settlers depended on slavery and forced labour on the one side and on coerced sex on the other. “Between 1657 and 1807, ‘408 women of, apparently, black descent married into the white population’ ”, notes the historian Robert Ross. These women, he says, “exploited the relative scarcity of their sex to achieve upward mobility for themselves and their offspring” (2004: 62).

The Dutch who had taken her into their life-world made an effort to “transform her”, noted one Dutch diarist, “from a female Hottentoo almost into a Netherland woman” (in Ross, 2004: 63). Early in her experience with the Dutch, Krotoa was torn between the alien family that adopted her for its own convenience and her own people, and their respective identities. The following two episodes, recorded in Van Riebeeck’s Journals, illustrate this.

#### **4.4.11 “Doman is no good”**

*During the night all [freeman Van Reijnierssen’s] male and female slaves had run away, ... We thereupon called the new interpreter Doman, now called Anthony, who had returned from Batavia with Hon. Cuneus, and asked him why the Hottentots would not search for the runaway slaves, to which he coolly replied that he did not know. [Little is known about Doman; ... he was taken to Batavia ... to learn Dutch, and there he seems to have noticed the threat that the Dutch posed to indigenous ways of life. When he returned to the Cape, he consistently advocated Khoikhoi interests, especially of the Peninsula tribes, over those of the Dutch in trade negotiations]. (Volume II, 1658, June 21st)*

Suspicious, Van Riebeeck resorted to the more trustworthy Krotoa and

*privately asked her whether our blacks were not being harboured by the Hottentots. On this she asked whether such was the Commander’s opinion, and being answered in the affirmative, she (speaking good Dutch) said these words, namely: “I tell you straight out, Mijnheer Van Riebeeck, Doman is no good. He told the Hottentots everything that was said in Mijnheer’s room the day before yesterday. When I told him that it was wrong to do so, he*

*replied: "I am a Hottentot not a Dutchman, but you, Eva, try to carry out favour with the Commander".*

Krotoa's vacillation between the two identities is illustrated in the following descriptions:

*The interpreters Doman, or Anthonij, and Eva wished to visit their friends, ... and asked for some copper, iron, beads, tobacco, bread and brandy as a reward for their services as interpreters, and presents for her mother and their friends and all the natives whom they, especially Eva, would visit, to induce them to bring a larger number of cattle. ... They promised to do their best ... They then left. When Eva reached the matted hut of Doman, ... outside the fort, she at once dressed herself in the hides again and sent her clothes home [to Van Riebeeck's]. (Volume II, 1658, September 23rd)*

*Oedasoia left after being treated and given bread, tobacco, ...*

*The interpreter, Eva, has remained behind to live in the Commander's house again, laying aside her skins and adopting once more the Indian way of dressing. ... She seems to have grown tired of her own people again ... we let her follow her own will so that we may get the better service from her. But she appears to have become already so accustomed to the Dutch diet and way of life that she will never be able to give it up completely. (Volume III, 1661, December 26th)*

Having married Meerhof, Krotoa had three children with him. After Meerhof was assigned to Robben Island as superintendent, the tragic end of her life started. She never had the opportunity to visit her people again. She started drinking. After her husband's death she returned inland with her three children and survived as a prostitute among the white settlers.

Her children, who from evidence presented in the Journal of 1662–1670 appeared to have received little care from Krotoa, were separated from her:

*In the evening the three children begotten by the late Junior Surgeon Pieter Meerhoff out of the female Hottentot Eva, appear in the hall, naked and destitute, the eldest sending in word that his mother, being quite drunk, had with all her household things and bedding gone to the Hottentots, and that in her home (which had been prepared and finely furnished for her in the house at the old pottery) she had left nothing behind in the shape of food or otherwise. ... This afternoon in consequence of her excessive drunkenness, and her shameful behaviour in the hall and at the dinner table of the Commander [Wagenaer], she had been severely*

*reprimanded, and advised to lead a better and more civilised life and abandon her adulterous and shameful conduct. Associating as she did with all sorts of men especially at night time, if she did not amend, her children would be taken away from her, and she herself banished on an Island.* (Volume **II**, 1669, February 8th)

For this reason, that same evening Krotoa decided to run away to her own people. Her children, who according to Dutch policy were more Dutch than native, she would have to leave behind or incur more wrath from the Dutch. They would care less if she ran away all alone, separated from them.

But, being a mother, unable to stay away long from her children, Krotoa did come back from among her own native people. Perhaps she had also been too “accustomed to Dutch diet”, as alleged. Soon after that she was thrown into “the hole”, that is, imprisoned.

On 26 March 1669 she was to become the first African woman to be isolated to Robben Island, while reportedly in a drunken stupour, and her worst fear, of being cut off from her children, came true. She must have died on Robben Island, separated from her people and her children, a broken soul, whose transformation from an African to a Dutch woman was never completed.

#### **4.4.12 Testimony to the destructiveness of the self-preservation motive**

By the time that Van Riebeeck left the Cape peninsular, the Dutch colonists had broken not just the economy but the entire structure of the Khoi life. The Khoi bodies were ravaged by the diseases imported into their environment by the Europeans. In 1661 Van Riebeeck acknowledged that a “great sickness is raging” among the slaves of the Company and the freemen, omitting to mention, as if it were inconsequential, that this was annihilating the natives too, from sicknesses that originated with the settlers. In 1713, smallpox-infested linen from the Company’s passing ships, that was, as usual, taken to be dried on the shore, spread the dreaded disease throughout the peninsular frontier. “It decimated the Khoikhoi who died in their hundreds. They lay everywhere on the roads ... Cursing the Dutchmen, who they said, had bewitched them, they fled inland with their kraals, huts and cattle in hopes there to be freed from the malign disease. ... But it pursued them” (in Mostert, 1992: 144).

De Mist, in his Memorandum of 1802 (Jeffreys & Cie, 1920: 253) to the Bataviaan Government, recorded the plight of the Khoi people as follows:

*On what grounds did these poor creatures deserve the persecution and ill-treatment meted to them by the Company's servants from the very founding of the Colony? From the caves of their fathers, they watched a foreign nation take possession of their coasts, offering not the slightest opposition; they gradually retreated before the advance of the strangers and provided them with cattle, sheep and goats; but all this could not sate the white man's greed. Covetous, as we might suppose, to emulate the Spaniards in America, but in a smaller field and to a lesser degree, the colonists hounded down these timid wretches, destroyed their kraals and villages, stole their cattle, seized the men and boys and reduced them to a state of subjection and slavery, drove others, in fear of their lives, to seek shelter in the depths of wild caves and forests, and callously allowed them to sink into a state of utter barbarism. These people have now become the most dangerous enemies of the Colony, and continual guerrilla warfare of defence and attack has to be waged against Bushmen-Hottentots, in which all the principles of civilization and humanity are lost sight of.*

As a result of the conducting of international business by Europeans, the aboriginals' livelihood as self-provisioning households disappeared and they became the profit base of European colonists. Those who produced the wealth watched helplessly as it was monopolized by a tiny minority of European households on whose farms they were destined to suffer cruel labour, right into the twenty-first century.

### ***The Cape of impoverished landscapes and ecosystems***

It was not just the Khoi people that were to be systematically transformed into paupers and beggars by the European-Dutch settlers. The landscapes and ecosystems were to suffer, too. Van Riebeeck, soon after his arrival, took time to study and take in the beauty and splendour of the Cape (Thom, 1952: 165):

*The forests were the finest in the world, ... and contained timber as long, thick and straight as one could wish. ... It is amazing that there are such fine forests, ... a pity though that ... there are not more suitable roads for transporting the timber. Also found everywhere were the finest flat meadows in the world, most suitable for planting and cultivating, full of game, namely harts, roes, steenbok, eland, shelducks, geese, partridges, pheasants and all kinds of*

*finches, snipe and small animals, but all so wild that it is almost impossible to catch them. Rock-rabbits and hares were also seen in great abundance.*

Marine resources were equally impressive in their abundance. The settlers were hardly two months in the Cape when they came to realise the extent of marine wealth open to their ruthless – and wasteful – exploitation (Thom, 1952: 47):

*As we arose from table we saw a large school of harders close to the shore and right opposite our door; we therefore had the sein [net] drawn. It was so full of fish that the purse was completely torn out and still at least 10 thousand were caught. ... Had we been able to get the sein out on land without it being torn, we should probably have caught more than 20 thousand fish in this one draught. It is often the case here that we catch more fish than we require.*

The birds of the sea did not escape the plunder (Thom, 1952: 58)

*The yacht returned from the Robben Island bringing back about a hundred black birds called duikers, which taste good; some penguins and about 3,000 eggs, all of which we distributed among the men to serve to some extent as refreshment and by way of change.*

*A fine load of 2,700 exceptionally fine well-dried seal-skins [were] found on a small island in the bay of Saldanha. They had been neatly stacked, apparently left there last year by a small French ship which did not have room for more.*

Nothing expresses the culture of callous ecological wastefulness and senseless plunder better than the following passages.

*Went ashore, however, and, as said before, gathered as many eggs as could be stowed in the boat. This took almost all day; ... walked across and round the island by myself. Found in a small sandy bay some huts of whale ribs and covered with seal skins; ... erected there by the French. (Thom, 1952: 90)*

*In the bay of Saldanha was a Frenchman with 12 cannon and 35 or 40 men. ... They were very busy catching seals, flaying them and broiling down train-oil from the blubber. They had already spent 6 months at it, having secured about 48 M skins (noted as 48,000) and some train-oil ... seal meat had also been their daily food. (Thom, 1952: 174)*

The systematic exploitation of the ecosystem soon proved unsustainable. In February 1654, less than two years after the Dutch arrival, the much prized seals had started dwindling.

*In the afternoon ... the galiot Roode Vos ... brought back ... Verburgh, an assistant to Jan Woutersen to supervise the seal-catching on the Dassen Island. She also brought back 6 firkins of train-oil and 5,373 skins, large and small.*

*The said Verburgh reported that they could not have continued for longer than another 2 or 3 weeks, as the seals were getting very scarce as a result of continual catching. (Thom, 1952: 212)*

As noted by John Richards in a November 2001 lecture at Brown University, titled “*The world hunt, species depletion and European expansion*”, this trend in the historical exploitation of ecosystems has brought about “catastrophic ecological changes that have reached crisis point in the world coastal waters” (2001: 2). “Such intense human predation”, the “world hunt” that reaches back to the early modern centuries, has rendered the Cape landscape and ecosystems so “pauperate by comparison with those of the fifteenth or sixteenth century ... The world hunt stripped out entire strata of larger animal and marine species from global ecosystems”. Indeed this world hunt did not spare humans either, as Moodie testified: “A population of 200,000 Hottentots in the Cape was reduced to just 32,000 (under the Dutch) “through a continued system of oppression” (1960: 2).

#### **4.4.13 Ignored lessons from the vegetable kingdom**

In Chapter Two we identified a particular problem that came to define Europe as it emerged from antiquity. From two vehemently opposed patterns of living, paganism on the one end and Judeo-Christianity on the other, was identified a third pattern that arose in Europe consisting of what could be regarded as a Constantinian compromise between the original two. This third pattern became the most dominant, though not totally obliterating the other two.

It was observed that all of these patterns of living were founded on culture defined by religion and that they evinced and sustained particular forms of human relatedness. As noted in Chapter Two, On the one hand, under paganism and its compromised version – pagan Christianity – the relatedness was characterized by domination and submission. In such a relationship the dominant, holding power, remains perpetually dependent on the submissive in a symbiotic relationship in which fear is the governing motive and unity of purpose is unattainable.

Ellen G. White observed in nature what she called the law of self-sacrifice and the law of self-preservation (1940). Christ, the Author of Christianity, Himself urged His audiences, for example, to “consider the lilies of the valley” (Matthew 6: 28), to “look at the birds of the air” (Matthew 6: 26). In illustrating the efficacy of these laws White drew on the agricultural phenomenon of sowing wheat seed, its growth and harvest, as taught by Christ. Christ had cautioned: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain” (John 12: 24). This, White says, is the “law under the furrow of the vegetable kingdom” (1940: 623):

*Those who till the soil [as did the Dutch in the Cape of Good Hope frontier] have the illustration ever before them. Year by year man preserves his supply of grain by apparently throwing away the choicest part. For a time it must be hidden. ... Then appears the blade, then the ear, and the corn in the ear. But this development cannot take place unless the grain is buried out of sight, hidden, and to all appearance, lost.*

*The grain of wheat that preserves its own life can produce no fruit. It abides alone.*

White suggested that it is the duty of each person, according to the endowments and resources possessed, to minister to the needs of others. “The life must be cast into the furrow of the world’s need. Self-love, self-interest, must perish”. And the “law of self-sacrifice is the law of self-preservation. The husbandman (the sower) preserves his grain by casting it away. So in human life. To give is to live. ... The life that is spent on self is like the grain that is eaten” (1940: 623).

“The law of self-serving”, White concluded, “is the law of self-destruction” (1940: 623). As professed Christians and gardeners, the Dutch settlers should have heeded and appropriated these lessons from nature in their dealings with the native “other”.

The lesson here is a simple but profound one. Success in any line of work cannot be brought about by narrow, inward-looking self-interest. No such individual or corporate motives, policies or programmes can bring about sustainable benefits, either to the object or the subject of such motives. Every individual or corporate business driven by self-interest, whether the business is at a microcosmic, local or global, international level – as was the Dutch East India Company – must

produce destruction. Sustainable social transformation is the result of disinterested, self-sacrificial devotion to the good of others.

In the nature of the human relatedness that was evinced by the Dutch East India Company in the Cape, internally its own employees and externally with the “Kaapmans”, the “Third Pattern” that had come to define and dominate in Europe held sway. The Calvinist Christians that constituted the entire Dutch mission to the Cape unmistakably brought this pattern into the Cape in the middle of the seventeenth century. Their brand of Christianity was itself an off-shoot of the Third Pattern. The intolerance inherent in Calvin’s behaviour and his dogmas and the Cartesian intellectual tradition that was characterised their relations with others were all products of the compromised Christianity that Europe had inherited from the cultural chauvinism of Roman Catholicism that drenched Europe in centuries of wars, totalitarian systems of government, “oceans of blood, mountains of corpses” (Weigel, 2004: 60).

Even in the Cape experience it was shown that the motive of self-interested gain leaves little room for the maintenance of trust and community. It plants in the hearts and minds of others seeds for its own destruction. The Company was devoid of compassion, mercy and grace, as witnessed by its employees. As Voigt (1899: 102) read their plight, “one generation of South Africans after another had struggled against misgovernment and misrule of the Dutch East India Company”. This had to result in the deep fracturing of what was, professedly, a Christian community of belief. In turn, the broken relationships lead to “free burghers” venturing out on their own, themselves infused with the same self-absorbed disposition and spirit of gain, to interact with the natives, only to perpetuate the damage they had incurred on their frontier neighbours.

#### **4.5 The Eastern Cape contact with amaXhosa**

Not long after Van Riebeeck started to establish the Cape of Good Hope frontier symbolized by the fort and garden at the foot of Table Mountain, some knowledge had reached the frontiersmen about the existence of amaXhosa, “another race of men”, distinct from the Khoi, known under the name of “Choboquas or Cobonas”. They were marked, among other distinguishing features, as living further inland, in permanent houses and wearing clothes (Schapera and Farrington, 1933: 28).

With rumours abounding about their mineral wealth and an abundance of cattle, Van Riebeeck and his men cherished the desire to make contact with them. In 1659, just over eight years after their

arrival, the lure of the Chobona wealth proved irresistible. The settlers had heard “through Eva, the interpreter, and others” about the “supreme chief or sovereign of the Hottentots, said to be the Chobonas or ‘Coboqua, rich in gold, pearls, etc.’” (Thom, 1958: 8).

From Van Riebeeck’s diaries it is quite evident that there had been “repeated requests” from his co-settlers to find amaXhosa and their wealth. In February 1659, “seven excellent men, all free burgers” came “forward to undertake an expedition to this tribe” (Thom, 1958: 9). The Company’s Council of Seventeen in Holland had agreed to it. The “free adventurers” were to be given “all the necessary provisions and requirements at the Company’s expense, ... best draught oxen, to be used for carrying their baggage so that they may stay away the longer”.

The search party was promised by the Company “a premium in proportion to the estimated value to the Company of whatever wealth they would bring back” (Thom, 1958: 9). Driven by this desire for gain and with “high hopes”, the young “freemen” began their “overland journey ... with provisions on two sturdy pack-oxen for three months”.

Unfortunately, fifty years of curiosity about amaXhosa were to go by before “a party of freebooters” were to “come into contact with them overland” (Schapera & Farrington, 1933: 29). We have established in the previous chapter, from the 1702 testimony of Abraham Bogaert, that the “Kariguriquas” who were called “Hosaas” “were the Chainouquas” (amaGqunukwhebe of Chungwa in isiXhosa language) (ox riders, according to John Barrows (1801: 193). These Chainouquas who neighboured the “Chobonas” were, according to Schapera’s observation, different from the Khoi, amaXhosa.

From the Journal of Olof van Bergh, who became a captain of the garrison of the Castle of the Cape of Good Hope, and Isaq Schrijver, we are able to locate these Chainouquas as having “occupied the Caledon-Danger Point region” (Mossop, 1831: 65). We know they were in this vicinity, at least up to 1699, when “there was scarcity of cattle not only for the shipping but for the requirements of the settlement” and Bergh was sent with 41 men to barter with them, returning from the expedition in 1700.

Bogaert further notes that the Chainouquas, who were among the tribes that lived at or near the Cape like the “Hottentots”, by 1702 had “retired”, for reasons that he does not declare, “so far inland that no one knows where” they had gone to settle (in Raven-Hart, 1971: 484). It is clear from

the conversations that Jan Van Riebeeck himself had with the “Hottentots” as far back as 1659, that the Khoi knew the Chobona–amaXhosa well, were intermarrying with them and held them in high esteem.

It should therefore not be surprising that given the social and economic devastation that they must have learnt about and observed being inflicted on their Khoi neighbours, amaXhosa preferred to relocate, moving away eastwards from the European threat.

It is important to remember what the Dutch perceived as “the Cape” during this period, about 50 years after the arrival and settlement of the Dutch East India Company. The language used by Bogaert is quite revealing. He speaks of the many “Hottentot” tribes that dwelt “at or near” the Cape. The “Namaquas” were among these. The “Namaquas”, he notes (in Raven-Hart, 1971: 483), lived “fully eighty miles east-north-east of the Cape”, meaning, clearly, that they were perceived as living outside the boundary of what was then regarded as “the Cape”, a possession of the Dutch East India Company.

This provides a good indication of where the Chobona or Chainouqua – amaXhosa who dwelt “near the region of the Cape” – must have been living, more or less. If “fully eighty miles” – 100 kms – was at that time outside the Cape, then the area as near as the Worcester of today must also have been regarded as lying outside the Cape boundary. Algoa Bay, therefore, the area where AmaXhosa were by the late 1660s, was much farther away from the Cape.

It was not far from here that the Dutch hunters and “freeburghers” met amaXhosa and bartered with them around 1702. In the same year, in an “unprovoked raid by the Dutch on a group of Xhosa”, the colonists fought with amaXhosa “near the Bruintjieshoogte” (Switzer, 1993: 46). This area down to the sea came to be called the Zuurveld, a territory that amaXhosa always contended as having been theirs.

With the advent of the terrible smallpox via a ship from Ceylon in the winter of 1755, awful devastation was inflicted on Cape inhabitants. In Cape Town, according to Theal (1894: 81) “hardly a single adult who was attacked recovered; eastward until Bantu were reached, the tribes as such were utterly destroyed, ... how far the disease extended among the Bantu cannot be stated with certainty”.

There is no doubt that amaXhosa must have felt the effects of the plague as abaThembu testified that the area between the Kei and uMbashe rivers “was almost depopulated by the small-pox” (Theal, 1894: 82). Barrows (1801: 216), in the account of his travels, noted that the “small-pox was once brought among them [amaXhosa] by a vessel that was stranded on their coast, and carried off great numbers. The marks of this disorder were apparent on the faces of many of the elder people”.

As “freeburgers” advanced eastward, thereafter, annihilating and evacuating the “Bushmen” out of the Sneeuberg territory, and beyond the region of Algoa Bay, it makes sense that with the devastation of the 1755 epidemic, amaXhosa, who must have been affected, had moved farther to the east.

Towards the end of 1769, the Cape government, under Ryk Tulbagh, established a commission to “inspect the most distant farms and ascertain the state of affairs on the frontier”, among other functions (Theal, 1964: 121). This commission established that Dutch “freeburgers” or “trekboere” had advanced considerably beyond the boundaries of the Cape, eastward, beyond the Gamtoos River. The “well-beaten wagon-road from Swellendam into Kaffirland” attested to this. Despite several prohibitions (“placaats”) issued from 1739 onwards, they were “purchasing cattle and carrying on a large trade with the Xosas” (Theal, 1964: 121).

The South African historiography propounds the perspective, as does Mostert (1992: 223), that from “the opposite directions” of the Algoa Bay “line”, “colonists and Xhosa” “were drawing” towards each other. But this is not the reality that was witnessed by the observers of the era. We have had testimony to the fact of amaXhosa moving away from the Cape. And the reason was the fate that their fellow Africans, the Khoi and the “Bushmen”, had met with at the hands of the colonists.

It has also been proposed (Marais, 1944) and seemingly unquestionably accepted (Mostert, 1992), that amaXhosa came into what was described rather clinically as “continuous contact” with the colonists from 1778. It has also been readily accepted that this “continuous contact” started in an antagonistic and adversarial climate and continued thus for over a century. As the Commission of 1769 discovered, contact between amaXhosa and the Dutch had never actually ceased, at least since the early 1700s.

The Dutch East India Company had held to an inward-looking economic policy. As analyzed by Commissioner De Mist in his Memorandum of 1802, this had restricted the freedom of colonists to trade. This was based on “fear”, “lest, by increasing the prosperity and wealth of a number of colonists, the Company should lose the benefits of its monopoly”. The Company, though having noted “with pleasure” in 1731, “the growth of the colony”, by 1758 was of the view that “the granting of transport and freedom in trade is regarded as too serious an innovation to be contemplated”. This attitude persisted and “held good until 1792”; indeed it spilled over to the period of the English rule, after 1795 (Jeffreys & Gie, 1920: 173).

Under the “demon of discontent”, according to De Mist, colonists and freeburghers, separated by long distances from Cape Town, conducted war “against the Bushmen and Kaffirs” (as amaXhosa were known); they were “taught” “to shoot down a fellow-being with as little compunction as they would a hare or a wolf” (Jeffreys & Gie, 1920: 199). By the time of the Batavian rule under De Mist, “plundering expeditions” by the colonists had become commonplace, with “border wars arising as a consequence” (p. 246).

#### **4.5.1 Frontier relations**

Dutch “freeburghers”, among whom were Willem Prinsloo, had established farms near the Little Fish River (Somerset East) when Governor Joachim Van Plettenburg visited this vicinity in 1778, to hold separate audiences with frontier farmers and amaXhosa leaders in the Kat River area close by.

This journey, which took him through the Camdeboo region, “convinced him” that the colonial white farmers resident here were “too far from the church” and that their “wives and families were exposed to the Bushmen depredations”. Significantly, Van Plettenberg, also noticed that “there were also roaming about the country in their midst a number of worthless Europeans, whose conduct tended to create most serious misunderstandings and consequent ill-feeling between the whites and the natives” (Hutton, 1887: 2).

Les Switzer (1993: 48) somewhat captures the relational climate and the conditions existing between amaXhosa and the white farmers.

*Contact between the Dutch stockfarmers and Xhosa frontier chiefdoms like the Gqunukhwebe was established early in the eighteenth century. Attempts by succeeding Dutch East India Company administrations to limit and/or regulate interaction between the*

*two groups proved futile. ... Dutch and Xhosa stockfarmers had much in common with each other. They ate the same kind of food and lived in the same kinds of huts. Boer children, at least, were usually dressed in animal skins like the Xhosa. Trekboers were less effective as cultivators, but livestock exhibited a socio-cultural dimension in Dutch frontier society that bore some resemblance to the role of cattle in Nguni society. Life centred on the family or extended family, and decision-making by both groups was a highly personalized process. Frontier Dutch and Xhosa alike were essentially pragmatist in relations with other groups.*

Given these similarities, amaXhosa had no reason to live in fear of the Dutch. Indeed they did not fear them and saw no reason why these stockfarmers should not be absorbed. AmaXhosa, had been for decades, already, absorbing refugees and adventurers from the Dutch society at the Cape and from other European places of origin, as has been noted in the previous chapters and will be seen in *the Grosvenor* episode that now follows.

It was during Van Plettenberg's time that the English ship called the *Grosvenor* carrying over one hundred and fifty people, including women and children and employees of the East India Company, was wrecked off the Transkei coast in 1782. Survivors from this wreck on their way to the Dutch settlements in the Cape met amaXhoas in many villages. Around the "Goose Visch", the Great Fish River, they referred to amaXhosa as "Mambokees", amaMbo, confirming the assertion we have held that amaXhosa are part of the great tribes of amaMbo that had come down from Ethiopia. Clearly amaXhosa had referred to themselves as amaMbo.

It is from the testimony of these English survivors that we get a glimpse of the life and character of amaXhosa at this period of Dutch presence and just before the English took over in 1795. The following characteristics were noted in Carter and Van Reenen (1927: 77–84):

- *[The Caffrees] ... were robust, and possess a greater degree of pride and courage.*
- *[They] practise agriculture, which proves they are not naturally wanderers.*
- *Industry is a leading trait in the character of the Caffrees; ... a love of agriculture, with a few religious dogmas, distinguish them as a more civilised people.*
- *Circumcision, which is generally practised among them, proves that they either owe their origin to an ancient people, or have simply imitated the inhabitants of some neighbouring country, of whom they have no longer remembrance, neither do they use it (as they say) in any religious or mystical sense.*

- *They entertain a very high opinion of the supreme being (God) and of his power.*
- *[They] believe in a future state where the good will be rewarded and the wicked punished.*
- *[They] are governed by a chief or king whose power is very limited, ... neither attended nor feared, but respected and beloved, and frequently poorer than many of his subjects.*
- *It is a custom among the Caffrees for each to gather his own grain.*
- *[Each family lives] separately, each surrounded by his own plantation of corn, occasioning a small hoord [a group of households, imizi, as in ilali (villages)] to occupy a large portion of ground.*

In August 1790 a search party thirteen Dutch colonists led by Jacob Van Reenen left the Cape, hoping to rescue their fellow Europeans and bring them back to the Cape among “Christians”. Two centuries after their arrival in black South Africa, these Calvinists were maintaining a dividing wall between themselves and “non-believers”.

Jacob Van Reenen’s search party travelled for about three months, through the land of Ndlambe, on the western side of the Fish River, receiving hospitality among the “Caffrees” that were to be brutally removed by the English Governor Cradock in 1811. In November, they reached the spot of the *Grosvenor* wreck. But they returned without any survivors. Some survivors had been assimilated, after eight years, among the “Caffrees”, like many Europeans who had survived numerous shipwrecks along that coast over the previous one hundred and fifty years.

According to Theal, this journey was motivated in the first place by the fact that, after eight years, “a report reached the colony that some white women were certainly living in the Kaffir country” (1964: 225–226). Around the Umtata River area, beyond uMbashe, they:

*came to a kraal occupied by about four hundred people of mixed race, descendents of Europeans, Bantu, and East Indians. Among these people were three old white women who could not speak any European language, and did not know to what nation they belonged, though from one of them called Bessie it was concluded that they were English. These women were wives of petty chiefs, and had children and numerous grand children.*

It is in this vicinity that the author had the pleasure of meeting two young women in the Coffee Bay Hotel in August 2005. During the usual exchange of the traditional lengthy greetings that involve

revealing the clan to which each participant in the conversation belongs – usually a safety net against *inyala*, the evil of falling in love with your own sister, in case the contact spills over to intimacy – the author was taken aback. The first girl made known to me that she was *umaMlungu*. *Abelungu* are white people. She was actually telling me that she belonged to the white people's clan. Her sister, who joined the conversation later, divulged their surname as “Honer”. Mrs Honer, their mother, was an employee in another hotel not so far away. She gave me some background to this whole episode that sounded to me much like an experience such as the wreck of the *Grosvenor*.

It is clear that there were Europeans, including the English, living among “Caffrees” long before the *Grosvenor* was wrecked in 1782. That they voiced no wish to return with the search party is ample evidence that they had been living contentedly among the Africans. They had been assimilated. It does not seem that the search party even bothered to try to convince them to leave.

The origin of the mixed group of people was not to be traced back to the three “old white women” only. In *The South Eastern Bantu*, J.H. Soga (1930), himself the son of a Scottish woman, reasoned that at least one hundred and fifty years before the wreck of the *Grosvenor* numerous other shipwrecks were recorded on that south-eastern coast, resulting in many European survivors settling among the native inhabitants. About one hundred years before the *Grosvenor*, the survivors of the *Stavenisse* (1686) found at least one survivor of an earlier accident. Of these survivors of the *Stavenisse*, noted Soga, “five persons preferred to stay” (1930: 66) among the natives.

In 1713, fifty-seven survivors of the *Bennebrock* wreck landed on the same coast. A year later, another European ship found seven of them still living there. Of these, “three remained with the natives” (Soga, 1930: 66).

Soga also noted that three Europeans were found living in among *amaMpondo* by the Hermanus Hubner expeditions in 1738, with wives and children. This is the “mixed group” identified by Van Reenen's party in 1790.

The Van Reenen search party had also met an Englishman on the way, some time before they reached the mixed settlement on the banks of “Sinwoewoe: Umzimvubu River”. He too had been living among the mixed group. It turned out that this Englishman had been a refugee from the Cape, knew the search party leader's father and was himself well known at the Cape (Carter & Van

Reenen, 1927: 162). One thing was certain, he was not going to leave and return to the Cape with them, he had made amaMbo his own people.

#### 4.5.2 Commissioner-General's confession

In 1793, just after the Company lost control of “the Cape”, the climate of foreign relations between the aboriginals and the colonists had degenerated to such an extent that the new rulers had to protect themselves by perpetuating the suffering of the Khoi and amaXhosa. The Commissioner-General, who was about to take leave of the Cape at the appointment of Sluysken, reasoned as follows in justification of their behaviour:

*the aborigines of this country, noted for their gentle and docile dispositions, have for the most part become the enemies of this settlement. ... The preservation of the general safety forced us, shortly after our arrival here, to issue orders, the execution of which have proved deadly to many of them; ... this was the only way we could protect ourselves. ... But when we seek with an impartial mind for the causes of all these calamities, we will certainly have to inquire, in the first place, into the behaviour of the colonists.*

*Who would not shudder with horror were he to pause for a moment and glance at the pitiful picture of innocent people mercilessly despoiled of their corn and cattle, nay, more, of their wives and children, torn from them by powerful and rapacious neighbours? Whose heart would not be filled with dread and loathing at seeing, not only the common rights of citizens, but even the laws of nature so openly disregarded that some, in spite of their consciences, actually dare to express a doubt as to whether it would be a crime to murder a Kaffir or a Hottentot? At most they regard it as a matter of small moment. (Jeffreys & Gie, 1920: 256–257)*

In De Mist's analysis, the border (or frontier) was “seem to have taken place more as means of retaliation” on the part of the “Kaffirs”, than “of attack”. He thus recommended that the “inhabitants of that remote district” be “gradually civilised” as “all reports” pertaining to “trading relations with the Kaffirs” agreed that “they are by nature a docile and peace-loving people”. If only the colonists could be civilized, therefore and be taught to cultivate the fertile soil they lived on, “in preference to stock-farming, the motives for cattle stealing and petty thieving, which the settlers of Graaff-Reinet have lately become accustomed to perpetuate against their Kaffir neighbours, would cease to exist” (Jeffreys & Gie, 1920: 246).

De Mist summed up the situation in the following “axiom”:

*He who brings about a cause of dissention should be blamed as the originator of the quarrel, rather than he who is driven into an act of violence because his passions have been excited.* (Jeffreys & Gie, 1920: 256)

To alleviate this situation De Mist proposed that the frontier settlement of Graaff-Reinet should be discouraged from subsisting “by means of stock-farming” (Jeffreys & Gie, 1920: 256). This would help prevent the “introduction of Kaffir cattle over the Fish River or other boundaries by every means possible”. De Mist perceived the balance of trade between the colonists and amaXhosa, and understood the long-term consequences of the unsustainable relationship: “the ease with which these simple folk can be wheeled into exchanging a cow or a heifer for a knife or a pair of shears is bound to estrange them from us in course of time, and will give them but a poor opinion of Christian good faith; and by thus obtaining cattle for next to nothing, the colonists there will be encouraged in their indolent and careless habits and accustom themselves more and more to a nomadic undisciplined mode of life” (Jeffreys & Gie, 1920: 246).

### **4.5.3 The British**

The British took over government of the Cape in 1795 at a time when Mr Sluiskens was in charge. They occupied the country for the next eight years, after which Holland, known then as the Batavian Republic of United Netherlands, returned to govern the country under the Amiens Treaty of 1802. These were to be troubled times.

The British rule started as a hostile take-over. Whereas the Dutch East India Company brewed its own enemies from within, Britain found ready-made enemies.

For Britain, this was a strategic takeover of government. The prize was not only a strategic point of security in the Cape but the wealth that the Dutch were amassing in the Indies. The Cape simply lay conveniently on an extensive route through which that wealth would be channelled to Britain. This position was so important to Britain that they regained control in 1806 and hung on to it for over a century and a half thereafter.

#### 4.5.4 Motives behind English expansion

From the onset, English expansion was not as rapid as that of Spain and Portugal, whose successes they envied. The English ventures to America and India in 1492 and 1498 respectively began this expansion. The expansion initially took place not on the basis of national adventure but as individual efforts, as evidenced in the adventures of the Cabots, who first became aware of Newfoundland around 1497. The banks of Newfoundland became the target of over-exploitation by fishermen from the west of England.

Unlike Spain and Portugal, the English obtained no permission – bulls – from any Roman Catholic Pope to set out on their sea expeditions. Indeed the British ignored these. The union between England and the Roman Catholic was broken by Henry VIII, paving the way for the formation of the Church of England. Through the Act of Supremacy (1534), the king of England was acknowledged as the “only supreme head on earth of the Church of England”. Monasteries were suppressed.

Henry VIII was “one of the true founders of English expansion” according to the English historian, William H. Woodward (1899: 14); under him, the adventurer and trader William Hawkins, whom we have already referred to in the previous chapters, went on slave expeditions. Hawkins landed in conflict with Portuguese slave traders when he hunted for slaves in the Guinea Coast that had already been allocated by the Pope to Portugal.

The guiding motives of English expansion were “various” (Woodward, 1899: 10):

- first, trade, to gain something of the wealth which was pouring in upon Spain and Portugal from west and east;
- then, religion, to found a Church in a new land away from the temptations and persecutions of the evil world;
- thirdly, settlement; the creation of a new piece of England across the seas, a true colony, a migration to a fresh permanent home;
- another was defence, “to protect trade, religion and settlement, the old home and the new, from the enemies of both”.

#### 4.5.5 The Britain that came to South Africa

France in this period of coming to the Cape was in the eyes of Britain deeply catholic. Mary I had led England back to Catholicism after Henry VIII. Elizabeth I restored England's religious independence. But it was to be under James II that another attempt was to be made to move the Church of England back towards the Roman Catholic Church. This was resisted. In 1688 seven church bishops withstood the king's attempts. They were imprisoned but later acquitted by a trial and James II was overthrown in the "Glorious Revolution" of the same year.

The following year, the Bill of Rights declared that a king in England must be Protestant. This was enacted intolerance against Catholicism and religious diversity in general. In the Act of Settlement of 1701, this religious intolerance was further entrenched as it required that the king or queen be a member of the Church of England. English history has reference to a phenomenon known as the Penal Laws. This was a group of laws characterised by intolerance of diversity.

These laws fundamentally sought to uphold the Church of England and to oppose any Protestant nonconformity or Catholicism. Dissenters were punished under a variety of these penal laws (*Penal Laws*, undated). They were:

- excluded from parliament whether in Britain or in Ireland;
- excluded from voting; and
- put under property restrictions; any member of the Church of Ireland, for example, could seize property from any Catholic without the need for compensation.

In Ireland, the Irish were deprived of:

- intermarriage;
- going to France, a Catholic country, for education; and
- giving inheritance to a son who was Catholic.

These laws – many of which lasted well into the nineteenth century – alienated nonconformists and Catholics. They made them poor, ignorant and helpless. Clearly, intolerance had become a feature of English culture and political life. For example, under the Clarendon Code, the umbrella of statutes passed after Charles II to strengthen the Church of England, the Corporation Act (1661) required all municipal officers to take communion under the rites of the Church of England. In 1701 the Anglican Missionary Society was founded, also called the Society for the Propagation of the

Gospel. Other societies of this kind followed. It was unfortunate that this vehicle for the dissemination of the Christian gospel overseas was born in an era of intolerance.

#### **4.5.6 A culturally divided England**

It has to be emphasised here that as far back as the period of Charles I England was burdened by religious cultural division even within the Protestant fold. King Charles I was in direct opposition to a section of his subjects called the “parliamentarians” in a struggle known as the “Puritan Revolution”. The dispute centred on the issue of the king claiming rule by “divine right” and a section of parliament that claimed sovereignty; the latter claimed to have the right and privilege of independence from the crown. The Scots, who were Presbyterian, were brought into the controversy by being promised that England would be brought to Presbyterianism and stood against the Puritan faction in parliament. The English Civil War broke out in 1642, and lasted until 1648.

The Church of England was further plagued by other schisms as it broke into several branches including Methodism and Congregationalism. In 1582, in revolt against the established church, Robert Browne published an exposition of the principles of Congregationalism. Underlying this principle is that each local congregation has only one head, Jesus. From the early seventeenth century, when they emerged, such churches were called “Independents”. They faced government opposition for some time in England. In 1620 the Pilgrims carried the Congregationalist tradition to North America from a congregation led by John Robinson in Holland, where it had gone into exile.

Despite these schisms, England had detested anything that had to do with the Roman Catholic Church since the period of Elizabeth I and England’s excommunication by a papal bull in 1570. Later, the struggle that took place between France and England manifested itself in the wars to control America and India. For over twenty-four years England fought Spain for the control of America. France entered this conflict against England in what became the “Seven Years’ War”.

The British came to rule the Cape at a time when they had lost both America and Canada. These colonies had been treated by Britain as “mere customers for goods and not as partners in the Commonwealth”, “their sentiments and interests alike ignored by Parliament, Ministers and King” (Woodward, 1899: 228). But it still had Australia and New Zealand among its possessions.

#### **4.5.7 Britain in Australia and New Zealand**

In 1788 the colonization of Australia by England began. The site for the first settlement was called Sydney after the British Secretary of State, Lord Sydney. Australia was merely a convict station for Britain. After their prison terms these convicts became “free settlers”. The aborigines and the free settlers fell under the British military administration. New Zealand was to be annexed in 1839. The Treaty of Waitangi was entered into with the aborigines of New Zealand with the understanding that the natives would retain sovereignty, be protected and never lose their land; and that if they needed to sell any piece of land the Governor “alone could buy land of the Maoris” “as representing the Queen” (Woodward, 1899: 278).

#### **4.5.8 The Capture of the Cape: 1795 to 1803**

The British took over the Cape with military force. In 1795 France had converted Holland into the Batavian Republic, so the British had to ensure the security of the Cape against France. Cape Town and the whole Cape area under it was governed for eight years as a military dependency, to prevent seeing what was “a feather in the hands of Holland” becoming “a sword in the hands of France” (Boucher & Penn, 1992: 22).

The Dutch governor Sluysken, with a Council of Policy, was in charge at the Cape when a fleet of nine English warships landed at False Bay in 1795. Their arrival was unexpected. The Cape colonists were aware of the controversy with France but were not sure whether to give allegiance to the newcomers they had not been consulted about. The British arrived at a time when the freeburghers were riddled with dissatisfaction with company policy at the Cape. In the Zwellendam and Graaff-Reinet districts revolts had broken out because of dissatisfaction with frontier policies.

“Alarm shots” were given throughout the districts when the military ships arrived, placing them under military alert against what was seen as a hostile presence by the British. Admiral Elphinstone presented a letter to the colonists as proof of having been mandated by his British Majesty to invite the colonists to “surrender themselves under the protection of Great Britain until a general settlement of the troubled state of Europe had been brought about” (Boucher & Penn, 1992: 27).

Dutch colonists responded with bitter hostility. They refused to pay allegiance. They decided to cut off communication with the British. They spiked the guns to render them unusable by the invaders.

“They destroyed or rendered unusable all the provisions at False Bay, including more than three hundred muids of flour, wine, brandy” (Boucher & Penn, 1992: 33).

It took from the middle of 1795 until October for some signs of “capitulation” to the English rule to be seen in the colony. But it was amid internal unrest and external threat.

It took two years for a government to be formed.

#### **4.5.9 How the British perceived the Dutch colonists**

In a letter dated 9 October 1795, written to Dundas in the War Office in London, some impressions were given of the colonists that the English found at the Cape. John Blankett wrote: “The people of this colony are extremely ignorant, proud and prejudiced, ... as far as relates to government and politics, these people are still in their infancy, ... a multitude whose customs are gross, whose ideas are confined and whose manners are coarse in the extreme” (in Boucher & Penn, 1992: 70).

Under these conditions the Dutch colonists kept the “Hottentots” in “ignorance and dependence”, noted Charles Grant in a letter to Dundas in 1796 (Boucher & Penn, 1992: 85). “It is necessary” he recommended, “that their violences towards the natives should be restrained.”

There is much to be learnt from the general descriptions of John Barrows, secretary to Governor Macartney. Barrows was instructed to travel into the interior of Southern Africa and chart it. Macartney is reported to have “attempted to deal with the problem that seemed to be at the root of unrest, namely the disputed frontier between the colonists and the Xhosa” (Boucher & Penn, 1992: 96). He met Ngqika, a Xhosa chief, and came back with favourable impressions that differed radically from those he held regarding the “Boors”.

He commented as follows regarding the “degeneration of the Dutch colonists in the interior”:

*[They are] unwilling to work, and unable to think, with a mind disengaged from every sort of care and reflection, indulging to excess in the gratification of every sensual appetite”.*  
(Boucher & Penn, 1992: 96)

This description is quite similar to that given by Walker:

*There is ample testimony that the up-country farmer of the late eighteenth century was too often a lazy man, leading a very animal type of existence, content if he had enough coffee, brandy, meat and ammunition. (in Martin, undated: 69)*

These perceptions can be well understood when one reads about the cruelty Barrows saw being inflicted on beasts of burden by the Dutch colonists, who often assisted him in his travels with transportation. Here follows one of several examples of brutality to animals.

In around September 1798 Barrows had to cross some difficult terrain near the Kowie River (near Port Alfred).

*The difficulty of the descent had considerably exhausted the oxen; ... In vain the animals strove [to ascend]; the drivers shouted and stamped, and flogged with their enormous whips, and the Dutchmen swore. ... After an hour's trial, bruising and fatiguing the oxen to no purpose, ... while the animals were struggling and tearing on their knees, and exerting their flesh to the utmost to draw up the wagons, the owner of one of the teams, enraged at their want of success, drew out of its case a large knife with a sharp point, and fixing on one of the oxen for the object on which he might give vent to his fury, cut him with several gashes across the ribs, in the flank, ... The ribs were largely laid bare, and the blood ran down in streams; yet in this condition the poor beast was obliged to draw in the wagon for the space of three hours after having received such brutal treatment. (Barrows, 1801: 182)*

In another instance “perhaps the more cruel”, Barrows witnessed this brutality, “as it was exercised on parts of the body susceptible to pain, the nose and the tongue”. In another, he “heard a fellow boast ... to have kindled a fire under the belly of an ox, because it could not draw the wagon” (Barrows, 1801: 183).

In March 1799 Barrows accompanied a military expedition that took him into the territory then occupied by amaXhosa. He returned with first-hand information – that “made him indispensable” – regarding the complex frontier situation characterised by a conflict involving the Dutch colonists and amaXhosa. “Beyond the Fish River is the extensive, populous and in a great degree civilised nation of the Kaffers” (Boucher & Penn, 1992: 100).

Barrows went on to give a somewhat studied account of the civility he found among amaXhosa, dispelling the popular perception held about them among the whites.

*It is a common idea, industriously kept up in the colony, that the Kaffers are a savage, treacherous, and cruel people; a character as false as it is unmerited. Their moderation towards the colonists, and all white people, has shown itself on many occasions. ... They [the colonists] know very well that in the height of a war into which this people was iniquitously driven, the lives of all their women and children that fell into the hands of the Kaffers were spared by them, whilst their own fell promiscuously by the hands of the colonists. (Barrows, 1801: 196)*

Macartney regarded these accounts, and recommended them to the War Office in London as “perfectly accurate and to be depended upon” (Boucher & Penn, 1992: 203).

It is unfortunate that Macartney did not show much resolve to deal with the problem between the Dutch colonists and the natives. In November 1798 he left the Cape. Before Yonge, Francis Dundas held the reins.

Francis Dundas took steps to deal with the amaXhosa–colonists quandary. The colonists were abandoning the Zuurveld territory, occupied by the Dutch since the 1770s, as they were being driven out by amaXhosa. They were angry that the government of the English was not intervening and revolted. But they were crushed by Brigadier-General Vanderleur, and their ringleaders arrested in April 1799.

Vandeleur, however, did not succeed in driving the amaXhosa out of the Zuurveld. Matters were made worse by the fact that the Khoi members of his regiment defected to the amaXhosa. This collaboration proved formidable. In May 1799 Dundas intervened by taking 800 reinforcements to the frontier, but this did not make much difference. A pact was signed in October according to which amaXhosa agreed to stay out of the area, but with the signing of the Peace of Amiens by the Dutch in 1802, leading to the British pulling out of the Cape, the natives returned to the Zuurveld.

During the brief reign of the Batavians from 1803 Ludwig Alberti, who made extensive observations of amaXhosa and their lifestyle, as reported in the previous chapter, was made a magistrate of the frontier. Though, according to Ferree (undated), Alberti tried “to keep the peace by playing the Xhosa tribes against one another”, there is no doubt that the strained relations between the colonists and amaXhosa perturbed him. He did his best to make an honest reading of the situation.

#### **4.5.10 Alberti's account of the strained relations between amaXhosa and the colonists**

Not long after the Third Frontier War of 1799, Alberti summed up the cause of the strained relationship as follows:

*Uncivilized populations, adjoining the neighbourhood of Europeans would undoubtedly have conducted themselves with tolerance for the greater part, and would not have become a danger to them, if one had treated them with human kindness and forthright goodwill, and had their natural rights not been prejudiced by self-interest and greed. ... But the Kaffirs were not treated in that way by their Christian neighbours. Deceit in cattle-dealing, as well as the depravity of their simple morality brought about by these neighbours and insurrection of the Hottentots against the even grosser ill-treatment meted out to them and the association it led to between them and the Kaffirs, and finally the incitement instigated by the colonists themselves, resulted in a war which the colony still experiences the painful consequences of.* (in Fehr, 1968: 70)

#### **4.5.11 The rejection of amaXhosa's civility: Chief Ngqika meets Governor Janssens**

During this Batavian rule of the Cape Colony, the Governor General Janssen made an attempt to remove the Ndlambe group of amaXhosa from the western side of the Fish River. In 1803 he travelled to the frontier to initiate this by negotiating with another leader, Chief Ngqika. During this period the recognised king among amaXhosa was Hintsá (Moodie, 1860: 39–40).

Near the Kat River, Janssen met the Chief, who was accompanied by his “mother and two wives”. In this meeting Ngqika made it very clear that he wanted to co-exist peacefully with the Europeans. This is what his own father before him had done and he wanted to perpetuate this. They ate at table in the European manner, and indeed his mother was by then the wife of another European, Coenrad Buys. He also brought with him several headmen and two hundred of his followers. The Chief indicated he was willing to collaborate with Janssen to the extent of disciplining those among his people who were “unfaithful to him and want to destroy him because he would not wage war against Christians” (Barrows, 1801: 192).

In recent times the human trait of civility has received considerable thought from a variety of scholars and practitioners in politics, sociology and organizational development. Frances Hesselbein (2002), a CEO in a Peter Drucker organization, considers this trait as having to do with respect for others; through it one acknowledges the “humanity of the other person”.

Forni (2002), to whom it has been the “most exciting discovery of the last several years”, has come to regard civility as “fundamental to making a good, successful, and serene life”. Edward Shils and Stephen Carter respectively (in Eberly & Steeter, 2002: viii) view civility as “an attitude and a pattern of conduct rooted in respect for the dignity and the desire for the dignity of other persons” and as “the sum of the many sacrifices we are called to make for the sake of living together”.

It is this civility, this preparedness on the part of the amaXhosa to live with the colonists, that was rejected by the Europeans whose aim was to maintain the wall of separation between themselves, as “Christians” and these “nauseating” “Kafirs”, as made clear in Dirk Gysbert Van Reenen’s Diary (Bloemmaert et al, 1937: 163–197).

#### **4.5.12 Maintaining an “I-It” relationship with Africans**

Martin Buber (1970) devoted scholarly attention to the way human beings relate to one another and their world. According to him, we often value both objects and people according to their usefulness to ourselves, motivated by a desire to get something from them. We do not make ourselves available to others in order to enhance their lives, we do not seek to understand them as much as desire to be understood by them, we do not really connect with them in our conversations. What they say or desire is not important to us. All we want is that they should respond in some pre-conceived way to want we want. We observe them from a distance while keeping to ourselves, and hold them outside the chance of a relationship. This we do to protect ourselves and our unacknowledged vulnerabilities. Buber called such encounters “I-It interactions”.

This is how Buber (1970: 31) described this “I-It” relationship:

*[Such a person] perceives what exists round about him – simply things, and beings as things; and what happens round about him – simply events, and actions as events; things consisting of qualities, events of moments; ... he perceives an ordered and detached world.*

There is on the other hand the possibility of encountering others without preconditions. This is what he calls a dialogic encounter. In this a relationship is built wherein each person endeavours to enhance the other. There was clearly no such intention when Governor Janssens met with Chief Ngqika. He met him with only one thing in mind and he expected to get a particular response from the king. If he did not, he would threaten and intimidate to get what he wanted.

In the “I-It” attitude with which colonists approached amaXhosa and all other African inhabitants, they perceived them as having strange, isolated qualities and as being beyond the bounds of a possible unity with themselves; they could never be part of the same world; reciprocity and mutuality of the “I-Thou” relationship was shut out by an “I-It” attitude of detachment.

In the “I-Thou” encounter, Buber reasoned, “between you and it there is mutual giving: you say Thou to it and give yourself to it, it says Thou to you and gives itself to you ... teaches you to meet others, and to hold your ground when you meet them. Through the graciousness of its comings and the solemn sadness of its goings it leads you away to the Thou in which the parallel lines of relations meet” (1970: 31–33).

In their conversation, Janssens raised many points with the king, all of which amounted to one thing only, “no Christians in Kafirland” and “no Kafirs in Christianland”, and that if “Gaika cannot decide to conclude peace on reasonable terms with the other Kafirs the Governor will use the power at his disposal ... to clear the colony of them”. This is the only point (number eleven), in the entire conversation that Chief Ngqika chose to leave “unanswered” (Barrows, 1801: 193).

The request was in itself a strange one that he would not know how to deal with. It went against the grain of amaXhosa political culture. In his meeting with Ngqika around 1797, John Barrows was given a lesson in the political economy of this nation. Freedom of choice was a highly respected notion among them.

Ngqika made it clear to Barrows that

*none of the Kaffers who had passed the boundary established between the two nations were to be considered his subjects. He said they were chiefs as well as himself, and entirely independent of him; ... that all those Kaffer chiefs, who had at any time been desirous to enter under the protection of his family, had been kindly received; and those who chose to*

*remain independent had been permitted to do so, without being considered in the light of enemies.* (Barrows, 1801: 193)

The silence “did not mean consent” to the strange request. He was being asked to reverse an age-old culture. His offer of integration and his open, welcoming arms were slapped in rejection by the “Christians”.

Dr Lichtenstein, who was part of this delegation that met with the king in 1803, tells of a separate meeting they held with some of the chiefs who were on the western side of the Fish River. These were Chief Nyaluza, Chief Ndlambe, Chief Chungwa, Chief Thole and Chief Ammassi. They had come in fear. They heard of the agreement that Ngqika their enemy had reached with the Governor, to expel them out of the Zuurveld, and had come to ascertain this. They came to the Governor to seek his protection from Ngqika with whom they were “in open war”. Of importance in this meeting is the sixth point raised by General Janssens, that “No Caffer shall come into the colony without the permission of his Chief, nor any colonist without permission of the Governor, ... pass over the other side of the Fish River” (Lichtenstein, 1928: 386).

The Chiefs did not hide their objection to this restriction on their freedom of communication and interaction. They left that meeting with no agreement on this. They would not agree to crossing the Fish River to live with Ngqika and would not accept restrictions of their interaction with colonists.

According to Buber, when a person comes in an “I-Thou” attitude as Chief Ngqika did to the meeting with Janssen, “It comes, and comes to bring you out; if it does not reach you, meet you, then it vanishes” (1970: 33).

Indeed Ngqika “vanished”; and conflict escalated between colonists and amaXhosa. Not even the chief’s offer to retain his white stepfather among amaXhosa was embraced by the “Christian” governor.

#### **4.5.13 Coenrad Buys, the AmaXhosa chief’s Dutch stepfather**

During the brief British rule a Dutch colonist had left the Cape to live on the east of the Fish under the people of Chief Ngqika. At this time Ngqika himself was a minor whose father was deceased.

His mother was an attractive young widow. Coenrad Buys found them in this state when he fled from the British Cape in 1795.

Remarkable about this story is not the fact that Buys married young Ngqika's mother, as told by Henry Lichtenstein (1928). John Barrows had seen Ngqika's mother during his travels and witnessed to her beauty by describing her as "a well-looking woman" (1801: 193). The story of Buys testifies to the forgiving and harmony-valuing nature of amaXhosa. Here was a member of a people, the Dutch colonists, with whom they had more than once been involved in bitter disputes for land. He was almost seven feet tall, well known among his own people, and "one of the warmest patriots", as Lichtenstein noted, making him probably a vehement opponent of amaXhosa's claim over the Zuurveld. Indeed, as related in the *Dictionary of South African Biography* (De Kock & Kruger, 1971: 163), in 1790 he had three farms registered in his name near the Bushman River. He was one of the provocateurs of the Second Frontier War. "Maynier himself accused him of being a turbulent spirit stirring up strife on the frontier by his high-handed treatment of non-whites" (De Kock & Kruger, 1971: 163). But his need for refuge was an eloquent plea for their compassion, and amaXhosa showered him with the grace of forgiveness.

It was he who facilitated a meeting between Ngqika and General Janssens in 1803. He acted as an interpreter. He, and the several other white refugees that were living among amaXhosa (Coenraad Bezuidenhout and his son, Frederik Bezuidenhout, Klaas Loggenberg, Willem Loggenberg, Hendrik Engelsman, Corns Faber and Jan Mater, Buys' children's schoolmaster), were offered pardon for their iniquities against the colony by Janssens, and he was offered a farm on his return in the lower Langkloof. There he returned with his Thembu wife, Ngqika's mother, with whom he had several children, and with whom he had an official marriage in 1812. He took with him a huge extended household. Clearly the civility of amaXhosa had transformed this giant of a white man.

In 1809 he left the Cape Colony with his mixed household. He moved toward the Limpopo River with his entire extended family, away from a Cape that was rejecting integration on religio-cultural grounds and becoming too dangerous for them, to live in the north as a "guest" under several black rulers: Moroka, Moletsane and Sekwati.

It was while on this trek that his beloved wife whom he called Elizabeth died. Grief-stricken, he is reported to have addressed his household that night, there in the Soutspanberg, and then left, never to be seen again (De Kock & Kruger, 1971).

It would be well for the descendants of the Buysvolk, who settled about thirty miles west of the present Louis Trichardt, to be reminded of their noble relations to amaXhosa.

De Buys, and VanderKemp, the first European missionary to work among amaXhosa, met and became friends among the people of Ngqika in 1799. They were offered land by Ngqika and his people beyond the Keiskamma River (De Kock & Kruger, 1971).

This act and the ample other evidence of Europeans being allowed to settle among amaXhosa and being given land supports Barrows' thesis that land was hardly sufficient reason for amaXhosa to go to war. As Barrows learnt, "war is not made by them for extension of territory". The shedding of blood was justified by some iniquity having been inflicted on their society or a member thereof (Barrows, 1801: 202). We shall see this more vividly as we later trace events that led to what came to be known as the First Frontier War.

#### **4.5.14 The food and gentleness of amaXhosa**

An interesting observation made by John Barrows regarding the lifestyle led by amaXhosa has come to warrant some attention in modern biology. This is the relationship between lifestyle, including diet, and character.

Barrows (1801: 200) observed and concluded:

*There is perhaps no nation on earth, taken collectively, that can produce so fine a race of men as the Kaffers: they are tall and stout, muscular, well made, elegant figures. ... Their diet is simple; their exercise of salutary nature; ... the air they breathe is pure; ... they are free from those licentious appetites which proceed frequently from a depraved imagination than a real natural want; their frame is neither shaken nor enervated by the use of intoxicating liquors, which they are not acquainted with; they eat when hungry; ... The countenance of a Kaffer is always cheerful; and the whole of his demeanor bespeaks peace and peace of mind.*

Barrows (1801: 202) made the observation that umXhosa "rarely kills one [head of cattle] for his own consumption, except on some particular occasion. When a stranger of distinction visits a Kaffer chief, he selects from his herd the fattest ox, and divides it with his visitors". "From the

nature of his food”, which in his observation was mainly milk, he concluded, “his [umXhosa] manners are mild and gentle”. Also of note is that even given this mildness of disposition and gentleness, fear is a passion of the “mind which can hardly be said to exist in that of a Kaffir”.

#### **4.5.15 Signs of declining temperance**

One of the most unfortunate factors in the degradation of the Khoi people was the licentious use of and indulgence in intoxicants, especially alcohol. Van Riebeeck’s Diary is strewn with instances of Khoi men and women, long before their total impoverishment, frequenting the castle itself at the Cape and farms, to beg for brandy from the colonists.

By time Dr Lichtenstein travelled with Janssens in the Eastern Frontier (1803–1804), signs of this danger were already starting to emerge among amaXhosa. In the Long Kloof vicinity:

*five men and three women, belonging to herds of the Caffer Prince Conga (Chungwa), came on a party of pleasure. ... They often come in large bodies, and will stay several days or even weeks. ... The Caffers who were now upon a visit, ... Gonnaquas (amaGqunukhwebe), ... begged some brandy of us. A glass was given to each of them.* (Lichtenstein, 1928: 282)

That same day the colonists were near the Riet-River in the house of a farmer named Muller, where, again, Dr Lichtenstein relates:

*we found a numerous group of Caffre visitors. This group had, to the great annoyance of the neighbourhood, been living for some weeks past a few hours distance from hence, and daily troubling some or other of the neighbours with requests for brandy and tobacco.* (1928: 268–284)

Not even amaXhosa Chiefs were able to escape the creeping intemperance. Chief Chungwa with whom Dr Lichtenstein and his team met to discuss issues of peace, “begged of them, as a token of friendship, a little flask of brandy” (Lichtenstein, 1928: 284).

They were also visited:

*by Chief Thole accompanied by another Chief named Tjatsjo (Tshatshu) and about twenty Caffres. ... They were conducted into a tent, and a cow was killed to do them honour, ... and they were besides, to their infinite delight, treated with plenty of tobacco and brandy.* (Lichtenstein, 1812: 381)

By 1809, amaXhosa had developed a strong liking for another of the European's extremely habit-forming drinks, injurious to the human body. As evidenced in Colonel Collins' Report, amaXhosa's habits of temperance were becoming further eroded, as they "appeared to have a great relish for [our] coffee", boiling it in "their iron pots" (Moodie, 1860: 50).

John Chalmers, who observed and wrote about the lifestyle of amaXhosa in Tiyo Soga's biography (1878), also included some remarks regarding the devastation that strong drink was making among the leaders of the people. And Donovan Williams (1978: 92) quotes Chalmers, who believed that amaXhosa had been badly influenced by European "outlaws and the refuse of the mother country" who had found "an easy access to every colony", as follows:

*The vilest excrescences, the ignorance and wickedness of Britain "were imported into the colonies and the Kaffirs were fast imbibing these vices with greed, especially drunkenness. Above all, there was not a Kaffir chief of any note who was not a slave to drink – British brandy is rapidly depriving them of their mobility and sapping their strength ... this will most effectively exterminate them if the weapons of British warfare have failed' "*

The degeneracy that crept in among amaXhosa owing to the use of injurious and habit-forming foods and drinks continues to bedevil them to this day. In an interview to get acquainted with the kingdom's development plans, management of the King Sandile Development Trust, established to drive poverty alleviation projects throughout the 42 tribal authorities that constitute the Rarabe Kingdom, raised concerns about the scourge of strong drink among the chiefs. So rife is alcoholism among amaXhosa chiefs in the kingdom, that a special project to address this was being considered. Their vision (2005) makes this point:

*I have a dream where each and every household in the Rharhabe Kingdom will have food on its table; where the people of the Rharhabe Kingdom will have their own economy run by the Rharhabe people irrespective of race, colour or creed; where our own children would see it worthwhile to plough back into the Rharhabe Kingdom what they have learned; and where the dignity of our Traditional Leaders is restored. (King Sandile Development Trust, 2005 Slide/Powerpoint Presentation)*

#### **4.5.16 Britain perpetuates the wall of separation**

In 1805 the Napoleonic Wars erupted again. Britain, desiring to protect her interests in the East, retook the Cape. The main plan was to keep this strategic station for goods returning from the East. “A fleet of sixty-three British ships carrying 7 000 troops under Major-General David Baird” anchored near Robben Island on 4 January 1806. The British arrived to a hostile reception by a mixed resistance army of Dutch colonists, Waldeckers (“German mercenaries”), Malay and Hottentots, and a French crew whose ship had been wrecked at the Cape. The battle that commenced on 22 January did not last long. Of Janssen’s troops, 337 were “killed, wounded or went missing” (Voigt, 1899: 100). The Dutch General retreated to the Hottentots Holland camp. From there he advised the hostile burghers who were not willing to give up against the British “to return to their farms”.

On 6 March, 1806, Dutch rule in South Africa finally came at an end. Janssens sailed away with 94 officers, 31 civil servants, 573 men and 106 women and children in seven ships. “They did not wish to remain under the British rule”. To those who “remained in the Colony, that day was one of sorrow and sadness” (Voigt, 1899: 102).

At this time Ndlambe was on the western side of the Fish River. The Boers had left the Zuurveld with murmurs, abandoning the farms they called home, because they were being bothered by some subordinates of Ndlambe. Let us take a look at the nature of this murmuring by settlers against the presence of amaXhosa in a territory they believed belonged to them.

#### **4.5.17 Colonists’ complaints and amaXhosa’s counter-complaints**

From the 1730s up to the early 1770s colonists were forbidden by the Dutch East India Company to trade with amaXhosa. But many contravened what was clearly a self-centred policy. Colonists like Willem Prinsloo in 1773 and Hermanus Lucas Crouse and Arnoldus Herring in 1774 “engaged in smuggling and cattle barter with the Kaffirs” “for beads, iron and copper” (Moodie, 1960: 19–22). In 1778 several colonists, among whom were the sons of Willem Prinsloo, accompanied by “Hottentots”, rode into the interior to “shoot elephants” and on the western side of the Great Fish River, “in Kaffirland”, “each of those burghers bartered cattle for himself from that people, giving for each head of cattle four bunches of beads and two copper plates, and a string of beads for each calf” (Moodie, 1960:73).

In 1778 Governor Van Plettenberg went on a mission to the Zuurveld and negotiated to remove amaXhosa out of that area. By 1779, “the Kaffirs had not as yet moved”; they were still “where the Governor had left them, [talking] of again sowing corn”. The colonists, who at this point had pushed further into the interior, were urging the government and the “Landrost of Stellenbosch” “to forbid this”. At that time the burgers near the Bushman River were making “successive complaints ... regarding disturbances” and “the conduct and aggressions of the neighbouring Kaffirs, although no dependence could be placed upon their authenticity, seeing that almost all the statements were at variance with each other” (Moodie, 1860: 80).

As the years rolled by the complaints started to include episodes of murder. AmaXhosa were reported to be murdering “Hottentots” who were in the employ of colonists. They were also plundering and stealing the cattle from white settlers. Among the reasons given by amaXhosa for carrying off the cattle of the settlers was this: “You Christians harbour the Gonnas Hottentots expressly to steal our cattle; why do you not drive that people back again to us?” (Moodie, 1860: 92).

In 1779 the First Frontier War broke out “beyond De Bruyn’s Hoogte” between the “Kaffirs and the inhabitants residing there”. In the “reciprocal attack, some of the inhabitants having been wounded ... by the Kaffirs, ... had been put to flight, leaving behind them 8 or 9 killed” (Moodie, 1860: 93).

To the magistrate at Stellenbosch this result did not come as a surprise:

*From the first letter the Council will perceive that these hostilities are chiefly caused by the violence and annoyances committed against the Kaffirs by inhabitants, with respect to which they had complained to the Field Sergeant, that Willem Prinsloo had taken possession of some of their cattle and also of Marthinus Prinsloo, by whom or by some of his companions during a journey into Kaffirland, one of the subjects of Captain Gaggabie (King Rharabe) had been killed. (Moodie, 1860: 63)*

We have already noted Barrows’ observations regarding amaXhosa’s perspective to war: “The shedding of blood was justified by some iniquity having been inflicted on society or a member thereof”. This letter from the magistrate to Governor Van Plettenberg testifies to this.

Amid all of these “disturbances” the magistrate seems to have known that the reports of amaXhosa behaviour were out of character and that it was most probable that colonists had stirred the hornet’s nest. The Landrost of Stellenbosch, in a letter to Governor Van Plettenberg, reasoned:

*It is by no means improbable that [the burghers’] complaints and accusations are more or less founded in fact, for the natural disposition of the Kaffirs, however revengeful it may on the one hand be, is, on the other, not so cruel as to provoke them to such attempts without just cause. (Moodie, 1860: 63)*

In the certainty that these “disturbances were not caused by amaXhosa”, the magistrate of Stellenbosch boldly gave his learned opinion:

*It is meanwhile certain that most of the family of W. Prinsloo, sen., are mischievous inhabitants of that country, who cause disquiet, and will not fail to do all that it is possible to have the Kafirs removed thence, in order to enlarge the extent of their own farms. Thus the promise made to your Excellency by the Captain Koba, to remove beyond Fish River with his people is already used as a good pretext to justify them (the Prinsloos) in forcibly urging the Kafirs to fulfil that promise. (Moodie, 1860: 63)*

Van Plettenberg’s negotiations, as analysed by the Stellenbosch magistrate, were driven by the desire for “separation from the Kafirs” so as to reduce “the increasing illicit trade” that went on between the “free burghers” and amaXhosa. Of course this illicit trade was causing “much violence and annoyance” to amaXhosa, hence the hostility from them.

Vanderkemp’s biographer A.D. Martin (undated: 65), tracing this situation at the Cape colony, noted that in the many “instances of cruelty practised upon the natives Dutch names rather than English predominate” because the colonists were “chiefly of Dutch extraction. On the other hand, the successive English governments appear to have been less ready to punish those guilty of atrocities than were their Dutch predecessors”.

As already noted, Britain and its East India Company merely occupied the Cape to guard her interests in the East. They were less interested in getting involved in burger–amaXhosa controversies; besides, the Dutch colonists resented their presence at the Cape.

#### **4.5.18 Colonel Collins' scheme for the Zuurveld**

In 1809 Colonel Collins of the British government also undertook a journey to the eastern frontier to inform himself about the situation there. He was convinced like many observers that “the wars that were first waged against the Caffres, were carried on exclusively by the settlers” (in Moodie, 1860: 17).

In his travel Collins had been impressed by the fertility of the contested territory from which amaXhosa were drawing a livelihood.

*The country situated between Bruinjies Hoogte and the Konaba River abounds in excellent fountains. The soil is good; and the timber growing on the mountains that border it on the north is superior to any within the colony.* (in Moodie, 1860: 18)

There was generally failure in securing that land permanently because there were insufficient troops and settlers there to beat back amaXhosa. He therefore schemed:

*Before hostilities are commenced measures should be taken to fill up the country from which the Cafress are to be driven.* (in Moodie; 1860: 18)

Collins estimated that it would take at least 6 000 settlers to occupy this fertile territory, which would be very valuable to the colony. This scheme was to come to fruition with the arrival of the 1820 Settlers to occupy the contested territory in the eastern frontier. In the period leading to that event amaXhosa had never lost their willingness to share the territory with settlers.

#### **4.5.19 “Why are colonists making warlike preparations against me?”**

While on his travels Colonel Collins took some time to meet with Ndlambe. Two messengers from Ndlambe met him first at Agter Bruintjies Hoogte. They had been sent to enquire make about what were perceived as preparations for war by the colonists against Ndlambe. Shortly thereafter Collins met with Ndlambe face to face. Whereas Collins' purpose was to convey the numerous complaints farmers had against “wandering Kafers”, Ndlambe expressed his concern regarding their retreat and was sorry that he had vexed them. So willing was he to have them return that he expressed his preparedness to restrict himself to the age-old tradition of hunting if it would satisfy the settlers and cause them to come back. “Their return would afford me much satisfaction, and I shall use my best endeavours to prevent their sustaining any injury from my people” (in Moodie, 1860: 20).

With this promise Colonel Collins proposed to Major Culer, the magistrate in Uitenhage, that settlers who had abandoned the area be encouraged to return. In 1810, however Culer recommended that co-existence between colonists and amaXhosa in the Zuurveld was impossible. This is how he reasoned:

*Neither peace nor friendship can subsist between the inhabitants [colonists] and the Kaffers while both inhabit the same country, ...the residence of the latter in the colony is prejudicial to the inhabitants. ... The causes of this are interwoven in the character of the Cafress, in that of the Colonist, and in the nature of the country. The Cafress are naturally insatiable beggars and thieves (in Moodie, 1860: 58).*

By 1811 Britain could no longer ignore the frontier situation. A decision was taken to expel amaXhosa from the Zuurveld. This was to be the “Fourth Frontier War”.

Graham, a British lieutenant-colonel, was given orders by the governor John Cradock to remove amaXhosa from the western side of the Fish River. Ndlambe was aware that some of his own people were involved in some mischief against white colonists; he acknowledged this, but emphasized that it was not encouraged by the nation: “We lived in peace”, he reasoned, “some bad people had stolen, perhaps, but the nation was quiet” (in Peires, 1980: 90).

This reasoning was ignored. A directive came out that they were to be forcibly driven out. Their homes and crops in the gardens and fields were destroyed, and vegetables in the gardens were trampled using 600 oxen despite pleas from the chiefs to be allowed to stay until after the harvest. This was a calculated brutality: “we chose the season of corn being on the ground, in order ... that we might the more severely punish them for their crimes by destroying it”, said Graham to Chief Ngqika, imagining that this cruelty against his insubordinate former subjects would impress the chief.

After this war, Graham reported that not a single umXhosa was to be seen west of the Fish River. Everyone seen was “killed or wounded”. The cruelty was unprecedented. Women and children were never killed in amaXhosa wars, and food was spared. It was a revelation about the lengths to which the Europeans were prepared to go in rejecting co-existence with them as a people.

From then onwards amaXhosa nation never reached consensus as to how to deal with this type of enmity. Two distinct reactions to this threat were advocated by two very articulate schools of thought. One was propounded by a rain-doctor called Nxele and the other by a prophet called Ntsikana.

#### **4.5.20 Nxele**

Nxele, the son of Balala of the Ndlambe amaXhosa, seems to have grown up on the western side of the Fish River. When Vanderkemp retired after fruitless efforts to convert amaXhosa, to settle at Qagqiwe near Uitenhage, Nxele became one of his converts (Bokwe, undated: 13).

Nxele, who lived at a time of internal instability among amaXhosa and external threat from colonists, was deeply affected by the Christian teaching of Vanderkemp. He accepted that “Nyengana” (Vanderkemp) was sent by God to convert amaXhosa. He believed that it was God’s will that he himself should be a follower and preacher of Christ, whose brother he believed himself to be.

There is no doubt that Dr Vanderkemp made a deep influence on Nxele. He confessed this to James Read, Vanderkemp’s colleague. He was disturbed by the fact that amaXhosa had not listened to the white preacher. Because of that it was his duty to “go and make his [Christ’s] will known to them” (in Hodgson, 1982: 100).

Dr Vanderkemp, as noted by Janet Hodgson, put emphasis on personal conversion. This is the transformation within a person that is externalized in behaviour and relationship with fellow humans. The doctor’s own conversion in Europe was dramatic. He had been a soldier and a medical practitioner, who left the “vanity of physick” to focus on philosophy (Martin, undated: 36). After the death of his wife and daughter the experience of meeting Christ as a personal influence touched his life. In his own words he said:

*I gave myself with all that I had entirely to Him whose power and love I now felt and I experienced that the only religion that pleaseth the Lord and satisfieth the soul consists of resting in Jesus. (Martin, undated: 60)*

Thus began, as Martin puts it, “a real transformation of his nature from self-centredness to Christ-centredness”. He then came to Africa. Having arrived in the Cape in 1797 he spent two years there and then moved to live and work among amaXhosa.

Doctor Vanderkemp chose this route. He chose to live among Africans, and left the comfort of the church community to share and participate in the daily experiences of Africans. For this he was highly criticised by his fellow whites. He was considered “eccentric”, as Janet Hodgson put it. He “was censured for imitating the ‘savage’ in appearance rather than inducing the ‘savage’ to imitate him, appearing in public, “without hat, stockings or shoes, and probably without a coat” (Hodgson, 1982: 96). All of this revealed the incarnation principle. He was not so much concerned about what white missionaries were after, making white Christians out of Africans. He was not after civilizing Africans. He stressed personal conversion, as in the acceptance of Christ as a model of personal living within any cultural context, and was less concerned about the cultural conversion of Africans.

Vanderkemp’s efforts among amaXhosa during a time of socio-political turbulence have been generally misread as having been unsuccessful because he made not a single convert. Nxele is the antithesis to that belief. He preached Christ as was taught by the doctor. He moved his own people to examine their lives and did this successfully. A change of emphasis came later, as he tried to reconcile the socio-political situation that his people were hurled in by the colonists.

During the height of colonial disturbances Nxele went to live near Ndlambe, who allowed him to set up his “own Great place”, shortly after amaXhosa were expelled from the western side of the Fish River in a ruthless campaign lead by John Graham in 1812. Nxele became concerned with finding a way to overpower the evil that motivated the white colonist to drive his people from their land. Thus, as Peires noted, “he spent much of his time in the new frontier outpost of Grahamstown, carefully observing the military and technical side of the behemoth, but interested in its magical underpinnings” (1980: 101).

Being allowed by Ndlambe, who governed from his own a “Great place”, a “Great place” of his own, attests to an important feature in the political system of amaXhosa. A “Great place” is a place and centre of governance equivalent to a parliament. That Ndlambe would freely allow Nxele to set up such a place is testimony to a aesthetic relational value driven governance that exercised by amaXhosa, what we referred to as distributed governance. Political systems that make room for such participation enjoy, as noted by Swilling (1991) heightened legitimacy.

Nxele continued preaching among his people, exalting Christ, whom he called “Tayi”. His following increased remarkably (Peires, 1980: 104). During the time of increasing socio-political hardships in the hands of colonists he became more and more aware that they were a threat to the very existence of the nation. It became increasingly clear to him that Christianity as practised by the colonists was not the orthodox Christianity he had been taught at Vanderkemp’s feet. Describing the type of Christianity that held sway among the colonists, Martin says:

*The public mind in the Colony, both ecclesiastical and lay, was on the whole sub-christian; ... among the sad pages in South African history – and they are many – one repeatedly finds the term ‘Christian’ used ... for those whose actions were the actions of anti-Christ. ... People whose lives were in no way governed by the teaching of the New Testament at times sincerely regarded themselves as entitled to whatever religious dignity invests the Christian name. ... Christianity has thus often become a corruption and a blasphemy. (Undated: 66)*

In his analysis of the situation, Maclennan (1986) is of the view that Nxele, who was fascinated with Christianity, had also stayed with the Chaplain of the Cape Regiment, Mr Van der Lingen, so it was not only Vanderkemp who was instrumental in his Christian education.

When Nxele left Van der Lingen, he returned “filled with Christian rectitude”, teaching and persuading amaXhosa to abandon anti-communal practices like witchcraft and murder, even advising Chief Ndlambe, his staunch supporter, to renounce polygamy in 1816.

As he came to believe more deeply that the colonists were incorrigible in their cruelty, Nxele started to rally amaXhosa to unite against the colonists and led about 6 000 warriors in an attack of Grahamstown, convinced that some miracle would take place whereby the bullets of the whites would turn to water.

AmaXhosa were humiliated in their defeat. Over a thousand warriors died while the British are said to have lost only a handful of soldiers. Thereafter, Nxele was hunted by Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Willshire. This is when the Christian aesthetic relational values in the warrior were revealed.

Nxele, in a remarkable turn of events, took a stand to protect his people. He surrendered himself in a Christ-like manner. “Calmly”, just as Christ was led to the cross, he delivered himself, self-sacrificially, to Andries Stockenstrom, the Lieutenant-governor who administered the Cape.

The heroic words that he is reported to have spoken are: “People say I have occasioned the war. Let me see whether my delivering myself up to the conquerors will restore peace to my country.” (Barrows, 1801: 86)

Some time later, two of his co-warriors approached Stockenstrom to reason with him. Describing their fearless appearance, as recognized and described by John Barrows earlier, Stockenstrom wrote that they were: "as noble-looking men and as dignified in their demeanour as any I have ever beheld" (Barrows, 1801: 86).

Stockenstrom, who was impressed by their address, said they spoke:

*in so manly a manner, with so graceful an attitude, and with so much feeling and animation, that the bald translation which I am to furnish from my hasty and imperfect notes can afford but a very faint and inadequate idea of his eloquence.*

*“This war, British chiefs is an unjust one, for you are now striving to destroy a people whom you forced to take up arms. Our fathers were men. They loved their cattle. Their wives and children lived upon milk. They fought for their property. They began to hate the colonists, who coveted their all, and aimed at their destruction. We fought for our lives. We attacked your headquarters, and if we had succeeded, it would have been just. You began the war, and we failed, and you are here. We wish for peace. We wish to rest in our huts. We wish to get milk for our children. Our wives wish to till the land, but your troops cover the plains and swarm in the thickets, where they cannot distinguish man from woman, and shoot all.”* (Barrows, 1801: 86)

Nxele, the “symbol of militant resistance” (Hodgson, 1982: iv) was later captured and taken to Robben Island, where many of his countrymen, generations thereafter, would be banished while struggling for independence and liberation from colonial cruelty. He died by drowning in the ocean while trying to escape to freedom from the island.

But the sort of courage displayed by Nxele was not the last to be seen among amaXhosa. As the wars raged on through the decades, it kept manifesting itself. After the war of 1846, while Brownlee was commissioner for the amaNgqika section of amaXhosa, the colonial government raised up a force of 500 “Kaffirs as police for purposes defence, and for the repression of stock theft” (Brownlee, 1896: 270).

#### **4.5.21 The man called Go, an object lesson in true authority and individual agency**

Around 1848, a party of “Kaffirs of Tyala’s tribe” reported to Brownlee that 12 oxen had been stolen “from a frontier farmer named Edwards, residing at Winterberg”. “Kaffir police” (under Commissioner Brownlee), whose work along the Keiskama and Tyume Rivers was to “examine each ford leading from the colony, and if they found that horses or cattle had passed through during the night, to follow them up”, were in place in the area. Tyala’s team told Brownlee that the stolen cattle had been traced through the thick Mathole forests into the village of umXhosa called Go. This is his story as recorded in Brownlee (1896: 269–305). Go responded with armed resistance against them. They eventually succeeded in confiscating all 12 cattle plus an additional four that belonged to him. This embittered him and he promised to avenge himself of this injustice.

Brownlee justified the group’s actions, and instructed them to give two of Go’s cattle to Edwards for compensation against his losses. The rest they could take for themselves, “as a reward for their exertions”. He also told them to leave Go to be dealt with by him (Brownlee, 1896: 370).

As the group of men were leaving Brownlee’s residence they met Go who told them he was approaching the commissioner to complain of the injustice they had done. They told him that “the gallows was already erected for him” (Brownlee, 1896: 370). Go apparently went on the run from that time on and the police attempted in vain to capture him.

Meanwhile, Go was executing his revenge. He multiplied his stock with horses and oxen he reclaimed from the colonists. He had become a “robber”. A Commandant with police was set after him. They were given instructions to steal on him in his village during the night and to “shoot him like a wolf” (Brownlee, 1896: 271). But Go proved “too clever” for them.

Then the unexpected happened.

On a Sunday evening just as Commissioner Brownlee was about to sit down to dinner, his servant told him that “Go was outside and wished to see me” (1896: 272). This Brownlee did not believe, and he told his servant to go back to the man outside and ascertain who it was who wished to see him. The word came back, assertively, that it was, indeed, Go that wished to see the commissioner.

As he sat in the lighted dining room Go appeared at the open door. He faced the commissioner, who had no inkling what the “robber” looked like. It suddenly occurred to the commissioner that he was now face to face with a dangerous man before whom he sat, defenceless, and unprepared for a fight. He thought to himself, “the tables were turned, and he might now shoot me, in return for my kindness in ordering him to be shot” (1896: 272).

Asked the commissioner: “Are you Go?”

“Yes, I am”, came the reply.

“Then why are you here? Do you not know that I have directed that you should be shot down as a wolf?”

“Yes, I know it,” was Go’s response, and he continued:

*“Here I am, do what you like to me, all I ask is, that my wife and children shall be left unmolested. They have done no wrong, but your police ill-treat and plunder them everyday, I only plead for them; for myself, I could go where you would not find me.”*

This was a display of self-renouncing, self-denying love and leadership, a redefinition of the concept of a father’s authority over his household. Such authority is the model that Christ demonstrated over his Church; it is based on love as Paul explained to the new converts of Ephesus: “Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for her”. Go revealed that true and effective authority over people, whether it is in an organization, a nation or at home, is motivated by love not power.

It is only to such authority that people submit willingly, not motivated by fear or feelings of inferiority.

The Commissioner, relying on the unquestionable honesty and sincerity displayed by Go, asked him to remain with his servant on his property that evening. He would not place him under confinement until the Governor decided what his punishment should be for all the crimes he had committed. Indeed there was no need to confine him.

The following morning Go explained to the Commissioner what had really occurred when Masebeni came to him. Two young men of his village had stolen the twelve cattle and he had surrendered them to Masebeni's group. They refused to take the actual thieves, saying that Go, as head of the village was responsible, "and they would take his cattle", not the twelve that were stolen but forty-six in number. This had infuriated Go, who went inside his house and seized an assegai, "declaring that they should not take his cattle until they had killed him, and he would fight to the last for them" (Brownlee, 1896: 273).

It was Go's father and his uncle that had held him; he watched his cattle being taken off. Four were taken to Brownlee and the rest were divided between Edwards and Masebeni's people. He had been on his way to complain to the Commissioner when he met with the message of a prepared gallows. The subsequent robberies he committed were motivated by this injustice. He was regaining what he had lost unjustly.

Brownlee reported this case to the Governor of the Cape, and suggested that Go be pardoned as he had made sufficient restitution. Free pardon was offered by the Governor.

#### **14.5.22 Individual integrity and agency**

After Go was pardoned Brownlee thought he could use him as a spy among amaXhosa. He pointed out to him the mercy he had received from the Governor, that he had not been punished; that he trusted him to assist him in "discovering thefts of stock" he suspected went to his neighbourhood. He promised Go that he would cause all of his cattle to be restored to him if he should agree to this arrangement.

"I will make no such promise", was Go's reply, and he continued, "but the future will show that I am not ungrateful for your kindness to me" ( Brownlee, 1896: 273). From then onwards, Brownlee had nothing further to ask of this just man.

Not long after this encounter, war started to brew between amaNgqika, under the leadership of Sandile, and the colonists. Toward the end of 1850, as the situation was becoming critical between the bitter enemies, strangely, a mutual transformation was occurring between Brownlee and Go. What started as an *I-It* relationship was evolving into an *I-Thou* relationship of mutual respect. As

the relationship unfolded Brownlee obtained more detail of the events that had taken place during the hunt for Go.

During his time as a refugee Go had had to flee from his village to live in a cave with his household. From there, to sustain his wife and children, he started to steal cattle for meat and to plunder a shop in Alice, not so far from the Lovedale seminary, at night, for flour and sugar, as he had no money to purchase supplies. While on the run, Go told Brownlee, he saw women and children being robbed and ill-treated by the police.

One day as the police were returning from prowling about as usual, it was dark and they were returning to their respective homes. They had to go through a narrow pass in the forest. The path they used “lay along a ledge of eight or ten feet wide, with a cliff above and another below, the whole overshadowed by large forest trees” ( Brownlee, 1896: 276). This is where Go waited for them, intending to kill some of them in the dark and to throw them over the cliff. Two of the three passed him suspecting nothing. As he was about strike the third with his spear, Go reported, “a thought flashed through his breast, ‘I cannot be a murderer’ ” ( Brownlee, 1896: 277).

Unconscious of the danger that surrounded them, the police passed. It was then that Go decided to surrender himself to Brownlee. The motive was to protect life; not his own but the lives of the weak and vulnerable in society, even the lives of those who did not deserve it.

Throughout the war and thereafter, these two men – Go and Brownlee – acted to protect each other from danger as they had discovered a common humanity between them.

#### **4.5.23 The scheme to break a people’s resistance to subjugation: George Grey**

After the defeat of Nxele, colonists followed up with other operations against amaNdlambe, assisting Ngqika to gain the upper hand against his foes. Soon thereafter they sent a strong signal to Ngqika that they had assumed *de facto* power over him, too. Four thousand square miles of Ngqika’s land between the Kat and Keiskamma rivers was confiscated. Ngqika’s protest was futile. He was a chief only at the mercies of his colonial chiefs. His sons, especially Maqoma, later showed a determination to avenge this betrayal. Up to 1848, just after the end of the Seventh Frontier War, friction between amaXhosa and the colonists showed no signs of ebbing. Governor after governor

did not succeed in ending it. Neither diplomacy nor military power was of any use. Not even the promotion of European Christianity and civilization through strong tactics helped.

This glaring failure called for a change in stratagem. The plan was to pacify amaXhosa and to assimilate them into the European way of living. A man who had succeeded with the aborigines of Australia between 1837 and 1843 and with the Maori of New Zealand, from 1845 to 1853, had to be brought into the Cape Colony. This was George Grey.

Rutherford (1961: 53) described the tactic Grey used among the Australian aborigines, as follows. A strong ally in this scheme was going to be the missionary: “Within this political framework, the missionary should labour to convert them to Christianity”. From an economic perspective the plan entailed that: “Government and colonist should offer the aborigines regular employment as labourers, farm hands and servants and thus draw them into association with Europeans”.

The shortage of labour was huge. England was receiving numerous requests such as the following from land barons in Australia:

*I AM A VERY extensive proprietor of land and stock in this colony. I am of the opinion that from 3,000 to 5,000 agricultural labourers and mechanics, if gradually introduced, would find employment, annually during the next four or five years. ... Ploughmen, men well acquainted with husbandry, such as reapers, mowers, ... are in great demand. Of these, shepherds are the most required ...*” British Parliamentary Papers, Vol. 5: 45).

The process of pacifying the barbarians was to be backed and sustained by a programme of effacing their identity through education:

*Finally, native boarding schools should be established by the Government, or by the missionary organizations aided by Government grants, whereby the younger generation could be drawn away from the debasing customs of the tribe and brought up in a civilised manner* (British Parliamentary Papers, Vol. 5: 45).

The envisaged outcome of the entire scheme, according to George Grey, was “a Europeanized aborigine”.

Apparently this was achieved in Australia as evidenced in this school examination of aboriginal pupils.

***Pupils of the seventh class: Examination of W. Robinson***

*Who made you? – God.*

*What is God? – A Spirit*

*Do you pray to God? – Yes, Sir.*

*What do you say? – Our Father which art in heaven etc.*

Examination result: “This is a well-informed and intelligent young man.”

***Pupils of the tenth class: Thomas re-examined***

*Do you like to learn to read? –Yes, Sir.*

*Do you wish to live as white people live? – Yes.*

*Is the bush a good place to live? – No, Sir.*

*Do you like to wear clothes? – Yes, Sir.*

Examination result: Not provided (British Parliamentary Papers, Vol. 5: 55).

What Grey achieved in New Zealand, prior to his being posted to South Africa, James Gump (1998: 96), has called a “manufactured triumph”. He believed he could repeat it among the natives of South Africa.

He used “grace and guile”. With the signing of the Waitangi land treaty, the Maori chiefs believed that they had agreed to “cede their governorship” in return for undisturbed “chieftainship” over their “lands, villages and property”. On the other hand the colonial government brought into New Zealand companies “whose fundamental goal was to take Maori land away” (Gump, 1998: 95).

As Maori suspicions grew, perceiving that they are being robbed of their land, Grey decide to “allay the feelings of irritation stated to be rising in the native mind, and to prepare [the Maori] ...cheerfully to receive that form of government which it may ultimately be thought necessary to introduce to secure the future welfare of this country” (Gump, 1998: 95).

When persuasion seemed to fail with some of the chiefs he demonstrated a resolve to break it using force. He detected signs among the chiefs to unite against the wiles of colonists to regain their land and he mused: “I cannot but dread [the consequences] if any steps are taken which should unite a large proportion of the native population against us” (in Gump, 1998: 96).

He then went on to take drastic steps to prevent the “native combination” by arranging that one chief Te Rauparaha be arrested and imprisoned “without trial for eighteen months”. In a humiliating manner, the “captors trapped Te Rauparaha in his own house and subdued the aging leader by grabbing his testicles”, destroying “his prestige” ( in Gump, 1998: 36)..

Grey did not even regret this humiliating treatment of the native leader. He justified it by responding to another complaining chief as follows:

*“I feel sure, ... that when you have heard all the evil of Te Rauparaha’s conduct, you will see that I have acted rightly, ... when you come to see me you shall see for yourself how bad a man Te Rauparaha has been”. He then signed the letter in a manner that revealed his mind toward the aborigines and their leaders: “From your father, G. Grey”*( in Gump, 1998: 36).

A true picture of George Grey’s “manufactured triumph” among the Maori, a product, according to Keith Sinclair, of “a mixture of greatness and pettiness, breadth of intellect and dishonesty”, could never have been better revealed by a speech delivered by a Maori Chief during a farewell dinner to Sir George Grey at Barret’s Hotel in Wellington: “While the Governor is with us, we shall do well, but as soon as he goes away, both the natives and white men will go astray” (Rutherford, 1961: 273).

Clearly, Grey’s cunning had only harvested an unsustainable peace in New Zealand.

#### **4.5.24 Towards a “glorious triumph” among amaXhosa**

Soon after his arrival in the Cape Colony to take up his post as governor in early 1855, Grey received a letter from his friend George Barrow in London (quoted in Gump, 1998: 89). It was challenging him to accomplish what he did among the Maori:

*If you succeed with the Natives there in any degree approaching to what you have achieved in New Zealand, what a glorious triumph it will be after all that has been said of doing anything with them.*

Leon de Kock's seminal work *Civilising barbarians* testifies to the degree that Grey's work, in collaboration with missionaries, succeeded in "Europeanising the aborigines" in Africa. The colonizing of the African consciousness took place in institutions like Lovedale – which were "directly instrumental in creating a new elite" – and its outgrowth, the University of Fort Hare where South African "intellectuals were produced who went on to establish nationalist movements such as the African National Congress" (De Kock, 1996: 19).

The envisaged result, especially in Lovedale, notes De Kock, was "a docile and efficient labour force which would accept both European religious and political authority, as well as European social superiority. Lovedale added to its stature as the leading school for Africans by assimilating the special programmes of the Grey Plan into its course of instruction" (1996: 71).

The Europeanization process in practice was aptly described by one of the teachers, James Aitkin, who worked at Lovedale (in De Kock, 1996: 75):

*The labour involved in the boarding, not to speak of the discipline, of so many pupils, ... must of necessity be onerous and heavy, yet everything is managed with a regularity and a clock-work precision which would not suffer by comparison with the daily duties appertaining to the best regulated military barracks. There are three meals per diem – breakfast at eight, dinner at one, and supper at six. Permit me ... to invite you to take a look in at the evening meal. The 6 o'clock bell has just rung, and the boarders are taking their seats in the spacious dining-hall ... At one end of the hall, on a dais, are placed, under spotless white covers, the tables at which the Europeans take their meals, the centre table of these being occupied by the boarding master, the members of his family and some of the staff. Mr Geddes sits enthroned at the head of his table and commands a full view of every individual in the dining hall. Noiselessly and without the least confusion or hustling, the pupils come trooping in and take their places, the highest class natives, or at all events those whose relatives can afford it, being seated nearest the Europeans and provided with somewhat more substantial fare than the other natives.*

Thus was social division systematically engendered in and among pupils. The future elite of black South Africans – *amagqoboka* (those pierced by European culture and a European type of Christianity) – having drunk of this vanity, went on to "struggle" for political rights and for equality

with white people, often for themselves only, to the exclusion of the uneducated masses of the so-called *amaqaba* (those wearing traditional garb and red-ochred).

Lovedale College and the rest of its kind were little more than centres of collaboration between the state and the various “Christian” missions in dethroning the African identity of amaXhosa. The superiority of whiteness, as depicted by James Aitken above, was systematically and “hourly” ingrained into the minds of young, unsuspecting victims. Their institution and teachers were to reproduce themselves in them and they would go back to their homes, under the garb of education, and practise the same dehumanising lifestyle on their own society.

These were supposedly “Christian institutions”. Indeed they professed, “talked”, Christianity but in daily practice denied its influence. Indeed the entire system proved a cruel perversion of the ideal that the Author of Christianity and the Orthodox Church Fathers, like Paul – “the prisoner of Christ” – had advocated. Specifically, the “Christian gentlemen” who led and taught there did not manifest the fruits of a *spiritual and human lifestyle*: “goodness and righteousness”; did not, as the Apostle Paul admonished, “walk worthy of the calling with which [they] were called” (Ephesians 4: 1), and were not: “kind to one another, tender-hearted” (Ephesians 4: 32).

They probably did not see any reason to “be kind and tender-hearted” towards their “non-white” students since they were systematically classified as the “other”.

They did not: “walk in love”, “walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5: 2 & 8).

As such they did not: “with all lowliness and gentleness bear ... with one another in love ... endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4: 2 & 3).

These teachers did not embrace their black students as “members of one another”; did not grasp the purpose of the Christian movement as being to make “one” since Christ, its Author, had “broken down the middle wall of separation” to “put to death the enmity” and make both black and white “fellow citizens” (Ephesians 2), here, and anywhere else on planet earth.

The graces that the Apostle Paul calls for in anyone who “walks in the light” – *lowliness or humility*, a most powerful and core attribute in the working of reconciliation among people; *gentleness or meekness*, considered in modern culture as weakness, but an inner strength that guards

against being condescending over others, giving its possessor the capacity to be sensitive to the weaknesses of others and being supportive, and the powerful ingredients for successful leadership in any organization; *longsuffering*; and *bearing with one another – are imperative to social well-being*. They are the fuel that ignite communion, whether it be transdisciplinarity among intellectuals or simple friendship among individuals or nations. Without the tolerance which comes with patience when faced with the weaknesses of one other, unity is not possible; community and peace will remain a mirage.

This is probably the reason why Tiyo Soga, a product of Lovedale, of whom we shall read more in the sixth chapter, refused to put his own boys through the dehumanization he went through in that institution.

We look back today “as we stalk the postcolonial briskly” (Spivak, 1999: 359), and “we may ask: what was the cultural-political fate of this indigenous elite as the great territorial imperialisms began to be dismantled, and the period of decolonization began?”

What she sees, abounding, is an “implicit collaboration of the postcolonial in the service of neo-colonialism. (Today this has been displaced into hybridist post-national talk, celebrating globalisation as Americanisation.)” (Spivak, 1999: 359).

There is widespread evidence, even in post-apartheid South Africa, that the “conqueror has remained the conquered” – an issue we shall be focusing on in the sixth chapter. Masses of victims of cruel colonial schemes have yet to see sustainable gains in the new democratic dispensations as both the rate and number of those who are becoming destitute continue to rise. A situation seems to be emerging, characterised, as Spivak puts it, by the “use [of] the needs of the needy in the interest of the greedy” (1999: 361).

The world in which the African elite were introduced to can be viewed as one in which poor classes of people exist, as White relates, “for the benefit of the ruling classes. Influence, wealth, education”, being among the “many means of gaining control of the masses for the use of the leaders. The higher classes” in this civilization do the thinking and the deciding, they “enjoy and rule” while the lower ones are to “obey and serve” (1898: 550). Under the power and influence of their colonial masters the elite that was being cultivated found their right as humans to “think and act” for

themselves, “wholly unrecognized” (White, 1898: 550) and they were destined to repeat this on their own people.

It is, indeed, an *I–It* relationship. Spivak also calls it:

*complicitous (folded together) rather than symbiotic (living on/off one another). Folded together, we live on/off whatever lies on the other side, in the minute particulars of our living as in the broadest structures of policy. ... A caution, a vigilance, a persistent taking of distance always out of step with total involvement, a desire for permanent parabasis, is all that responsible academic criticism can aspire to. ... The remote motor of the exodus of those of us who became globe-trotting post-colonials ready for entanglements in new global complicities.* (1999: 162)

The conclusion, therefore, is hard to ignore. Academic responses to the plight of the masses of poor people, taking place in distant conferences, where the voice of the sufferers themselves is hardly important, are themselves part of the problems of the poor.

#### **4.5.25 Princess Emma: The tragedy of Grey’s assimilation policy illustrated**

The tragedy of George Grey’s assimilation policy was perhaps first graphically illustrated in the life of one of Sandile’s daughters.

George Grey’s plan was aimed first at breaking the power of chiefs and asserting British control as the only point of authority. First he implemented a system of chiefs earning salaries from the crown government. His next move was to collect the people into controllable areas, ‘locations’, a radical departure from the traditional villages.

Integral to his plans was to induce amaXhosa chiefs to part with their children. The future leaders, “pulled out of their society, and totally immersed in the incoming culture”, would then “on their return home” “implant the new values, beliefs and practices within their indigenous social fabric” (Hodgson, 1982: 41).

This is the scheme that lay behind the establishment of Lovedale, and Fort Hare, its outgrowth. The first such institution was established in Cape Town, strategically, to have as wide a distance as

possible between the children and their kith and kin. Grey had the Church assist in this scheme as he saw, despite his experience among the Maori, that amaXhosa chief loved their children too much. “He was unable to persuade a single chief to part with his children” (Hodgson, 1982: 41). Bishop Gray of the Anglican Church found out during his visitation to the Eastern Cape that his efforts to do so were “fruitless”. “The ties of family and tradition were still too strong.” (Hodgson, 1882: 41)

It was at this time that the Nongqawuse cattle-killing tragedy took place. Though there have been numerous attempts to explain this event, which decimated the disintegrated amaXhosa, rendering them a helpless people overnight, Grey’s scheme of subjugating them has never been dissociated from it.

The next chapter sets out to discover whether there are any pieces left of the original people after this disintegration. Are there still to be found any remnants from the values that Grey purposed to erode in collaboration with the various colonial “Christian churches” in their schools?

When Grey visited amaXhosa after the Nongqawuse tragedy, “he found children being placed at his disposal”. It was a way of protecting them from the ravages of hunger. Bishop Gray was happy to receive them. Thereafter the church did as it pleased with the children, just as it was doing among the First Nations in Canada. The Methodist Church and the Anglican Church in Canada had started boarding schools for aboriginal children as far back as 1830. According to the 2002 Report of the Law Commission of Canada: *Restoring dignity: Responding to child abuse in Canadian institutions*, these institutions had a policy of assimilation in mind.

This commission remarked in its research findings that:

*Children who lived in residential institutions suffered some measure of disconnection, degradation and powerlessness, due to the very nature of institutional life. In determining the scope of its research, the Commission therefore felt it was important to look not only at physical and sexual abuse but at other types of maltreatment as well, such as neglect, and emotional, spiritual, psychological, racial and cultural abuse, all of which also have profound and long-lasting effects. Furthermore, it examined the impact of abuse on children who were not abused themselves but who witnessed the abuse of others (2002: 6).*

A worrying finding of the commission was the realization that, “as a result, the residential school system inflicted terrible damage not just on individuals but on families, entire communities and peoples” (2002: 61).

Emma, Sandile’s daughter, was one of thousands of victims of the assimilation scheme in South Africa. She was sent to Cape Town with scores of other children, to be transformed into an English lady. There, in the area presently called Bishop’s Court, these children were confined, with little intercourse with the outside world, totally at the mercy of the churchmen. “Drilling” such as we have observed above among the Maori was the “only discipline”. To this, however some young ones did not yield readily.

#### **4.5.26 “I beg you to let me go to see my parents”**

From the cruelty of her unnatural confinement at her school, Zonnebloem, Emma wrote this cry to George Grey in November, 1860. (A reading of the following heartfelt cry makes one wonder whether a commission such as was instituted to enquire into such matters in Canada is not also warranted in South Africa.)

*“My Lord Governor, – I want to ask you please Sir to let me go back to see my parents for a short time and I will come back again I will not stop any longer. It is because I do desire to see my own land again I beg you to let me go to see my parents and if you do let me go I shall never forget your kindness. I should be so pleased to see my Mother’s face again. I beg you do let me go my Lord Governor.”* (Hodgson, 1982: 40).

In a sentence that expressed the victimization, self-denigration and dependence that was to creep in among amaXhosa and the entire black race in South Africa, with the European educated “elite” in its vanguard, Emma said: “I cannot do anything for you, and you can do so much for me” (Hodgson, 1982: 40).

## **4.6 Conclusion**

The Dutch East India Company, Europe’s first multinational trading organization, demonstrated not only what was noted by Richards as a “world hunt”, in the historical exploitation of ecosystems that has brought about “catastrophic ecological changes that have reached crisis point in the world coastal waters;” and the “intense human predation” (2001:2). This “world hunt” spirit reaches back

to the early modern centuries, which rendered the Cape landscape and ecosystems so “pauperate by comparison with those of the fifteenth or sixteenth century” as it stripped out entire strata of larger animal and marine species from global ecosystems” (Richards, 2001: 2).

Not only the global ecosystems, but everything that ever stood in the pathway of human self-aggrandizement, has suffered. The dethronement of God as the Supreme Being in human existence and the exaltation of the human self have resulted in the diminishing of the value of all life. It was, and still is, all systemic, so dramatic in its clarity. Crime after crime has been committed not only by man against man; the inhumanity of man has inflicted lethal blows against nature, too.

Europe’s first crime, which according to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in his 1983 Templeton Prize Lecture, was World War I, was much more than just a “rage of self-mutilation” (in Weigel, 2004: 8.). His analysis agrees with the conclusion of this work. There was “a mental eclipse among the leaders of Europe due to their lost awareness of a Supreme Power above them”. This “eclipse” was brought about by a deliberate dethronement of the Supreme God, demonstrated, it is suggested here, in the deliberate alteration of his law. This having engulfed just about all Europe, plunged not only that continent into a “rage of self-mutilation” but the whole universe that neglected the supremacy of the Creator. Man and the environment lost value as human self usurped and claimed honour and glory for itself.

In its consideration of the destructiveness of European dominance and control, South African historiography has been preoccupied with a question that is inadequate in taking the country down a path towards Immanuel Kant’s hoped-for “perpetual peace”. The inadequate question asked was concerned with the “how” of the dominance rather than with the “why”. Of the two broad schools of thought, one, led by W.M. MacMillan (1929), propagated that race was used to entrench dominance; the other, led by Martin Legassick, and followed by Marxists, proposed class as the means. Another, equally insufficient, view, has proposed that the integration of South Africa into the world economy was the cause of European supremacy (Elphick & Gilliomee, 1989).

It was, indeed, a diversity of Europeans that colonised South Africa, Dutch, English, French and German among them. They may have spoken a variety of languages and embraced apparently different cultures. But all of them projected themselves and took pride in one cultural feature, as has been seen, especially the Dutch and the English against the Khoi and amaXhosa. They all considered themselves Christians and the others barbarians who were to be “civilised”. And with

their brand of intolerant Christianity, they wrought havoc on the lives of those they were determined to “civilise”.

Race and class were merely methods, avenues, through which the Dutch structured Cape society, but the driving motive was cultural chauvinism legitimised by the spirit of a compromised brand of Christianity, as evidenced in their Calvinism.

Elphick and Gilliomee, as do most South African historiographers, display a sad under-appreciation of the culture that Calvinism inherited from Roman Catholicism, as they concluded that “Calvinism in general lacked missionary zeal” (1989: 527). Calvinist zeal dispersed hundreds of thousands of anti-catholic Christians all over the world, as already shown in this work. It is understandable that under its various guises, Presbyterianism, Lutheranism, and Methodism among others, Calvinism appears to have had nothing to do with the missionary zeal that shaped the South African society.

Going much deeper than the tides of economics, race and class, power and politics – factors which according to Noel Mostert (1992), in his version of the story of amaXhosa, fashioned South Africa – South African history, owing to the impact of European influence, was swayed by the currents of religiosity. These currents ran through Europe long before the southern tip of Africa was affected. This chapter can conclude, on the basis of what was observed in the second chapter, in agreement with George Weigel (2004: 12), that:

*History is not simply the by-product of the contest for power in the world – although power certainly plays an important role in it. And neither is history the exhaust fumes produced by the means of production. Rather, history is driven, over the long haul, by culture – by what men and women honor, cherish, and worship; by what societies deem to be true and good, and by the expressions they give to those convictions in language, literature, and the arts; by what individuals and societies are willing to stake their lives on.*

We conclude this chapter with one inescapable thought: it is the spirituality cherished by people that structures and drives the society they choose to live in. The politics, social relations, economy, the quality of the environment people live in, including the kind of institutions found therein, are all products of their spirituality as constituted by the type of worship within which they are located. What has clearly emerged from this close look at the values that characterised the cultural lifestyle of amaXhosa is that they were a people endowed with graces that allowed them to embrace

“otherliness”. With these graces, diversity was never perceived as a threat, it was embraced. Culture was never used as an ethnic barrier against others. AmaXhosa can look back with pride at the “Bessies” in their midst as evidence their culture of tolerance and compassionate living.

## **Chapter Five:**

# **Investigating the prevalence of aesthetic relational values among amaXhosa in the Eastern Cape**

### **5.1 Introduction**

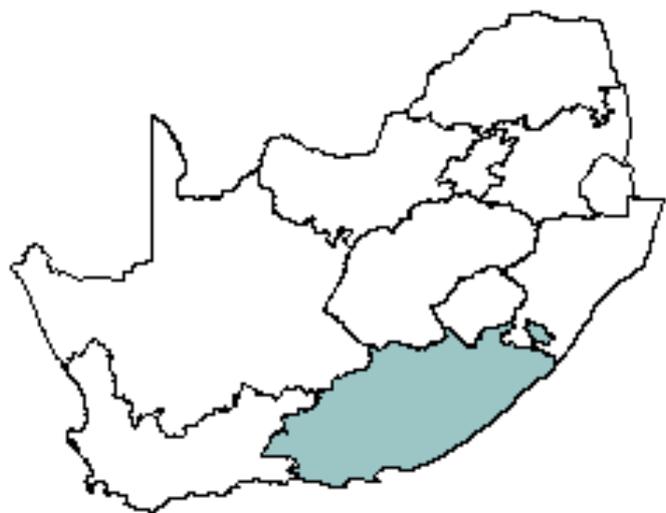
Thus far this study has established that people's historical experiences are largely the product of their cultural leanings. People's spirituality, manifested in the cultural tendencies that are informed and directed by certain value preferences, define their substantive existence. It is the extent of the prevalence of particular relational values that qualifies lifestyles as life-supporting or not.

The study has now reached the point of excavating manifestations of these aesthetic relational values among amaXhosa in the Eastern Cape at the present time. Indeed, the author's entire conscious life as umXhosa has been a journey of growing awareness and curiosity in this regard. Though the study draws from research conducted during and immediately prior to the actual period of the study, it synthesizes the findings thereof with other knowledge-generating experiences, particularly ethnographic encounters among amaXhosa going back as far as the mid-1990s.

### **5.2 The research site: An overview of the Eastern Cape**

The research was conducted in various villages of the Eastern Cape.

The Eastern Cape is the second largest province in South Africa in terms of land mass, covering an area of 169 580 km<sup>2</sup>. The province has 39 local municipalities. Out of this total, 30 have high levels of deprivation that exceed the national average. Most of these are in the former apartheid "homelands"



known as Ciskei and Transkei. Census 2001 indicates that at that time the province had a total population of 6 436 763. Bisho is the capital city, while isiXhosa is the most commonly spoken language (83,4% of the population in 2001), followed by Afrikaans (9,3%) and English (3,6%).

The four significant economic sectors in the province are: business opportunities and manufacturing, agriculture, fishing and forestry, and tourism. Manufacturing makes the biggest contribution to the provincial economy at 19,7%. This, though slightly more than the national average of 18,9%, amounts to only a 7,1% contribution to the national economy. The provincial unemployment rate over the period September 2001 to September 2005 increased from 32,0% to 33,9% (Stats SA, 2006).

### 5.2.1 A place of biodiversity and where untainted natural beauty still lingers



*Source: Mhala Development Trust*

This beauty lingers on in both the body and spirit of the people.



*A Mhlokulo village celebration just outside Mthatha, September, 2006*

Graham Kerley (2006), a professor in the Eastern Cape’s Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) zoology department and director of the centre for African conservation ecology at the university, and chairperson of the conservation committee of the Eastern Cape Parks Board, has observed the following pertaining to the Eastern Cape region: *“From a global perspective it is probably one of the most important areas in the world. It is the only place in the world where three of the global biodiversity hotspots come together. So that is really important. Cape floral region, succulent karoo and the Mputaland – Pondoland hotspots. It is the only province that has all seven of South Africa’s biomes. These are the very broad habitat types such as savanna, grassland and forest and we have all seven here in the Eastern Cape. I think we are particularly proud of the fact that the Bavianskloof, which is a World Heritage Site, is also the most diverse reserve in South Africa. It has all seven of South Africa’s biomes in one single reserve. That can’t be beaten anywhere else.”*

The natural endowment, and the Eastern Cape’s historical hospitality, welcoming and accommodative nature of her people, amaXhosa, as noted in this study, seem to make a metaphoric statement that the area was meant to be a place where both nature and humans commune.

### **5.2.2 A place of desertification**

Desertification is defined as including “land degradation and loss of soil fertility, soil structure” (CSIR, 2004: 87). Land degradation reduces the productive capacity of land. Human activities such as mismanaged agriculture, overgrazing, fuelwood consumption, industry and urbanisation as well as natural disasters contribute to land degradation.

The Eastern Cape is one of the three worst provinces in the country in this regard. According to the National Department of Agriculture, 20,3% of the province has been predicted to have ‘high’ soil

loss, while a quarter and a third (35,6%) is predicted to have, respectively ‘low’ and ‘moderate’ (between 13 and 25 tons) soil loss (CSIR, 2004: 88). Commercial lands for grazing, cropland and forestry are characterised by extensive gully and sheet erosion. The most serious bush



encroachment problems are also experienced in the commercial areas. In communal areas, overgrazing is of greatest concern.



*The face of soil erosion: Herschel/Sterkspruit, 2006*

### **5.2.3 A place of poverty and deprivation**

One of the most worrying trends in post-apartheid South Africa is the persistence and deepening of poverty. Despite the increase in per capita disposal income, there is clearly growing income inequality among South Africans. Some live in increasing wealth while the poverty of others deepens. According to Global Insight (2004), income inequality, as measured by the Gini-Coefficient, increased from 0,60 in 1996 to 0,64 in 2003. The Gini-Coefficient for the Eastern Cape in 2005 was 0,65 (SAIRR, 2007: 4).

In South Africa as a whole, the “percentage of households with an income below R6 000 in 1996 was 57,5% and it decreased marginally to 57,2 in 2001” note Meintjies et al (2005: 10). The Eastern Cape recorded “not only the highest level of deprivation but also ... a marked deterioration in its relative position – the composite poverty index increased from 148,3 to 152,9 – an increase of 4,6 index points”(Meintjies et al, 2005: 10).



The deprivation in the province is so palpable that one can almost touch it, imprinted as it is on so many faces. This young man, photographed against the dilapidated tribal authority offices built by the apartheid homeland president Lennox L. Sebe for the Khambashe tribe, would not let the author leave the premises without offering him something to eat.

Though his village was in a festive mood, celebrating the arrival of a few local economic development projects facilitated by the Rural Development Centre of the Walter Sisulu University, just outside Mthatha, the Mhlakulo village shepherd pictured here refused the author's appeals to draw nearer and join in. He considered himself unworthy because of his external appearance and chose to watch and listen from a distance.



#### **5.2.4 Institutional dependency**

Much of the province is rural and land is not held under private tenure. It is a system that the traditional leadership would like to keep intact and the states seem reluctant to interfere with; needless to say that it is a safe haven for the poor. The weak capacity of Eastern Cape municipalities to generate income of their own – especially through property rates and user charges – is depicted in the following table.

**Table 5.1: Capital budgets per district for 2003/04: Eastern Cape**

District/ metro	Total capex	Grants/ subsidy	Loans	Internal income	Donations, other
Nelson Mandela Municipality	R749,2m 28,6%	R292,9m 39,1%	R0 0%	R169,3m 22,6%	R286,9m 38,3%
Alfred Nzo DM	R238,8m 9,1%	R235,3m 98,5%	R0m 0%	R3,5m 1,5%	R0m 0%
Amatole DM	R510,9m 19,5%	R347,7m 68,1%	R73,3m 14,3%	R43,7m 8,55%	R46,3m 9,05%
Cacadu DM	R107,8m 4,1%	R60,5m 56,1%	R4m 3,77%	R22,1m 20,47%	R21,2m 19,66%
Chris Hani DM	R293,4m 11,2%	R276,3m 94,2%	R0 0%	R15,4m 5,25%	R2m 0,55%
Ukhahlamba DM	R135,2m 5,2%	R126,9m 93,9%	R0 0%	R8,2m 6,1%	R0m 0%
OR Thambo DM	R585,7m 22,3%	R523,6m 89,4%	R1,9m 0,3%	R60m 10,3%	R0m 0%
Total EC	<b>R2 621,1m</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>R1 863,4m</b> <b>71,1%</b>	<b>R79,3m</b> <b>3,1%</b>	<b>R322,2m</b> <b>12,3%</b>	<b>R356,3m</b> <b>13,5%</b>

*Source: Intergovernmental Fiscal Review, Aug 2004, National Treasury, South Africa*

It is evident from the above that most municipalities survive on transfers from government, as this represents 71,1% of their revenue stream. Own generated income represents 12,3% of total revenue.

### **5.2.5 Poverty even in the economic hub: Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality**

The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality (Port Elizabeth) is the economic hub of the province, contributing 45% to the Gross Geographic Product (GGP) of the Eastern Cape according to the Development Bank's Development Information Business Unit (in Swartz et al, 2007: 33). The combined contribution of the Metro and Buffalo City amounts to 70% of the entire province. Both benefit from the concentration of industries. But it is this potential that attracts many jobseekers, resulting in the area experiencing high rates of urbanization and unemployment. This immigration puts pressure on all aspects of service delivery: water, sanitation, refuse removal, electricity and housing.

Amongst the metro's challenges are "poverty, overcrowding, unemployment, racial inequalities, poor infrastructure and lack of access to services" (Masuku & Maepa, 2004: 19).

There were 260 800 households within the metropolitan area in 2001, of which 42,1% had no income or had a total household income of R800 and below, while 57,9% had a total household income of R801 and above. The unemployment rate for the metro (including discouraged work-seekers) was 46,4% (Stats SA, 2004: 4). The combination of poverty and unemployment is a critical challenge that the metropolitan area needs to address.

### **5.3 The research experiences**

As noted in the introductory chapter, a variety of qualitative research methodologies, all of which have an ethnographic leaning, were used, integratively, over a period that goes back to just before the year 2000. In particular these were informed by the appreciative approach and mode of inquiry.

#### **5.3.1 Hegebe: *Ilima***

*Ilima* is a system of household production used extensively among amaXhosa. Central to the system is the principle of collaborative economic productivity. Of the three sub-systems of *ubuntu*, which according to Manci are “welcoming”, “accompanying” and “presence”, the *ilima* system epitomizes “accompanying”. It is, as it were “being with and entering the other’s world intimately. To accompany others in their life journey and to remove obstacles on peoples’ path” (2005: 339).

All Nguni customs such as *ukunqoma* – lending a cow to a needy household to meet daily subsistence needs until the household can stand on its own, and *ukuxhwarisa* – to provide to the destitute or homeless a place to stay until they get their own, fall under this sub-value.

Any household that is faced with a huge amount of work that would prove too much for it to carry on its own sends out an invitation to all others in the community for assistance. A burden-bearing team is established for various kinds of work, be it the “erection of a new house, cattle kraal, fencing the homestead” or weeding a field full of food crops (Manci, 2005: 341). The host would prepare refreshments that all would enjoy at the end of the day. The result of such a practice is the entrenchment and preservation of the sense of community among residents.

The author found this age-old custom being practised among the Hegebe clan in Mqanduli, which is part of the King Sabatha Dalindyebo local municipality in the former Transkei. I observed the participants in the particular *ilima* shown here, weeding a maize field. During the ensuing interview, however, some worrying aspects emerged.



I observed that the group was working on a field of about 2 hectare owned by a household that ran a grocery store in the village. The participants were of both sexes, with ages ranging from fifteen to just over seventy years. All were working for a fixed fee.

It was particularly disturbing to observe the elderly woman struggling among the younger workers. I gathered in the interview that this was to her a matter of survival. The old age grant from the state was inadequate for her household and she was the only income generator.



This particular experience revealed to me that despite the survival of what used be admirable customs among Africans, it only takes a little digging to find out that beneath the surface is a hard cold layer of callousness to the plight of the more vulnerable households. It was clear in the interview that the poor and vulnerable are no longer able to rely on friends and neighbours for survival. They must rely on their physical abilities to benefit from their neighbours. Reliance on friends and close relations can prove vulnerable. As Cleaver (2005: 898) observed, “trust and mutual assistance are not automatic products of living together but are also formed and eroded over time”. In sub-Saharan Africa, “the poorest part of the world” and the region with the “highest share of its population (between 90 and 129 million people) living in chronic poverty”, older people are “particularly vulnerable to this poverty”, especially when they have to care for children and large households (Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2006: 65–68). The humiliation of dependency defines their lives. Devoid of aesthetic values, communities may appear to be still using noble customs. But below the surface, these may have degenerated into dry, oppressive practices.

The various degrees to which aesthetic values have been eroded or still linger in various communities are further illustrated in the other experiences that follow.

### **5.3.2 Upper Ngqwara**

Around 1999 a group of about nine women in the municipal area of King Sabata Dalindyebo in Mqanduli formed themselves into a farming association. They obtained land from the local Chief of Upper Ngqwara Village and were assisted through donor funding to establish a High Value Crop project, with the technical assistance of the Institute for Tropical and Sub-tropical Crops of the Agricultural Research Council. It consisted of over three hundred fruit trees on about four hectares of communal land.

A wide variety of citrus fruit was piloted on the land. The quickest progress was realized within the first quarter of the pilot: a good harvest of gooseberries (*amaguzu*), which the women processed into jam. Some grenadilla followed later. The citrus, the women were advised by the Agricultural Research Council, were going to take at least three years to come into full production.

The subsequent months were devoted to training the participants in managing the growth of the citrus trees. All went well for a while but it was hardly a year into the project when the care for

these trees became the responsibility of less than half of the association. By the middle of the second year only two of the women had been showing commitment to the thriving trees on the hillside.

Meanwhile the fence that had been erected prior to planting was vandalized, putting the trees under real threat from the goats belonging to the surrounding homesteads. Nobody knew who the culprits were but the apathy of the village people to the struggles of the two remaining development activists became palpable.

From time to time the two would come running from afar to chase the plundering goats out of the orchard while nearby people seemed to go about their daily chores in complete oblivion of what was going on. Needless to say, animosities grew. On one occasion, one of the orchard minders broke the legs of two goats and the controversy deepened in what had seemed, on the surface, a peaceful village.

The project therefore did not just reveal the lack of a spirit of cooperation within the women's association. It laid bare to us, as outsiders, the spiritual poverty of the "neighbours", especially in compassionate living attributes.

Having learnt bitter lessons from the Upper Ngqwara Experience, we decided to make individual households the units and centre of village development. Individual household profiles were collected in the village. Thereafter, households were invited to *iimbizo* (gatherings) where the proposal to establish "High Value Crops" on individual household held land was explained and discussed. We took a hard decision, given the widespread poverty and destitution we encountered on a daily basis, that each participating household be asked to make a noticeable contribution to the cost of the trees, some of which were to be transported from as far as Port Elizabeth and Nelspruit.

The reason behind this was that this was not simply a poverty alleviation project through welfare. If it was, we were going to leave no development capacity behind. As we had learnt in Upper Ngqwara, it was not simply material want that plagued our people; underneath lay the harder layer of spiritual want. The glaring bankruptcy in the community and the spirit of dependency had to be confronted. We envisioned a time where the people would need to look back and say to themselves "we did it ourselves", "we had a hand in our improvement". Each household had to be taken

through a developmental process of realizing its capabilities before being thrown in a situation of having to collaborate with others. Independence comes before inter-dependence.

These same problems plagued the participants in the following experience of the people of Elliot.

### **5.3.3 Masikhule**

*Ilima*, as the mode of African collaborative productivity, used to be applied among willing and equal households. Hundreds of land reform projects by the Department of Land Affairs in South Africa have ground to an embarrassing halt. It was simply assumed that because Africans are a “communal people”, lumping them in their hundreds to farm together on commercial farms would provide the quickest way out of landlessness and poverty. The Masikhule Property Association at Elliot illustrates this point very well.

The Elliot/Maclear region in the north-east of the province is known as a prime potatoe-producing area in South Africa. In 1997 hundreds of households from the two black townships of eKhowa (Elliot) approached the regional office of the national Department of Land Affairs in East London as potential beneficiaries of the department’s Land Redistribution Programme. At that time the author was a deputy director in that department, assigned to manage projects in that region.

After months of facilitation and land identification, 61 households qualified in terms of the department’s criteria to buy two commercial farms, totalling over 1 400 hectare, from a “willing seller”. Here was an opportunity for poor households, many of which comprised ex-farmworkers themselves, evicted from the surrounding commercial farms of Elliot. The very farmworkers who lived on the farms at the time of the purchase were among the beneficiaries. Overnight they had become landowners.

Having obtained enough equipment from the transaction to work the land, it was possible for production to begin without delay. Hardly six months into the project, however, it became clear that not all the households had the same voice in the decision-making and running of the farms, despite regulation by the state’s Communal Property Association Act (1997). Of the 61 beneficiary households whose R15 000 state grants were used to purchase the farms, hardly a tenth were actively involved in farming the land, directly or indirectly. Before the first year was over the participants became involved in a bitter legal battle that further split them.

The National Development Agency of the Department of Social Welfare came to the rescue a few years later, around 2001. Over two hundred sheep were added to the project giving it the capacity to generate income more quickly. Sadly, this did not work either. At each of several visits to the project long after the author had left the department in 1999, the number of livestock had dwindled noticeably, despite appeals for cooperation among the remaining households. When the author visited Elliot in 2005, hardly any of the communally-owned livestock was left.

By the beginning of 2006, in the High Value Crop Programme, over 33 000 trees had been planted by individual households in about 30 villages in the former Transkei. The project has brought very noticeable improvement to many a household; one example is described in what follows.

#### **5.3.4 The Feya household of Miller's Mission**

One of the households we encountered after the Upper Ngqwara experience was that of Mr Feya, a South African Railways pensioner who had retired in 1984. When the author first met this household, Mr Feya had not been receiving his monthly pension from the former employer's pension fund for over three months. So, before we could get into the High Value Crop programme we had to get this hurdle out of the way. After several desperate phone calls to Johannesburg we succeeded in unblocking the flow of the major source of the household's income. This provided the author with a way into the heart and mind of the elderly Feya couple. From then on we could talk about improvement of their banana orchard.

They had a huge garden with over 1 000 nematode-infested banana trees, from which they sold their ailing fruit to school children and neighbours for 30 cents each. Had it not been for the appreciation the author had demonstrated for their immediate pension problem we would have not developed the rapport and trust that allowed us to uproot over 70% of their ailing banana trees at the risk of losing the vital income they were generating from the investment of many years of hard work in their orchard.

We asked them to allow just 18 months and a transformation would be seen in their orchard. The transformation came about in six months. At least three new banana and citrus cultivars were planted. The trees performed so well that in just six months they were able to start selling huge bananas to the public for at least R1 each.



*The author with the highly appreciative Feya couple (left) admiring the improved orchard*



*After just 6 months of hard work and sacrifice, the Feya household had witnessed a dramatic change in their orchard. The fruit was healthier looking and better tasting*

### 5.3.5 Mqotho coffee

Just outside Port St John's we were introduced to the coffee-loving Mqotho household. They produced, ground and sold organically grown coffee from their garden. Here we not only suggested the improvement of their existing coffee trees, but soil tests also indicated the establishment of a variety of nut trees.

The action research team, led by the author, together with members of the Mqotho household, dug over 50 one cubic metre holes for the trees in their garden. This was our deliberately chosen approach, to demonstrate the researchers' and the beneficiaries' commitment to the project.

The process was as important as the expected content and product, true to the principles of Appreciative Inquiry, from the very beginning. The household's involvement in the project was held before them as of critical importance, otherwise the research team would not walk the development journey with them.



*A proud organic coffee producer shows off his improved crop*

The process is as important as the content.



*Inter-cropping is used so that the households can realize immediate results while waiting for the longer-term gains*

The research team insisted that the participating household should collect their orders.



The research was conducted on the principles of Appreciative Inquiry. There needed to be collaboration between the researchers and the subjects.



*Demonstrations and training took place on household gardens, but the households had to do the bulk of the sweating*

### 3.5.6 Jan Tshatshu dairy

Tshatshu is a village near the township of Zwelitsha outside King William's Town. In about 1976 livestock owners in the village acquired well-equipped dairy premises so that they could collaborate in a commercial venture to sell milk from their cows. This took place within the former Ciskei government's rural development programme.



Close to 79 households from the village participated in the project. The author first encountered it in 1998. Then it was still in full operation with the potential to expand, despite growing dissatisfaction among the participants with the Da Gama Textiles company, which

was irrigating their grazing lands with contaminated water from their factory. The milk produced had a poor quality because of the effluent water. This was reported to the Department of Agriculture and Da Gama undertook to do something about it.

The author reconnected with the dairy again in September 2006 to assess progress. Only two households remained in the project, the Jacks and the Magqazas. I found the 56-year-old Mr Magqaza milking six of his productive cows (he had a total stock of 44, while Mr Jack only had two). Their cows were producing an average of 5 litres each per day and they sold the fresh milk at R3 per litre. Both men depended on this milk as they were unemployed and not yet old enough to qualify for an old age pension from the state. Over the years, Mr Magqaza had been able to educate his four daughters. Three of them now held good positions in various state institutions. These cows were still a reliable source of income and food security to their households.



*Dairy farmers Mr Jack (left) and Mr Magqaza, two proud and self-supporting households of Tshatshu Village*



*Mr Jack. Most of the milking equipment is dysfunctional*



*The farmers do the milking themselves*

According to their testimony, greed, corruption and dishonesty had torn the whole scheme apart. There were rumours that the provincial Department of Agriculture was intending to round up all livestock owners and reorganize them into a dairy cooperative again. But Mr Magqaza wanted to have nothing to do with this. There was too much dishonesty in the village.

### **3.5.7 Emzini African Restaurant and Jazz Cafe**

In the Mkhangiso hamlet of Buffalo City (East London) – also known as Berlin – an enterprise owned by a young black woman affectionately known as “Roundi” (noRoundana Nini) to local people, struggled to its feet in 2000. Ms Nini’s business model rested on local rural women producing a variety of indigenous African dishes for a very appreciative market around the Border region. What she provided was an African cuisine outlet that included a Jazz Music offering that attracted some of the best artists in the country and sturdy employment opportunities in a small rural hamlet.

Soon after the opening of the casino in East London, Miss Nini secured premises next to the hotel attached to the casino complex, providing her catering services to the regular flow of gamblers and business people in the city.

The author reconnected with Ms Nini in September, 2006, while working on this aesthetic values project, to assess the extent to which the collaboration with the rural women had progressed. The first point of call was a cold visit to Berlin, where it all started. Ms Nini had abandoned the original “Emzini” model. She had concentrated on the more profitable city business. This, too, she had lost close engagement with and had left under inefficient management. At the time of our reconnection, she had been married for about a month to a businessman from the rural town of eNgcobo and had become *umakoti*, a newly wedded woman. Needless to say, the Emzini African Restaurant and Jazz Café was tottering on the brink of closure.



*Today Emzini stands empty in Mkhangiso, an abandoned attempt at doing business with aesthetic relational values*

### **5.3.8 The Pilo household life history**

The author first came across the people of Kwezi-Naledi, a black township in Lady Grey, in 2001, while in the employment of the Eastern Cape Provincial Government, in the Office of the Premier. It was during an assignment to track performance in the delivery of the government’s primary school children nutrition programme that I encountered some depressing living conditions there. Since then I have been back again and again to see what basic service delivery ordinary people have been experiencing from the local municipality. The following history of the Pilo household captures

in my mind the callousness, nepotism, injustice, unfairness, maladministration and general hardship that ordinary people have come to suffer under post-apartheid governance at the municipal level.

A local veteran anti-apartheid activist, Mr Nthako, provided me with the background to the settlement of Kwezi-Naledi. According to this elder, the tin houses were erected by the apartheid government around the early 1960s to accommodate black families. At the time and thereafter families were made to pay rent. This came to an end during the rent boycotts that were common a few years before the advent of the new democratic regime in South Africa in 1994.



*There are rows and rows of these single-room houses in Kwezi-Naledi township, Lady Grey*

According to Mrs Pilo, she was married quite young to her late husband and they moved into their present single-roomed tin house around 1963. She has never left Kwezi-Naledi and always worked up to her retirement as a domestic worker for white people in the small town of Lady Grey.

All her children and grandchildren were born in this house. It has little furniture, notably a double bed that takes up most of the space in the 4m x 3m structure. She sleeps on the bed with one daughter and two grandchildren. The rest sleep on the floor. There were altogether eleven people living in that tin home at the time of the interview. Mrs Pilo was kind enough to give me the following profile of her family at present.

**Table 5.2: Pilo family structure**

Head of family	Immediate dependants and relationship to head of family	Age	Employment status	Dependants' children
Mrs Pilo: pensioner	Boniswa – daughter	30	Unemployed	Zizipo & Banathi
	Sello – son	27	Unemployed	Xolani & Rethabile
	Tshepo – son	24	Unemployed	Thabiseng
	Son		In Cape Town and unemployed	Mpolokeng
				Itumeleng (held by mother in the picture below)



*Eleven souls live in this 4m x 3m single-room house in Kwezi-Naledi*

Mrs Pilo's hope that she will ever move to a better house under the post-apartheid government has almost faded. Soon after 1994, when it was first announced that the new government was going to build new homes, she was among the first people who got their names registered on a "waiting list" at the local municipality.

After many years of hoping and waiting and seeing younger families moving into some of the “RDP” (four-roomed) houses built by the provincial government, she has lost hope of ever moving into a better house with her many children and grandchildren. She does not bother to inquire about the waiting list at the local municipality, any more.

Tshepo, her 24-year-old son, registered long after she did for an “RDP” house. A new group of these have just been completed. He is waiting for a key to his own house now. I asked Tshepo whether it would not be better to allow his elderly mother to move in first with the bulk of the family while he awaited another turn. He told me he had no problem with the idea, but was afraid that as soon as his mother moved out, the local government would forcibly raze the tin home to the ground.

In all of the above cases the author engaged with people living their actual lives. In the next instance people were called together to reflect on their condition in the hope that they would agree on what needed to be done to redesign their bleak future.

### **5.3.9 Future research in Cofimvaba**

In the language and symbols (customs and traditions) common among amaXhosa in the Eastern Cape which they use to make sense of their world and to share their understanding thereof among themselves, as reviewed in the preceding chapters, we have come to the conclusion that theirs is a life-supporting world view. The practice referred to as *imbizo* (the closest English interpretation available being the “gathering”) in which members of a society assemble themselves to *ukubonisana* – to lay bare their various ways of seeing – to share points of view – points to an inclusive approach to societal living. This sort of thinking resonates with what has been referred to by the eminent systems thinker Russel Ackoff (1974: 12), as “expansionism”; it is a “synthetic” mode of thought that turns attention to wholes with interrelated parts.

According to Ackoff, problems relating to whole systems such as society, when viewed with synthetic thought, are dealt with “as part of the larger system” and explained in terms of their role in the larger system. No problem, therefore, is dealt with in isolation from its role in society, the larger whole. From a practical point, for example, a problem in the system of education (be it violence, or poor performance in school subjects) cannot be dealt with effectively in isolation from society. It is not a problem of the Department of Education to deal with alone.

We shall see from the thinking that emerged in the three-day dialogue that took place at Cofimvaba that there are still noticeable remnants of expansionist thinking there. The fact, for example, that people reject “one-directional dependence” on decisions taken by traditional leaders on their behalf, demonstrates this.

The Future Search method uses the “Interactive Planning Meeting” technique. People from various walks of life and disciplines, in a particular social setting, meet to relate stories about their past and present with the purpose of determining – redesigning – the sort of future they would like to realize. Using their capabilities they go through a process, after spending many hours in conversation, of planning and acting towards the realization of the envisioned future.

As far back as the 1970s social scientists Ronald Lippitt and Eva Schindler-Rainman held Future Search conferences in North America using large communities of up to 300 people. As a research methodology, it was refined and developed on the basis of work done by, among other leading theorists, Weisbord (1992), who researched conditions under which groups cooperate.

Having been approached by the Intsika Yethu Local Municipality, which combines the rural towns of Cofimvaba and Tsomo, to facilitate the production of a local economic development framework, the author was part of the project team put together by the Development Bank of Southern Africa to drive this process. With the project leader we decided to use a somewhat participatory method in which the voice of the local people would be the loudest in the output. We agreed on co-facilitating Future Search.

The process used that was used which included conferring with the councillor and manager of community services and the local economic development department, to identify community-based organizations and influential people in the two towns and their villages, also included the following:

- Over just more than a month, word went out to the organizations and individuals explaining what was being planned.
- After another progress assessment meeting involving a few leaders of the community-based organizations, it became clear that there was a positive disposition among the groups regarding what was being conceived.
- Logistical arrangements were then put in place for a three-day continuous engagement and dialogue, including the transportation and accommodating of the participants in a central area.

About 70 people from various villages in Tsomo and Cofimvaba were brought together in the town hall at Cofimvaba to take a look at the past and the present and to envision the type of future they would like to realize.

The three-day dialogue by the people of Intsika Yethu Local Municipality was to meet a clearly articulated desire by citizens to control their future. Throughout, they repeatedly expressed the need for cooperation, an important aesthetic value, to get to the preferred future. The readiness and preparedness to cooperate was almost tangible throughout. The systems analysts Gharajedaghi and Ackoff have recognized this condition as a prerequisite to development (1986: 35) “to increase one’s desire and ability to control the future is to develop”. Indeed the people from the society of Intsika Yethu have, interactively, expressed the desire to attain better material conditions and increase their income. However, this, on its own, would simply result in growth. “Development, not growth, is the primary objective of interactive social systems. Growth is desirable only if it contributes to development”, observed these systems thinkers (Gharajedaghi & Ackoff, 1986: 36). They also noted the importance of cooperation in development (p. 155). To the extent that cooperation reduces conflict among people, it “facilitates development”; and “the key to accelerated development” is “participative planning” (p. 133).

One important thought emerged that binds the product of that three-day dialogue in Cofimvaba. It is the realization by virtually all six groups that their material condition cannot be considered and dealt with, effectively, in isolation from spiritual considerations – life-supporting traditional beliefs and attitudes. For example, the fact that the absence of motives such as *ukukhathala* (minding and caring) among people and political leaders is seen as closely related to socially disruptive behaviours such as rape, theft, *ubuvila* (idleness) and many others that were mentioned, points to an appreciation of the intimate interdependence between material well-being and spirituality. Without the vital motive of *ukukhathala*, for example, public officials stoop into indifference that leads to poor service delivery at the local level.

As the citizens appraised their past and their present situation, they identified things of value that had been left behind and relegated to insignificance for various reasons. *Ukukhathala* is one of these. According to the participants, these values must be recalled in the search and design for a better future. They do not belittle the importance of education as brought by white people; but to the extent that this education has not emphasized these values, it is not worth as much as it could be to the people.

Extracts from the report of the *imbizo* can be found in Appendix II.

## 5.4 Concluding observations

Having peeped into the precolonial spirituality of amaXhosa, my conviction has become unshakeable, as the experiences above bear testimony, that we are a people that do great injustice and harm to ourselves. The material poverty that besets the millions of poor people at the eastern Cape is propelled by a much deeper lying malaise, spiritual poverty. Individuals, households and whole villages suffer immensely as we have grown ignorant or come to disregard aesthetic relational values. AmaXhosa have lost the former sense of duty and responsibility towards the wellbeing of others. We have forgotten the only force that can hold us together and by which our peace and wellbeing used to be preserved and maintained.

This loss has grown little by little from as far back as the days of Chief Sandile, who was thrown into a state of agony as he meditated over the emergence of this sorry condition among his people on that day of his daughter's wedding. He was reduced to tears. Those tears were not for himself. It was not in self-pity – living for self was a strange phenomenon among amaXhosa. He could see the sad future his people were destined for, and it was this that saddened this big man.

The old landmarks of their being were abandoned. They were succumbing to the lifestyle of their conquerors, and have become a people “who never have enough”, who “look to their own way, every one for his own gain”; who each “walk according to their own thoughts”, who idolize the designs of their own thoughts and “worship the work of their own hands” and “measuring themselves by themselves” (Isaiah 55: 12; Isaiah 31: 7; Jeremiah 1: 16; II Corinthians 10: 12).

Many, a great number among amaXhosa, profess to be Christians. But it is evident that they have imbibed the Christianity that landed on the Cape coast in 1652. We live a lifestyle that is a direct denial of the true worship that our ancestors believed their Creator expected, the worship demonstrated by a life of compassion toward our neighbours. AmaXhosa have, generally, lost cognizance of the ancient fathers' God who created all beings, thus making them brothers, the God of the Sabbath. This God has, not surprisingly, been forgotten because the Sabbath itself – the memorial of His Creative power – has been trodden underfoot as insignificant. The very conquerors who came to lord it over them, treating them as objects of exploitation, had lost this consciousness

of God's Fatherhood and by implication, humanity's relatedness and brotherhood, because of having erased the importance of the Sabbath from their memories at the time of their arrival among them. AmaXhosa learnt from their school.

This is a radical departure from the culture of drawing identity from a Creator-God whose attributes were known to include compassion, mercy, lovingkindness and care towards all life. This Creator-God, Giver of life and supreme Source of amaXhosa's very identity, was worshipped, as we have noted in this study, through each person relating to all of creation through the very attributes that distinguish their Creator. Indeed were Chief Sandile alive, the tears that he fought back during his daughter's wedding would flow like a torrential river today.

Poverty now rules supreme and manifests itself in the unsightly behaviour and unprecedented cruelty that amaXhosa inflict on themselves and others. Despite the myriad government policies and programmes intended to shield our people from destitution, many a household lives in perpetual dependence, continually a month away from starvation and death. In many households, despite the improved access to state welfare programmes, the vulnerable such as the elderly and children continue to suffer, under the cruelty and selfishness of their supposed guardians. They hardly ever enjoy the grants that the state provides to keep them alive. Compassion has been considerably eroded. The material poverty is simply and truly an outward manifestation and evidence of the deep seated cancer in our souls, the spiritual poverty in aesthetic relational values.

But the most encouraging fact is that in the midst of this relational wilderness and desolation some remnants of the former amaXhosa self remain entrenched among them. Being human, "ubuntu", is still the extent to which the attributes of the Creator are reflected in individual relationships. The practice of *ilima*, though it has turned into a callous formality, is an example of the remnants of a great past that we are able to recall. Even through failures such as the Emzini experience can be detected some seeds of hope; that the spirituality of the people has not entirely been lost. It is resilient and keeps creeping back to life.

Having glanced at the evidence and efficacy of aesthetic relational values in the lives of certain people through history that influenced the world in significant ways and having examined the matrix of these socio-cultural values as cherished and lived by amaXhosa in their pre-colonial

setting, this study has come to confirm the theory that it is only through self-sacrificial living that sustainability on our planet has a chance of becoming reality.

## **Chapter Six:**

# **Implications for sustainable development planning and recommendations**

*The heavens will vanish away like smoke,  
The earth will grow old like a garment*

*We all fade as the leaf*

*The new heavens and the new earth  
Which I make shall remain ...  
And from one Sabbath to another,  
All flesh shall come to worship Me; says the Lord.*  
(Isaiah 51–66; NKJV)

### **6.1 Introduction**

Having devoted considerable attention in this study to the mythical world of gods and the various beliefs they stand for, the most compelling conclusion arrived at is that the core driving force in virtually all human culture and practice has been religious culture. From the powerful gods Re and Marduk in ancient Egypt and the lost golden kingdom of Babylon, now remaining as ruins in present day Iraq, to the more recent gods of the last world empire, the iron kingdom of Rome, which mingled itself with the most powerful contemporary religious movement of the present, the so-called age of knowledge, religion-driven culture continues to influence human history. This has been amply demonstrated in the direction of politics and governance in the United Kingdom, as seen in the period of the Presbyterian Movement, and in the United States, as evidenced by the influence of papal Rome, most notably in the Reagan and George W. Bush eras (Chapman, 2004).

The most resilient of all the myths, however, which continues to fascinate and attract millions, is the mystery of the Creator-God, in the context of orthodox Christianity, whose life is so interwoven with the created universe and created beings that He was prepared to lay down His life in order to win them all back to His side. This mystery has proved itself to be one of the most influential

amongst the greatest and noblest men and women that have ever trodden the earth. From King David and King Nebuchadnezzar in the ancient Hebrew and Chaldean dynasties, to Ghandi, who brought the powerful English government to its knees in India, his mentee, Martin Luther King Jr, Albert Schweitzer, Beyers Naudé, who paid the price for caring for the oppressed masses, to Makana, Tiyo Soga and Nelson Mandela, sons of the Xhosa-speaking people of South Africa – these are only a drop in the ocean of such great lives.

The original Christian myth as advocated by its Author, the Jewish teacher Jesus, known as the Christ, presented and demanded of humans the living of a life of self-sacrifice. The entire governance of the Christian God is founded on a set of values summed up as love.

This study focuses on strategies to counteract the tragic outcomes incurred by the masses of South Africans in their contact with the West. Most of the strategies recommended are a rich heritage left by our ancestors, notably, Tiyo Soga, Isaka Seme and Bantu Biko. The “glorious triumph” over amaXhosa that George Grey’s friend, George Barrows, hoped he would attain, undeniably surrounds that people and has become one of the saddest and most regrettable hallmarks of South Africa. Simply put, it was the triumph of the European self-image over African values and identity. But the problem is not simply one of differences of race and ethnicity. It lies much deeper, in the erosion of humans’ capacity to relate to one another, as co-creatures, with compassion. It is with this human defect, the loss of this crucial sense of common humanity, the loss of the sense of duty to live in harmony with all creation, that Europeans came into contact with Africans. The consequences of this for Africans, in the continent of their origin, were devastating.

The devastation was distinctly articulated when, as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn describes, Europe “fell into a rage of self-mutilation” in World War I, because of “a mental eclipse among its leaders” regarding the consciousness of a “Supreme Power above them” (in Weigel, 2004: 6), a consciousness first planted in Europe by Paul, a disciple of Christ, when he passed “from Troy in Asia Minor to Philippi on the European mainland” “to shape the future” of that continent’s culture and history. By the time of her contact with Africa, Europe had well-nigh forgotten what Paul had “beseeched” them to do; to “let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit,” [but] “each esteem ... others better than himself; each ... to look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others”; not to become like those “whose god is their belly”; but “let [their] gentleness be known to all men”; to remember, always that all of humanity, “being many, are one body in Christ”; that we ought, therefore, to be “kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly

love ... to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep; ... to be of one mind toward one another, [having] regard for good things in the sight of all men” (Philippians 1 to 4; Romans 12). With this consciousness having failed, the Sabbath’s significance long forgotten, Europe entered Africa, first from the North, as we have noted in the Ethiopian experience, and later in the South, with no less devastating impact, including a “protracted agony” of over one hundred years with amaXhosa, leading to the almost total effacement of the same God-consciousness among them.

### **6.1.1 The effects of this loss of human relationships**

From Chief Ngqika’s simple attraction to European attire and the intemperance and degradation that ensued through addiction to European brandy, through to the demonstrated self-rejection of the external, physical and cosmetic African appearance, manifested in various ways such as the wearing of European hairstyles, which became particularly apparent in the generation that went through the factories of cultural transformation – Lovedale College and the University College of Fort Hare – the contact between amaXhosa and Europeans has produced some very chilling results.

In no other sphere of life, arguably, has the impact been graver than in the socio-political dimension. In Karis and Carter’s (1972) work, *From protest to challenge*, it was clearly shown that the so-called elite African who came through the European institutions of education had been systematically assimilated to the degree of pleading to be incorporated into the Western cultural ideal of socio-political living. Europe had adopted an atomistic view of society. People belonged to various classes and sects. In this mode, in which socio-political living was a rights-based experience, Europe made contact with southern Africa.

### **6.1.2 Assimilation: From the duty-based to the rights-based society**

The European-educated Africans accepted unquestioningly the atomization of socio-political living. They accepted belonging to various opposed and inherently adversarial, religious sects whose un-Christlike and divisive character had been demonstrated in parliamentary divisions and civil wars in Europe. Africans became Anglicans, Methodists or Presbyterians with no clue as to where the division in religion originated. Membership of these religious sects, and employment as part of the state labour force, were regarded as external insignia of social progress.

It is, perhaps, in the socio-political realm that it can be concluded with a great degree of regret that in the “new democracy” in South Africa, the “conquerors have become the conquered”. Driven by the desire to attain political equality with white people, what Karis and Carter (1972: 5) call “a Christian Western-educated group” of Africans emulated Europeans. In 1882, *Imbumba Yama Afrika* (translated: African Unity) was formed in Transkei, nothing more than an interest group of educated Africans, “modeled upon existing white pressure groups, to attempt to work with and through the institutions of the white-dominated colonial political system in order to achieve better representation of African interests” (Karis & Carter, 1972: 5).

Early African journalism, led by John Tengo Jabavu in Qonce (King William’s Town) with his journal *Imvo Zabantsundu* established in 1884, betrayed the misinformed hope among educated Africans of being accepted by Europeans as “civilized” by being allowed “to vote on an equal basis with whites”. They presented themselves as “Native people standing well with the Government” and Africans in general as “subjects of the Queen”. They had essentially accepted white domination and its systems. Gordon Sprigg (Karis & Carter, 1972: 14) is quoted unquestioningly by Jabavu in an 1884 editorial of *Imvo Zabantsundu* as having said:

*It is my opinion that the black man here distinctly recognizes the superiority of the white man, and that for a very long time to come, perhaps, forever, the recognition will prevail as to leave the representation in the hands of men of European descent.*

This thinking, based on the perception of Africans as the “other”, as residing outside the European community of humans and the category of civilized humans, as inferior to the white man, was used in justifying white people’s actions and attitudes towards amaXhosa and all black people. Essentially because of the position they occupied in the ladder of humanity they were not and could not be given access to certain “rights”. This entire attitude towards Africans resided in a Western cult based on the very influential Calvinist Christian doctrine that some people, God passes by at His will, reprobating them out of an intention to exclude them (Maurois, in Reaman, 1964). The whole cult differed from the African perspective, which, as seen in chapter three, conceived of God as a “Father” and “God of all flesh”, and this has had devastating consequences for what could have been “the universe of the blood” (Danqua, 1968).

This situation was aggravated by Africans who looked at themselves through European lenses. Not a few were there who like Sol Plaatje and Makiwane, for example, believed, respectively, that “socially and politically, the Bantu people are in their teens”, that the “English Nation is a greater

nation than the Kafir” (in De Kock, 1996: 112 & 118). It is not this sort of Euro-mimicry – whether it is simply “the mask of mimicry”, as De Kock labours to justify Makiwane’s behaviour (1996: 120) or the “modulated voices of the elite subjects of missionary education” (De Kock, 1996: 106) that gave birth to what De Kock called a “subversive subservience” (1996: 118) to their very efforts to gain “equality” with Europeans. We are basically facing a fundamental problem amongst humanity. In our dealings with one another, within and between nations and cultures, it is taken for granted that wealth, education, skills and talent place the possessor in a position “to control another’s mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty” (White, 1898: 550). This is not a “problematic of colonial governmentality” as claimed by Homi K. Bhabha (quoted in De Kock, 1996: 114). It affects more than just the colonizer or the colonized. The “problematic” is the failure to realize that “power, position, talent and education” do not place a person in a position to pursue personal profit, but “under greater obligation to serve his fellows” (White, 1898: 550). The intolerance that exists between the “educated and the uneducated”, “the weak and the strong”, “the civilized and the uncivilized”, “the upper and lower classes”, “the poor and the wealthy”, is the product of this human weakness. It leads people to oppress, compel and to lord it over others.

Having been deprived of even the false political representation they were clamouring for in politics, these European-educated Africans embarked on political “struggles” to gain for themselves positions of power and influence in society – with the assumption that this is where the problem resided – through “nationalist movements”, the very Western philosophical institution that had led to the degradation and dehumanization of the African self in the first place. The Europeans had categorized and classified themselves as belonging to a higher position in society, deserving of certain “rights” which, as the result of their relative (lower) socio-cultural position, black people did not have. This very institution – a product of the atomistic view of society that Europe had adopted – has produced regional and international hostilities (the holocaust and the “ethnic cleansing” in Eastern Europe and in Rwanda being among the most well-known), and world-scale conflicts, with excuses based on just about every facet of human living, whether in economics, politics, or trade.

To this day, people are being led and taught to see themselves as of a certain nationality and therefore as having certain “rights” that give them access to certain, exclusive joys in society. Children whose parents have the green “identity document” are entitled to certain “rights” and those children whose parents “came from outside” – who are being attacked in South African squatter camps as “*amakwere-kwere*” (the derogatory term used by South African blacks to refer to those from other SADC countries and beyond, because of the “odd” way they speak) – do not have the

“right” to local child welfare grants. Nationalism, certainly, continues to divide humanity and society and militates against the very concept of a world community.

The extent to which the very mind of the leadership of some of the African nationalist organizations had lost cognizance of or were ignorant of the African view of society and had been eroded to self-denigration, has been documented in the utterance of the Executive of the South African Native Congress in 1903 (Karis & Carter, 1972: 18):

*The question of loyalty raises the larger question of the indebtedness of the Native races to the Government and people of Great Britain. How much is implied in the thought that out of the self-sacrificing faith of the Christian nations, foremost among whom are the people of the British Isles, the Gospel of Salvation has been brought to the people that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, cannot be adequately expressed. No mere words can describe the spiritual blessings brought by the Messenger of Peace and good-will from the Church Catholic in fulfillment of the Divine Commission.*

This analysis is a far cry from that of 1883 by S.N. Mvambo: “Anyone looking at things as they are, could ... say it was a great mistake to bring so many denominations to the Black people” (Karis & Carter, 1972: 12).

This early African leadership was so far removed from the Nxele calibre of leadership which rejected white brutality and colonial domination, that they reached a stage where they “cordially appreciate(d) the necessity of preserving the race ascendancy of the whites” (Karis & Carter; 1972: 14).

They even wanted to entrench the dependency of Africans on employment in the civil service under white government. They wished “that the natives should be encouraged to fill responsible positions in the Civil Service, and to aid in the administration of the country” (Karis & Carter, 1972: 22).

The South African Native Congress was founded in the Eastern Cape in 1902 to “coordinate African activities”, “particularly with regard to electoral politics”; a “vote-gathering committee”, “intensely concerned with rights due [to] Africans as ‘loyal British subjects’ ”. Led by a European-educated elite, the people of the Eastern Cape, and later all blacks throughout South Africa, were drawn away from the ancient African worldview of society. This was the society founded on “a

network of duties” (Abraham, 1962: 26), in which human duties towards each other rather than human rights were the antecedents of socio-political living.

This elite had imbibed the atomistic European view in which human rights came before human duties. Their African “self and identity” had been reworked and remodeled; Europe had succeeded in “inscribing its consciousness” in their minds. “Eurocentrism” (Muthyala, 2001: 93), “a one-eyed monster, deformed, partially grown, its vision blurred and myopic, its claims parochial and predatory,” had swallowed them. Duty, which humans owed each other irrespective of colour, creed or caste, faded in importance in defining society.

The borrowed and adopted “driving force of [the] human rights ideology” of our struggle fathers became the ideology of themselves as victims. By focusing on victimization and powerlessness in the face of endless atrocities, their movement ended up “dehumanizing the individuals in the oppressed society” (Mutau, 2002: 285). A “focus on values such as solidarity, interdependence, and responsibility” from the onset would have been essential, Mutua suggests. Other categories for the analysis of society took centre stage; in Eurocentric fashion “class, gender, ethnicity, and religion” took primacy as “central categories for analysis” (Arif Dirlik, in Muthyala, 2001: 96).

## **6.2 Prixley ka Seme: The “regeneration of Africa” and “cooperation with all life”**

Long before Bantu Biko articulated the aims of Black Consciousness as seeking “to show the Black people the value of their own standards and outlook”, to “make the Black man come to himself; to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity” (1978: 29–30), in 1906 Prixley ka-Isaka Seme wrote about the “regeneration of Africa”, asserting, as did Tiyo Soga before him, his pride in being of African descent.

This was a personal appeal by an individual to his fellow Africans to put their memory to work and to consider “their great and original genius”, and to “refuse to camp forever on the borders of the industrial world”. Realizing the important step that was being taken to obtain industrial and educational skills in European centres of knowledge, “Edinburgh, Cambridge and ... the great schools of Germany”, he saw in this activity a “process of regeneration” (Karis & Carter, 1972: 40).

Seme started to envision a new black organization, inclusive of every black tribe, in the form of a “South African Native Congress”, which would emerge and put spiritual and human-centred regeneration at the base of progress. In 1911 he reminded his fellow Africans of the duty of man “to perform towards God and towards one another”. It is this perspective on humanity that we have been looking at in the previous chapters, observed among amaXhosa by Ludwig Alberti in particular and by others.

Seme urged for such a regeneration in spirituality and humanity. He called for “cooperation” among Africans, throughout the country and outside, “not only with his own kith and kin but with all peoples and with all life”. Seme hoped, as advised by a “great Paramount Chief” who accepted that his name be in the list of “princes who endorse and support” [the] new movement, that the Congress would be “strongly against” “political partisanship”, one of the fatal factors to the “existence of such Societies” (Karis & Carter, 1972: 34). This is the major weakness in African political life, a major source of the continuing divisions and suffering in the continent. In this regard the liberation movement and the National Democratic Revolution in South Africa, has lost the main thrust of Seme’s vision.

This was certainly a call for the return to the “universe of the blood” articulated by Danqua (1968), a call to remembrance of the fact that human life is one “continuous blood”, from one original Source. The creatorship and fatherhood of God was the reference point of being in Africa, as observed by many a European scholar. Relationship with other created beings, irrespective of race, was ordered from the basis of this consciousness; being human was measured by the extent to which the qualities of the Great Source of life were simulated. Unkulunkulu, Qamata, Modimo, Onyame, the Great I am and Jehovah, was the “provider”, the “merciful”, the “compassionate”, the “kind”, the “One abundant in goodness”, the “long-suffering”, the “forgiving” (Exodus 34: 6 & 7). Each person needed to relate to others through these same beautiful values.

As noted by the German theologian Karl Barth (in Cassell, 2005), God Himself, “in actuality gives us the model of personhood”. It is as humans are “impacted by God” that they “become persons” themselves. *Ubuntu*, true personhood, therefore, becomes much more than the intellectual construct of African scholars; a person is not a person because of the individual mind, as imagined in the Western concept of personhood constructed by Descartes, nor is a person a person because of other persons, as constructed by Desmond Tutu (quoted in Mbigi, 2005: 69); nor the “ultimate source of our existence, from which individual actions and attitudes flow” as imagined by Mbigi (2005: 70);

but through a God-impacted consciousness not only of Africans but of all humanity. This consciousness was intended to be preserved by the observance of that great memorial of His creation, the Sabbath of Saturday rest; all of nature comes to us as a gift from a Creator whose joy is giving; the Creator, who acts towards us in a multiplicity of graces: mercy, kindness, forgiveness, compassion, and long-suffering, relates to us in love. When humans relate towards each other in these ways, fellowship, community, is created; God's personhood, shown in His acting, "shows us what love is, and defines for us what a person is" (Barth, in Cassell, 2005). A person does not become a person through others but fulfils his personhood by acting in love towards others.

Sadly, however, the Congress' leadership seems not to have been able to free their minds from accepting the existence of a white Parliament and its laws in whose creation they had no say. There was an ever-present tacit acceptance of the authority of white institutions. It was with "energy and steadfastness of purpose" that George Grey laboured, starting in New Zealand, to destroy all the indigenous people's institutions, institutions which sustained their being. Soon after his arrival in Africa, Grey articulated the principles that would guide his work, starting among amaXhosa, the people at the vanguard of resisting foreign rule over themselves in southern Africa:

*Talented and honourable European gentlemen being brought into daily contact with [amaXhosa] Chiefs, and interesting themselves hourly in their improvement and advancement will in the course of time induce them to adopt our customs and laws in place of their own, which the system I propose to introduce will gradually undermine and destroy.*  
(in Gump, 1998: 90)

The substance and evidence of the "advancement" of amaXhosa, in Grey's plan, would be to persuade their chiefs and their children to prefer foreign laws and customs above their own, and abandon their indigenous cultures. In practice, amaXhosa would be subjugated under a British way of living and alienated from their norms in just about all facets of their lives. The customary laws of land tenure; the dependence of their economy on individual households; their political autonomy under their kings and chiefs; their economic independence as a people; all of this would be eroded through Grey's stratagem.

Indeed after years of putting European magistrates among amaXhosa chiefs and educating their children under "talented and honourable European gentlemen", the damage was inflicted, the mind and heart of amaXhosa was colonized. This is clearly seen in the reaction of both the indigenous rulers and educated Africans to British colonialism. They had indeed been induced to adopt British

customs. Let us look at this as illustrated in the testimony given by King Ngangelizwe before the Native Laws and Customs Commission (1883) (quoted in Swartz, 1995: 60). At this time “Paramount Chief Ngangelizwe was a salaried leader under British subjection, paid two hundred pounds a month”.

***Commission:** And before the government came into the country, if a man was dissatisfied what did he do?*

***Ngangelizwe:** He appealed to Ngangelizwe. If not satisfied with a small court, he appealed to a higher. That was in the old time; but at present in a case which is settled by a small chief, the man does not appeal to Ngangelizwe, but to the magistrate.*

Pertaining to land issues the commission probed and established that traditional leaders were not at liberty to do as they pleased with land. As guardians and custodians of the land, they were not allowed to sell it but were obliged to make it available to whoever needed to use it for sustenance, even to white farmers:

***Commission:** And if the chief wanted to sell a portion of land to a European farmer, for instance, could he do so?*

***Ngangelizwe:** He could not sell the land, but he might allow the white man to occupy it as his subject. And when the white man left that land he would also have no right to sell it as he was given it.*

The total disregard for indigenous people’s customs was shown when this Commission recommended to the British Government of the Cape:

*that the lands in the territories now occupied by tribes or sections of tribes shall, by formal title deeds granted by Crown, be settled and vested in Boards of Trustees nominated by Government, ... subject to such rules and regulations as Government may fix. (in Swartz, 1995: 73)*

After this commission the Glen Grey Act of 1894 was established. This piece of legislation, according to Wiggins (1929: 26) was intended to weaken and destroy the indigenous institution of governance, “deprive the chief of his power over land” and to “replace chiefs by appointed salaried headmen”.

Theophilus Shepstone, who worked among amaXhosa as a “diplomatic agent” in 1835 and in Natal between 1845 and 1875, was regarded as “the father of Africans”. He has been acknowledged as the

author of the “location system” he crafted in Natal, “using judicious and tactful methods” (Brookes, 1924: 28). Single-handedly, noted Brookes, “without the use of a single trooper, and without the loss of a single life”, Shepstone was able to push 80 000 Africans into fixed homes in his locations. He became “ruler in everything” over Africans put under him in Natal (1924: 20), to the extent that he “nominated and officiated in crowning Cetywayo King of amaZulu” (Swartz, 1995: 80). His intention, according to Binns (1963: 70), was to “transform him that his own people would not know him”.

Shepstone had a “profound realization that African institutions were strong and that it would take cunning and stratagem to erode them. He recommended, thus, that the chiefs be made to seem important while true power was to be shifted to whites” (Swartz, 1995: 81). Welsh (1971: 112) noted that what Shepstone essentially aimed at was that “tribal independence ... be forbidden at all cost”.

What is especially disturbing and astounding in the responses to foreign rule by the European-educated elite African (which included chiefs) is how they had come to take for granted the preeminence of British institutions and control over theirs. Both Shepstone and Grey were unambiguous in their plans for the total subjugation of Africans. The government, Shepstone urged (Holden 1963: 182), should:

*begin at the beginning, where the commencement ought to have been made years ago, ... let the government state in plain and distinct terms that the Kafir are British subjects, under British law, and subject to British institutions ... Let the Kafir Chiefs be set aside altogether; and let the Kafirs know we acknowledge no chief but the Queen of England ... Let it be known that her majesty is chief alone.*

This is indeed what British imperialism seems to have succeeded in bringing about. In numerous “petitions” to the British Government and in “testimonies” before various commissions, black representatives of several organizations hardly questioned the authority of the British government and Queen over them. Many a bill and law passed by Parliament was opposed; many a “petition” and “delegation” sent to the Queen appealing for her intervention in their protestations; but all was to no avail. Remarkably, nowhere did any of these make reference to the opinion of the African Kings. The representations were made without even consulting their own indigenous structures of governance, especially the kings. These “petitions” and “delegations” in effect were evidence of the

disdain with which black leaders had come to regard their own institutions, institutions that gave substance and sustenance to the African identity and self.

The following utterances by representatives of the South African Native National Congress before the Eastern Transvaal Natives Land Committee, January 8, 1918, illustrates the extent to which black leaders had come to legitimize racial ascendancy and judge their own humanity through Western humanism.

*Solomon Tutu: I am a representative of the South African Native National Congress. ... The sore point with us is this proposed segregation; ... that there has been no land set apart for natives on the high veld.*

*Joseph Hlubi: I am a Swazi and representative of the South African Native National Congress. It is repugnant for us that we should be made to live apart from the white people. We want to live among them. Before you white people came, there was a great deal of bloodshed and trouble among us. Then when you came, we lived among you and we became men. We rose in the scale of civilization, ... we became well ordered under the rule of the white men.*

Here is the vindication of both Daly and Spivak's point, African leaders affirming and "participating in the colonialist tradition of saving nonwhites from themselves" (in Mowitt, 2001: 9).

In 1914 the *Cape Argus* published a "Petition to King George V, from the South African Native National Congress, July 20 (Document 35 in Karis & Carter, 1972).

*To His Most Excellent Majesty, George, V, ... May it please Your Majesty: The humble petition of the undersigned most humbly and respectfully showeth: That the petitioners are Your Majesty's most loyal and humble subjects, who have always been loyal ... and still desire to continue to be loyal to Your Majesty's throne and person. ... representatives of the South African National Native Congress, ... most humbly approach Your Majesty as their King, their father and protector.*

The impact of this gullibility and cultural effacement is still with us. Indeed, the "one-eyed" monster of Eurocentrism has nurtured socio-political leadership in South Africa. We were, very early, made ready to become a "nation-state" sold to a capitalistic view of society; little wonder that

the administration of state and society, the management of economic and other resources doggedly follow the Eurocentric blueprint according to which human beings and society must serve the economy rather than the other way round; a “nation-state” totally oblivious of the primacy of duty among humans as the prerequisite in making sustainable development a reality.

The language of the petition quoted above epitomizes the degree of self-denigration reached at that time and the disdain these representatives had developed for their own institutions. It is against such blatant self-denigration that Seme called for a spiritual regeneration. Biko observed: “spiritual poverty ... creates mountains of obstacles” (1978: 28). Against such a transformation Polanyi (1945: 79) warned: “Robbed of the protective covering of cultural institutions, human beings would perish from the effects of social exposure; they would die as victims of acute social dislocation through vice, perversion, crime, and starvation”.

Polanyi might as well as have been describing the social degradation that Tiyo Soga perceived emerging among his people, amaXhosa, during his era. Conscious of this negative development Soga conceptualized a counteractive response and strategy.

### **6.3 Tiyo Soga: “Live for the elevation of your degraded, despised, down-trodden people”**

From the 1835 diary of C.L. Stretch (quoted in Cousins, 1899), Member of the Legislative Council of the Cape Parliament, has trickled some information giving glimpses of “old Soga”, as Tiyo Soga’s father has often been described by writers. Jotelo Soga is introduced by Stretch (nicknamed *Xololelizwe*, one who brings peace, by amaXhosa) as one of Chief Maqoma’s counsellors who often visited him at Adelaide. (Chief Maqoma, whose father Chief Ngqika with his wives had developed a liking for strong European drink, as we have seen in a previous chapter, had himself become an alcoholic by 1835.)

Jotelo is described as having been the first among amaXhosa from the tribe of amaNgqika to have been attracted by the farming technology used by colonists. He was challenged by Stretch, whom he “begged” for cattle since his had all been “lost in the war”, to “take the trouble to dig them out of the field”. Four months from the time of this strange advice Jotelo had done just that. He had “produced peas, onions, barley and potatoes” for sale to colonial soldiers stationed at Fort Cox, and

made enough money to increase his cattle. He was granted a plough and “Johannes Clasens, Martinus Muller, and Pretorius Buise, ... by order of Government [were] sent” to provide him with some agricultural extension services. He seems to have taught himself to irrigate many acres of his land using a water-furrow, a first by an African according to Stretch. With such an introduction to the European way of life, Jotelo seemed to have resolved to expose his children to European education.

Tiyo Soga was one of “thirty-nine children” from Jotelo’s eight wives. He grew up not knowing his exact date of birth. But as he grew to become an educated young man he traced his year of birth to a memorable year in the history of amaXhosa. “My mother”, he related to John A. Chalmers, his biographer, “tells me I was born during the year that Makoma (Maqoma) was expelled from the Kei River, and I find [from reading Justus’ book *The Wrongs of the Kafir Race*] that event took place in 1829” (Chalmers, 1878: 7). 1829, according to Samuel Rolland who traveled “Kaffraria” and gave its account in April 1830, is the year in which Chief Ngqika died (in Germond, 1967: 126).

Tiyo Soga was exposed to European education while growing up at Tyhume. He was first taught by his brother Festiri – who became one of the church elders at Mgwali, near Qumra (Williams, undated). Much about Tiyo’s development and the state of amaXhosa during his era has been documented by John Chalmers, the second son of the missionary William Chalmers, who was born at Tyhume, eight years later than Tiyo, in 1837.

John grew among amaXhosa, and “was impregnated by their life and customs and could speak their tongue like a native”, notes Donovan Williams (1978: xiv). He was among the Europeans who observed and admitted the negative influence that the British had had among amaXhosa. As noted in a previous chapter, Chalmers believed that “the outlaws and the refuse of the mother country, ... the vilest excrescences, the ignorance and the wickedness of Britain” had been imported into the colonies and amaXhosa had imbibed their vices (in Williams, 1978: 92).

According to Williams, the name given to Tiyo at “his birth by his mother, was Sani – a contraction of ‘Zisani’, ‘What bringest thou?’ ” (1978: 10). This name was to be replaced later by another, “Tiyo”, given to him by his father. The name Tiyo was given “after an influential Galeka councilor who was brave on the battlefield, and wise in his counsels at the great place” where the leader of amaXhosa resided. Undoubtedly Jotelo Soga, despite his acceptance of much good that was brought among his people by the Europeans, like many of his countrymen had fought for freedom against

their rule. Despite his desire to have his sons educated, he must have hoped that this would not become a way of further subjugation but be the attainment of positive influence for the benefit of his country. Just as he had been the first to adopt white people's technology in the utilization of the soil but had stayed in close cultural connection with his people, he must have hoped that education would benefit his children but not alienate them from their own.

Tiyo indeed became educated and stood out among his countrymen in this regard. As hoped by his father, Tiyo did obtain "knowledge", even about "that One blessed life of self-sacrifice, which on the cross bore the sins of all men, even of Kaffirs, in His own body" (Chalmers, in Williams, 1978: 12).

This is what Tiyo found and emulated in his own life, as he had learnt from Jesus of Nazareth. He came back from being educated overseas to devote his life to his people. His own health deteriorated in the course of his labours among them. Owing to his extensive preaching he developed laryngitis and later, asthma, but for a long time he hid this so that his employers would not restrict his labour of love among his people.

All along Tiyo Soga had been aware of the many wrongs that his people had suffered under the British. Despite having received many advantages himself through association with the best among them in his work, he never lost consciousness and mindfulness about the ills that the same people had caused among amaXhosa. He never kept quiet about these. He observed and addressed the issues, often suggesting counter strategies.

At a time when African kings, their dignity, governance systems and African values were being belittled, even by his European fellow missionaries, Tiyo Soga made his mind known on these matters, thus displaying and articulating a keen mindfulness and original thoughts on black consciousness, what Chalmers called "over-sensitiveness about his colour and nationality" or "his Kaffirhood" (1878: 435 & 439). One instance in which this came vividly to the fore was the time when King Sarhili, who had lost about two-thirds of his land forcibly at the hands of the white colonial government, requested a missionary from the Free and Presbyterian Churches to be sent to work among his people.

A decision was taken that Soga be the one sent. He had no problem with this, but he had a problem with the manner in which his white co-missionaries were handling the matter. "Soga intimated his

willingness to accede to their request”, but on condition that one of the relational norms of the major value of “ubuntu” and universal civility be observed by the Church authorities, by informing Chief Sandile, “his chief, to whose tribe he chiefly ministered, of their decision, and reason for his removal. One of the brethren present, said he could not see that Sandilli, a heathen chief, had anything to do with the matter, and suggested that, as Mr Soga was willing to go, he should be disjoined” (Chalmers, 1878: 439) and sent away without any regard for Chief Sandile.

Conscious of this blatant disrespect for his chief, Soga rose “to his feet, and in a few pointed, burning sentences, exhibited to perfection the Kaffir patriot and the Christian missionary, and made the offending brother, and all present, feel and heartily acknowledge that the course which he had proposed was the only one that could be taken” (Chalmers, 1878: 439).

Soga was a man deeply pained by the degradation of his nation. He often referred to his people as “my poor countrymen”, observed Chalmers. This “gentleman by creation” to whom “the character of another was as sacred as his own” was, to the self-important co-missionaries who considered themselves superior to “Kaffirs”, an object lesson in a life driven by aesthetic relational values. Though he “was not offended at a trifle, ... if anything seemed to depreciate his countrymen, ... or if he imagined himself insulted because he was a Kafir, he became completely unnerved”, noted Chalmers (1878: 439).

Soga was himself the personification of compassionate living. He keenly felt the poverty of his countrymen as his very own. He considered an insult or a disservice inflicted on them to be a “stab which I deserve because I am one of them”. He lived his life in respect for all human dignity, irrespective of colour. A maxim he gave to his own sons was: “Insult no human being; but fear no man, ... Cowards insult ... A brave man and a gentleman never insults”. But Tiyo never confirmed the lie that Europeans believed about their superiority as a race, by “the offensive aping of the Englishman” that was, then, “so common among his young countrymen” (Chalmers, 1878: 434 & 443). Considering the widespread effort today among African women to wear hairstyles that conceal their own; the race to be educated in English medium schools so as to assume an English accent in speech; the race led by political leaders, from the local level of government to the national, to live in white suburbs, while little commitment is shown to making villages and townships safe and livable places – this “aping of the English” seems to be forging relentlessly forward.

Though his works may be “badly neglected by historians of southern Africa” (Williams, undated: 1) and socio-political commentators, Tiyo Soga believed that traditional black values had “intrinsic and desirable worth”. He wrote prolifically on such matters. The following comments are all found in Williams (1978: 90–103).

On African unity:

*Tamboekies [abaThembu] – Mampondos – Mampondomisi – Mabomvana – Galekas [amaGcaleka] – Zulus – Maswazi – These are all pure Kaffir races – one in language and manners.*

*I find the Negro from the days of the old Assyrians downwards, keeping his “individuality” and “distinctiveness” amid the wrecks of empires, and the revolution of ages.*

On black territorial integrity:

*Africa God has given to Ham and all His descendants – my firm belief is that nothing shall ever dispossess them of this inheritance – that God will keep the Kaffir in his southern portion of it – and that God will so overrule events as always to secure this.*

*I find him [the Negro] opposed by nation after nation and driven from his home. I find him enslaved – exposed to all vices and the brandy of the white man. I find him in this condition for many a day – in the West Indian Islands, in Northern and Southern America, and in the South American Colonies of Spain and Portugal, ... exposed to all these disasters, and yet living – multiplying and never extinct.*

To Soga, black people were one people, wherever they might be in the world. He was mindful of the largeness of the African continent, the largeness of the numbers of those to whom Africa belonged by divine ordination despite the trials that took them elsewhere, and their resilience. Before him no African or black consciousness writer had so articulated such thoughts.

On the preservation of history, culture and tradition:

*What was history or legend should be recounted. What has been preserved as tradition should be related. Whatever was seen heard or done under the requirements of custom should be brought to light and placed on the national table to be sifted for preservation. ...*

*Let us bring to life our ancestors: Ngconde, Togu, Tshiwo, Phalo, Rharhabe, Mlawu, Ngqika and Ndlambe. Let us resurrect our forebears who bequeathed to us a rich heritage.*

On respect for authority:

*Raise your hats to chiefs and respectable people. To white gentlemen bow your heads gently even though you do not utter a word. Do that to white people who deserve this. This is pleasing.*

On pride in blackness and uniqueness:

*I told them (the three boys) when they left me, that though their mother is white, they were to consider themselves black men, and that they were to take their place as Kaffirs – a race of which they need never be ashamed, ... of powerful, eloquent, independent councilors. ... I am a Kaffir of the Kaffirs. To me that fact is a mere straw driven by the wind; but you, Englishmen, lay great stress on such things, and sometimes I see it is of advantage to tell them that socially, all though not politically, we too can lay claim to such honourable an ancestry as they can (Williams, 1978: 103).*

On education: Tiyo grappled with the issue of education and the future of black children. He revealed his mind on the matter in handling the education of his own three boys:

*In our various colonial towns, there are Government-aided schools, which may be attended by the children of all, black and white, without distinction; but it is a question whether the higher class of schools in these towns may be attended by coloured children, even though their parents are respectable (Williams, 1978: 103). [Soga used 'coloured' interchangeably with 'black']*

Tiyo expressed these forebodings in a letter to Rev Dr Anderson in Scotland, in September 1869. Education institutions, in as far as they were meant for black children, were designed to persuade them, by any means, of the superiority of whiteness and the stupidity of the black point of view. There was a façade of equality in state schools which concealed this evil purpose. The education provided effectively created a divide which would be perpetuated in every facet of society: a skills divide, a governance divide, an economic divide, effectively a spiritual divide that would keep both black and white in perpetual inequality, one lower than the other, one superior to the other. The existing institutions of education in the colony were serving the purpose of structuring society for the selfish benefit of white people.

Out of a concern going much further than for mere education for his boys, to that of instilling a character and love in them for labouring self-sacrificially for and among their own people, as a matter of duty, as he had done, Tiyo admitted (Williams, 1978: 103–106):

*I do not wish to be the first to raise this delicate question about my children, as it might lead to controversy which would injure their prospects for life. God has enabled me to live down these prejudices so far as they concerned myself; but I would never think of subjecting young natives to an ordeal such as I have passed through at the outset of their career, lest they might be ruined by it.*

Tiyo revealed in this letter that he was quite cognizant of the damage that institutions such as the Lovedale Seminary were inflicting on black children and their future.

*At the Lovedale Seminary our coloured children have prosecuted their studies and mingled in happy friendship with white boys, without being put to shame on account of their colour. To bind my boys down permanently at this Institution, admirable as it is, would curb the natural bent or inclination of their minds with reference for the future (Chalmers, 1878: 412).*

In another letter to one Mr Bogue in January 1870, Tiyo elaborated on why he had decided to send his sons away at the tender ages of eight, ten and eleven (Chalmers, 1878: 412–414).

*If God blesses my intentions regarding them, and answers my prayers, they may all the sooner be able to do something for themselves, for their mother, the younger children, and their own country.*

Thus Tiyo demonstrated that he believed in compassionate living, in being “saved to serve” and in restitutive development. He continued:

*If they act according to my desires and prayers, they go to Scotland to obtain an education to benefit their own countrymen. They are not needed in Scotland, and are much required in Kaffirland. Although they should be so defective in intellectual powers as not to rise higher than tinkers, they must come home and practise that craft for the benefit of poor Kaffirland. (Chalmers, 1878: 412)*

Tiyo concluded the letter with a profound request and a plea that contemporary leaders should heed in South Africa: “Encourage among them, my dear friend, by every means, love to home, love to country, and love to race” (Chalmers, 1878: 413).

In the realm of trade and business, as will be noted below, Tiyo maintained this master strategy; he advocated business approaches and methods that benefited communities. The approach he advocated in education he pursued in every other aspect of life, for the benefit, not of self but society, beginning with one’s own community. Business enterprises, in Tiyo’s philosophy, ought to be means not for self-enrichment but for the generation of wealth for the benefit of the entire community.

It is in the light and understanding of this reasoning and noble intentions that the strategy we shall consider below came from Tiyo’s mind and heart.

### **6.3.1 Tiyo Soga’s advice to his sons: A master strategy against exploitative, community-depressant human practices**

Aware of the prejudices that would continue keeping his children in poverty because of their appearance Soga wrote a special “*small note-book*” entitled “*The Inheritance of My Children*”. It contained “sixty-two pithy maxims for their guidance”. What we shall consider here are a few extracts that have been made public from this sacred text that was “intended to be seen and read only by his own children” (Chalmers, 1878: 429).

Soga’s Maxim	Implication
I. It is the height of wickedness, a libel against God’s creation, for men to hate others for differing in skin from themselves.	Never regret being born with African blood. It is every whit as good and as pure as that which flows in the veins of my fairer brethren.
II. God has made from creation no race of men mentally and morally superior to other races.	It is the desire to learn and improve continuously that makes the difference between men.

III. Vanity, pride, conceit, boastfulness and egotism are very hateful features in a man's character. Avoid them above all things.	Live with humility, obedience and diligence.
IV. In learning anything ... go to the foundation of it.	Excel in any branch of knowledge you set your mind to. Avoid superficiality and shallowness. Become original thinkers not imitators.
V. Be courageous. Be manly, early.	All the difference between the success of some men and the failure of others mainly lies in the possession or in the want of self-confidence, courage and manliness.
VII. Love men as your fellow creatures.	No man should dislike others, because they are not like himself, or are not his countrymen. Love all men".
XIV. Set your face against scandal – the assassination of a neighbour's character.	If you cannot defend another do not hear him maligned. Scandal is easily put down if you can muster courage to say: "I will not sit and listen to defamation of character."
XXXI. As men of colour, live for the elevation of your degraded, despised, down-trodden people.	Assist one another; patronize talent in one another; prefer one another's business, shops. ... It is better to prefer and elevate kindred and countrymen before all others.
XLI. Should Providence make you prosper in life, cultivate the habit of employing more of your own race, than any other, by way of elevating them. For this purpose prefer them to all others ...	Union in every good thing is strength. ... Disseminate this idea among all your countrymen, should you have any influence with them.
LI. Expect to be found fault with, and to be misunderstood ... Be not much concerned at this if you have a clean breast and a pure conscience.	Learn in secret to subdue and correct in yourself what you know to be wrong.

LII. Insult no human being; but fear no man when you are in the right.	A sense of righteousness makes a man brave and a brave man never insults.
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A superficial interpretation of some of Soga’s maxims may translate into racial discrimination. Only when one understands the context and the age-old obligation that each person has to those of his/her household will the nobility of the advice shine. Indeed projects like “Proudly South African” in the economic arena do lean toward this thinking. When communities are encouraged through the tenet of mutual beneficence to support local businesses, thus increasing the number of times their money circulates among them, in their community, they will soon see that this is the means to their own livable, efficient, and self-reliant community. No community can live interdependently and in dignity alongside others if it has not demonstrated its confidence in itself, self-appreciation and independence.

Tiyo Soga cannot but be acknowledged, in terms of Ketan Patel’s analysis and intuition, as a “master strategist”. He clearly understood that “you cannot effect sustainable change without changing minds” (2005: 80). His thoughts and teachings, therefore, were powerful, purposeful and principled.

The task of social transformation, to be successful among black people, must commence where the ruin was focused. As shown above, the policies of the colonizers were aimed at estranging the indigenous people from themselves. For as long as this is not given the attention it deserves, prioritized and elevated to a national consciousness level, black people in South Africa will remain a thorn in the flesh not only of themselves but of every other nation that has anything to do with them.

*Robbed of the protective covering of cultural institutions, human beings would perish from the effects of social exposure; they would die as victims of acute social dislocation through vice, perversion, crime, and starvation. (Polanyi, 1945: 79)*

## 6.4 The physical manifestations of the great human loss

Spiritual poverty is not easily detectable. The physical designs from a mind bereft of spiritual wealth, however, are readily accessible through our senses. Black townships from Kaya-Mnandi in Stellenbosch to Mamelodi in Pretoria are monuments that bear unequivocal testimony to the fact that the apartheid planners were unconcerned and indifferent to the consideration of whether the

migrant labour hostels and the “match-box” house they designed for black families were ugly and unhealthy or not. These cold featureless structures were a far cry from the majestic church structures that the apartheid government helped the Afrikaner people to erect. The ethnically limited respect the Afrikaner community enjoyed from their government was articulated in the physical structures they agreed to build for one another.

The sad realization in the post-apartheid era is that village, town and city planning still display a disregard for human scale. In Gugulethu, Duncan Village, Kwa-Langa, Atteridgeville and countless other black townships, not only are the apartheid houses and settlements intact, but very often more grotesque structures, hardly wholesome for human habitation, continue to mushroom. Production of housing happens simply to meet targets. The expansion in South African towns and cities is indifferent to the social destiny that is likely to be attained in the settlements. It seems to matter not that these settlements debase the people inhabiting them. This kind of development is accelerating as the demand for service delivery becomes more and more violent in South Africa. Just as the world’s leading metropolitan settlements have been stalked by the problem of urban exhaustion with few innovative solutions being forthcoming, South African counterparts are on a path in which their development will be limited by their catastrophic results.

The city decay in the Tshwane metropole; the widening poverty and income gap between ethnic groups; socio-economic segregation such as distinguishes the inhabitants of affluent Sandton City and those of nearby Alexandra township in the Johannesburg metropole; the multiplication of crime even inside the gated communities whose walls betoken the fear of the inhabitants inside the fortresses; the migration of industry from the cities, leaving behind families totally reliant on state grants for a livelihood; the accelerating frustrations with public transportation and congestion on public roads; the erosion in morality attested to by the steep increase in teenage pregnancies in our schools; all are evidence of a deep-seated spiritual poverty in planning culture.

On the last point, a recent news item reported that more than 5 000 Eastern Cape schoolgirls, 55 of them in grade five, fell pregnant in 2006. This meant Eastern Cape was the South African province with the most teenage pregnancies. Moreover the figure had almost doubled since 2004, when 2 615 schoolgirl pregnancies were reported (News24, 2007).

There is growing apathy in the large settlements to civic issues and the palpable indifference of the individual to the violence inflicted on, especially, vulnerable groups such as women, children and the elderly; all of these aberrations are part of a systemic social mess.

One hardly sees any town, village or city designed in such a manner as to facilitate and encourage inhabitants to congregate in authentic community. Even in the first decade of democracy in South Africa, from little to no consideration was given to providing spaces such as for child recreation and community parks as thousands upon thousands of squares of unhygienic cement brick houses were delivered to the poor. Black townships, even under black political leadership, continued to be the dormitories that the apartheid administration designed them to be.

People come together mostly in crowded trains, taxis ranks and shopping malls, where they rub shoulders in total anonymity and indifference to each other's presence. They clog public amenities enshrouded in a culture of estrangement in cities that boast the most advanced developments in information technology and communication. Human qualities, if any are still there, must be buried under blank countenances that pass each other as if they were inanimate objects.

This is a tragic picture of people who are insensitive and estranged from each other. Each takes from and dumps on the common environment that sustains us all whatever he or she can, unconcerned of the consequences their actions have on others. Each pillages and plunders for self gain. This is the logic of the capitalist market. The logic itself is rooted in minds that have lost the capacity to relate to other humans. Such people, as Bookchin (1986: 101) calls them, are "withered individuals"; separated and detached from others, they have lost the sense of purposeful living.

Aesthetic spiritual qualities are wanting in just about everything we do. The reason is not hard to find. Individuals who have lost internal aesthetics are incapable of producing aesthetically rich designs. Huge are the townships that are being built, gigantic are the skyscrapers being erected; but they are structural monstrosities devoid of any grace or sense of place and evoke no awe and no admiration in us. They are gigantic but lacking in grandeur.

Biko warned that the black child, after years of being educated to "hate his heritage", would hate himself to the extent of seeking and finding "solace in close identification with the white society". To many today, living a "white lifestyle" is a sign of achievement. Black-township-living still "makes it a miracle for anyone to live up to adulthood" (Biko, 1978: 109). These settlements are

still the dungeons where “rape and murder are very common aspects of our life” (Biko, 1978: 109). All of this is symptomatic of the spiritual poverty that besets the people. Indeed, “material want is bad enough, but coupled with spiritual poverty it kills. And this latter effect is probably the one that creates mountains of obstacles in the normal course of emancipation of the Black people” (Biko, 1978: 28).

Despite the widespread symptoms of degeneracy, the research conducted among amaXhosa now living in over-crowded, employment-dependent and poverty-ridden urban townships and rural villages attests to the existence of remnants of the values that graced the pre-colonial lifestyle of amaXhosa in South Africa. Speaking and being accompanied by a delegation of traditional leaders in a function held at the Walter Sisulu University on 27 October at Mthatha, Eastern Cape, as the national president of the Congress of Traditional Leaders in South Africa, Chief Patekile Holomisa (2007) attested to the resilience of the “principles of communality and neighbourliness” among our people. He made a passionate plea for a return to these principles as a means for development and living in every facet of our lives. He noted:

*“Sikhweb’ ibuyambo. Sithi kwezo ndawo sikuzo nokuba kukwiliphina icandelo lobom, masizame sisebenzele ukuba iimfundiso esikhuliswe ngazo zibenalo ifuthe khonukuze sibuyele ebuntwini bethu” / We are calling for the return to our humanity through working to make the traditional principles of education through which we were raised relevant and effective in whatever line of living.*

*“Sisakholelwa ngokusebenzisana nokwakhana ngokwenzelana amalima” / We still believe in collaborating to build one another.*

*“Sakha imizi ngamalima; silimisana ngamalima; iintlanti zethu sizibiya nangamalima; xa siswelekelwe siyancedisana, xa sisonwaba ngemigidi nemidudo siyancedisana; xa amasela esiba imfuyo yethu sihlaba umkhosi sancedisane ukuyofuna nokubamba amasela”. We build our houses, cultivate crops in our fields, build our livestock kraals through collaboration. Whether we mourn our dead, rejoice when our youth come of age or search for our stolen livestock, we do it all through collaboration and mutual assistance.*

Even through the prejudiced eyes of some European observers who perceived amaXhosa as irredeemable, unsalvageable and godless savages, the forcefulness of the aesthetic relational values that graced their lifestyle during the early days of their contact with Europeans has been bountifully

demonstrated. The variety of graces that made the lifestyle of amaXhosa admirable, whose remnants are still prevalent in isolated cases, were an adornment of their personal, family and communal intercourse. Relations and attitudes not only towards members of the community but also towards strangers were touched and defined by these graces.

The reference point of living among amaMbo – of which amaXhosa are a branch – has always been *Umdali*, the Creator of heaven and earth and the seas and everything in them. The dimensions of the Creator's character, "compassion", "mercy", "kindness", "forgiveness", and a myriad others, were highly cherished and applied in day-to-day living in and relations with virtually all forms of life. It is therefore not surprising that the fullness of *ubuntu*, humanness, is approached in each person's life to the degree that these values are demonstrated in the relationship of each being towards all life. To this day amaXhosa are reluctant to refer to a being whose life demonstrates greed and other forms of cruelty as *umntu*. Often such beings are called *into*, a thing, without a soul, as "it" has lost sensitivity and consciousness of others as worthy of respect.

## **6.5 Implications for sustainable development**

### **6.5.1 Restoration of Sabbath observance and African regeneration**

As attested to and confirmed by a wide variety of research, the observance of the "Sabbath in Africa can clearly be traced and established from its Edenic roots, through the Hebraic dispersion and its native Hebraic and Christian origins" (Davis, 2001). In the call that continues to be made by one African leader after another for an African Renaissance or the Regeneration of Africa at the spiritual level, it is unthinkable, within the logic of the argument thus far presented, that the "renaissance" or "regeneration" can be complete without giving consideration to the "remembering", recalling and restoration of the Sabbath, the memorial of God's creatorship and, by implication, of the "brotherhood of all mankind".

The Psalmist (Psalm 68: 31) looks to and expects a time when: "Ethiopians [Africans] will raise their hands in prayer to God".

The Prophet Zephania (3: 10) also predicted that: "From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering".

And the Prophet Isaiah (56: 6 & 7) that: “those foreigners who become part of His people, who love Him, who observe the Sabbath, ... I will bring ... in my house of prayer, ... a house of prayer for all nations”.

In his work *The Sabbath roots* (1999), Charles Brooks has pointed to evidence of an expanding consciousness of the Sabbath among Africans. What are the implications of this restoration? This has profound implications of continental and global proportions as we shall see when dealing with the likelihood of the emergence of intolerance around the Sabbath issue below.

“Remembering to keep the Sabbath”, to observe this memorial of creation, helps humans to remember the origin and source of all life. This memorial keeps human pride in check, reminds humans not to elevate themselves above other forms of life, not to abuse and oppress their fellow creatures and to remember that all men and women have a common Father and Creator. This day becomes a reminder that all types of inequalities among humans are unnecessary smokescreens. Little wonder that the Israelites, who had just been freed from a slavery that lasted over four centuries in Egypt, had to be reminded by their leader Moses of the Sabbath as a day regarded as “holy” by the Creator; a day which every creature therefore must “keep holy”.

Keeping this day holy has profound implications. Among these is the fact that all forms of inequity among humans have to be abandoned. On this day of freedom from inequity – which the concept of holiness must include – each person must stand before all others and before the Creator in full freedom, with nothing to hide; nothing to be ashamed of; free from guilt. All the dehumanization that characterizes working for others stops. “Male servants” and “female servants” must go through this day in full equality with their “bosses”. Indeed there is no “boss” on the Sabbath. All forms of discrimination among strangers must be put away. The day provides a break from all sorts of inter-human cruelties. Indeed, King Solomon regarded and analyzed cruelty towards others as cruelty to their Maker: “He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker” (Proverbs 14: 31).

But this freedom is not restricted to inter-human relations. It extends to and affects all of creation, including animals. When the Israelites were reminded to “keep” the Sabbath they were reminded to keep it with their cattle. As such, the Sabbath assumes an invaluable importance for sustainable development. It makes demands on all humans to treat all life with respect; it demands the application of the relational principles in our daily experiences with all life. It assumes the importance of an instrument for stability and harmony between humans and all other forms of life.

Any society that learns to “keep the Sabbath” conscientiously will see the observance restoring social, political, economic and environmental stability as humans realize that they do not have the licence to abuse each other and the environment. In chapter two we noted the consequences of disregarding the Sabbath in the history of the Northern Kingdom of Israel with headquarters in Samaria; how socio-political leaders and their institutions became involved in the systemic oppression of the weak in society. We saw the Sabbath as an institution of grave import, a shield against social and political decay.

On a more beneficial continental scale growing devotion to the Sabbath does not simply hold the promise of uniting Africa under the formalities of orthodox Christianity, it holds out the more profound promise of a communal Africa characterized by a peaceful existence and tolerance for diversity, even for an “otherly” external world, something that evades the continent now.

## **6.6 Recommendations**

### **6.6.1 Service delivery and human settlement development planning**

The despondency and human waste and suffering in South African townships, shacks and shanty towns, rural villages and in the pockets of poverty that exist in (or adjacent to) affluent export farms in areas such as Rawsonville near Worcester in the Western Cape and Duncan Village at the doorsteps of the city of East London, find a striking metaphor in the depressing physical environment that most black people live in. The country, like many in the rest of the world, is facing the pressure of urbanization. Under this pressure the designing of our towns and cities has become characterized by functionalist architecture. Very little is guided by spiritual considerations such as *ubuntu* and community. The functionalist designs of our age lack sacredness and are notable for an absence of architectural aesthetics.

Urban and rural designers and planners, apparently devoid of any consciousness regarding the need for human communion and socialisation, produce settlements that betray a preoccupation with commercial considerations. Everything seems dominated by structural efficiency to facilitate the goals of the market economy.

In this instrumentalist thinking and approach the disregard for human society and communal coherence has paved the way for a plethora of social aberrations. Hostility and the aggressiveness of humans towards each other is on the rise, reflecting the widespread neglect for social relations.

The subservience of community and human values to structural efficiency and functionalism has, through centuries of debasement, produced soulless inhabitants in soulless cities. Millions now live in Orwellian villages, with “squares of buildings” that “accommodate about 1,200 persons each”; with a “public kitchen, an infant school and a lecture room, ... lodging houses ... dormitories for all the children exceeding two in a family” (in Bookchin, 1986: 136). It is the cold callousness that has reproduced itself in our relationships.

More worrying about the government’s continuing provision of the apartheid type of cement brick “match-box” housing in South Africa is the work of Harvard School of Public Health’s Nancy Krieger and that of her elder brother James Krieger of the epidemiology, planning and evaluation unit at Public Health, Seattle and King County. Though these siblings work separately, they have produced work that has serious implications for the current delivery of housing in South Africa.

According to Drexler (2006: 2), Nancy Krieger’s work has led her to the conclusion that “racism and social class indelibly stamp diseases across populations”, and that there are “political and economic structures that prop up race and class differences in health”. This is made evident by the findings of her brother James who noted:

*The most common asthma triggers are well-known: mold (from dampness and poor ventilation), dust mites (from old carpeting and unwashed linen), cockroaches and rodents (from infestations in dilapidated homes), tobacco smoke, toxic indoor chemicals, and ozone and diesel particulates in congested urban areas. This list explains why the disease disproportionately strikes poor people and minority populations. In King County, Washington, children from low-income neighborhoods are three times more likely to be admitted to the hospital for asthma than children from well-heeled communities. (Dexler, 2006: 5)*

Chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma and chronic bronchitis are quite severe in South Africa. In fact deaths from asthma in the country, at 18,5 per 100 000 asthmatics, is a rate that is calculated as the fifth highest in the world (Masoli et al, 2003). Poor households that are still dependent on smoky domestic fuels such as paraffin, wood and coal for cooking and heating, and have to live in

poorly constructed and poorly ventilated low income housing, continue being victims. As a member of the Housing Support Office that advises the Eastern Cape Department of Housing, Local Government and Traditional Leaders, the author has been on service and product evaluation visits to many a housing project and listened to a barrage of complaints from households that were provided with houses with defects ranging from gaping cracks and doors that will not shut to walls that stay damp owing to poor workmanship.

All of the above is a consequence of a political governance system that hogs for itself the responsibility of planning, directing and implementing development for its citizenry. South Africa at present is preoccupied with the notion and aspires to be regarded as a “developmental state”. What we have suggested in the introductory chapter is a communal development state. A state that is open to be influenced by every voice in society. Such a state does not “direct” but co-directs development. It does not “row” but co-“steers”; rowing is the responsibility of the people that services are intended for. The state has to be a catalyst for the satisfaction and realization of the plurality or multiplicity of interests in its real. This as Swilling (1991) noted, enhances and deepens its legitimacy.

The systems thinkers, Gharajedaghi and Ackoff (1986: 18) have provided a definition for development that incorporates the notion of sensitivity to “abilities” “own needs” and the issue of “legitimacy”:

*“Development is the process in which people increase their abilities and desires to satisfy their own needs and legitimate desires and those of others.”*

Such a state that communes with various voices is not pro-active in its planning approaches but interactive. Such a state goes to the extent of encouraging associational living in society; it catalyses the emergence and building of community institutions, especially in incoherent neighbourhoods where cultural diversity threatens to slacken social development and growth. In many settlements in South Africa community is weak owing to the phenomenon of urbanization which draws strangers from all over the country to share common spaces without a common social vision. A state is not given but has to earn its own legitimacy by giving people in it the space to grow in their own abilities, allowing people to learn experientially by the options they choose, and to satisfy what they regard as legitimate desires.

There are subtle tell-tales that governance in South Africa has not moved much from the tyranny and the disrespect for human dignity and choice that characterized the colonial and apartheid governments of the past. When public managers are more concerned with pleasing constituent-serving party officials (ministers and presidents), legislatures and fear courts rather than being concerned with the quality of public services; when row upon row of identical “match-box” type houses, for which many must wait for years without the decency of an explanation where they are in the long “waiting lists” and the public must still endure one-size-fit-all offerings from public institutions, then we can be sure that the citizenry is at the mercy of disconnected governance whose attention is grabbed only by protest marches, episodes of heinous crimes in the media or the gutting down by fire of hundreds of shacks/informal/makeshift houses, in the middle of biting winters.

Government at any level that does not bring people into decision making processes, at best relying on consultative processes and irregular public meetings (*iimbizo*), giving communities no role to play in the delivery of services, reveals the extent to which the reigning political system is closed and distrusts the capacity of the citizenry to think and understand what they want. People, in response sit back and become victims of their own neighbourhoods because the police who must come and fight crime *for* them do not respond fast enough.

Community sensitive governance holds the promise of taking willing nations past the customer blind approaches of authoritarian and patronizing systems we have become accustomed to. A political system driven by the spirituality of aesthetic relational values is one destined to discover that communities are able to articulate productive and effective solutions to the problems that plague them when they are trusted as the basic problem-solving locus in complex social systems.

### **6.6.2 Reconnecting communities with the environment**

It is not only the type of housing that depresses the observer. The level of supportiveness in the surrounding physical environment of the houses is of grave importance, too. Among amaXhosa there used to be a popular expression that illustrated very aptly how as a people they put a premium on environmental aesthetics. The expression was “*ilizwe liyintombi*”; translated, “the land is as beautiful as an adorned virgin”. One wonders what has happened to this sense of beauty when experiencing the endless rows of “match-box” houses and treeless villages in black settlements. This very environment is as depressing as the stories of human callousness that come out from them from time to time.

In the fields of biology and eco-psychology there seems to be some agreement about the direct relationship between access to the beauty of nature and human wellness (Kellert & Wilson, 1993; Roszak et al, 1995). In the latter's work, for example, research revealed that patients who are able to view the beauty of nature through the window from their sick-beds in hospital – bird-life, flowers, the verdure of trees and grass – tend to recuperate faster from their ailments than those who can only view the unnatural such as parking lots. Herein, I believe, lies the sense and the method of Sabbath observance as the memorial of creation. This ancient African and Hebraic rite, must essentially, re-connect humanity, on a weekly regularity, with itself and with nature in a bond of mutual beneficence, leaving little room for aberrations such as xenophobia and environmental decline and the accumulation of disproportionate wealth in a milieu of widespread poverty and unemployment.

According to David Malakoff (2004: 2), writing in an American Community Gardening Association publication, there is proof from “a dizzying array of disciplines, ranging from psychology and economics to sociology and medicine” that greening communities “is a good investment”, that “Nature is not just ‘nice’ ... it is a vital ingredient in healthy human functioning”.

Malakoff makes reference to at least three categories of studies that prove that people benefit from a, literally, greened living environment. These three groups are outlined below.

#### *The background theories*

These studies attempt to explain why people respond positively to green spaces. One group of theorists (Ulrich and Parsons) has produced a theory that “people are overwhelmed by the noise, movement, and visual complexity of the modern world, and that quieter, less chaotic plant environments (such as a garden) reduce stress” (Malakoff, 2004: 3).

#### *People's response to plants and green spaces*

This category has looked into how a plant “can reduce stress, fear, and anger, and lower blood pressure and muscle tension.” Malakoff cites a study by Stephen and Rachel Kaplan that arrived at the conclusion that “nature provides the fatigued human mind with a ‘restorative’ change of peace.” (Malakof, 2004: 3).

#### *The role of plants in the development of healthy human communities*

This category, according to Malakoff, (2004: 3) “has attracted the most interest from community greeners”. He mentions the work of researchers like Relf who have identified no less than three distinct roles played by plants in community development. Plants:

- a. *provide a more livable environment by controlling physical factors such as temperature, noise, and pollution;*
- b. *help create a community image that is perceived as positive by both residents and outsiders; and*
- c. *create opportunities for people to work together to improve communities in many ways.*

Other studies that Malakoff cites are those by Mark Francis of the University of California, Jill Roper, a graduate student at Rutgers University and Marti Ross Bjornson of Northwestern University, all of which claim respectively that when communities build and maintain their own gardens, they harvest “unique social and economic benefits”; there is “increased ... frequency of interaction among the gardeners”; and “greenlining” results. Whereas “redlining” refers to the phenomenon whereby poor communities are isolated from accessing government and business (especially bank) services, “greenlining” refers to the realization noted by Bjornson that communities in garden projects are likely to find access to “non-profit and government officials they might never have known about and vice versa”. All of these are areas in which local municipalities could effect a turnaround without huge capital lay-out. A gardening competition among households, over a short space of time, can produce results similar to those experienced by many a poor community in the United States. Municipalities can facilitate the revival of social intercourse. With a little bit of awareness raised regarding the value of communing, the present Urban Renewal and Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategies can incorporate the provision of public amenities such as rural township parks where children can play again and people can converse and gossip again.

An interesting experience was related by participants in Limpopo during the course of training trainers for the national Department of Provincial and Local Government’s Community Based Planning (CBP) Programme in April 2006. According to them, since the local municipalities have provided water taps in rural communities in the province, young men are struggling to find lovers. This has come about because the “*meetings by the rivers*” that the world-renowned South African folksong writer and performer, Miriam Makeba, sings about, have come to a stop. The country’s leading urban renewal pilot in Alexandra township near Johannesburg would do well to consider a variety of land use patterns that ensure safe running, walking and bicycling. School pupils,

especially, can be assisted to access education, recreation, entertainment, shopping, and other local services in healthy ways.

What seems to be on the rise now is the design of what Ebenezer Howard (in Bookchin, 1986: 140) coined as “the garden city”. (Actually, the new garden cities in the UK built after WWII turned out to be horrible and soulless, because they had not grown organically.) In my interpretation these human settlements seek to balance the need for urban living with the need for affinity with nature. But inside the huge gated walls of these “golf estates” are people who do not have a shared and intimate social life. There are palatial homes so close to each other but none with organic interaction among the neighbours, even the shopping malls and the wide open manicured lawns that are so close and surround them do not engender community. The motives behind their establishment are purely economic and class related, underpinned by the fear and loathing of their poorer fellow humans. So, while people are so near to each other, they remain distant and isolated. Community is a mere masquerade depicted in the structural design but not in the heart and soul of the inhabitants.

People are connected and knitted together by aesthetic values that produce community among them. Human scale cannot be the product of structural designs. Housing is more than just a construction product, it is also a process and a lifestyle. The type of house, the quality of space it occupies and human factors (cultural, economic and political) all interrelate in such a manner that its provision cannot and should not be a matter of one government department or the concern of certain disciplines. It is a transdisciplinary concern.

### **6.6.3 Allowing communities to manage their environment**

The Development Bank of Southern Africa’s Unit devoted to assisting with development efforts in the Eastern Cape, the Eastern Cape Business Unit (ECBU), works very closely and is in continuous interaction with several government units that have to do with the physical environment in the province. These include the Department of Health; the Department of Economic Affairs, Environment and Tourism (DEAET); the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF); the Department of Land Affairs; and the Department of Agriculture, as well as a host of other departments associated with rural and urban development.

DWAF and the DEAET, however, are “the two key departments that the environmental sector covers” according to the ECBU (2007: 18). DWAF focuses on areas related “to water resource management, forestry and until recently waste management” while Environmental Affairs falls under the DEAET. This department has identified the intent and operations of its Environmental Affairs Programme as:

*to ensure the conservation of biodiversity and the protection of the environment through ecologically sustainable, economically efficient and socially equitable use of the environment in the Eastern Cape. The Programme operates through five designated sub-Programmes:*

- *Integrated Environmental Management*
- *Biodiversity Conservation Management*
- *Environmental Impact Management*
- *Coastal and Marine Management*
- *Waste and Air Quality Management.*

The State of the Environment Report (2004) produced by the Council for Scientific Investigation and Research, despite this intent by the Eastern Cape government, has found the following to be the actual condition in the province.

***Regarding the atmosphere and climate***

*The Eastern Cape Province does not appear to be a priority area as far as air quality is concerned, as is evidenced by the number and type of industries in the Province.*

*Monitoring of air quality in the Province is performed on a fragmented basis as no co-ordinated network exists.*

*No comprehensive assessment of air quality is therefore possible. Only ad hoc, very limited assessments can be made. In addition, little information is available on clinic admissions for respiratory infections. The majority of households, particularly those in rural areas, rely on fossil fuels such as paraffin and wood for domestic energy. Indoor air pollution is therefore a concern in the area, although it has not been quantified.(2007:20).*

### **Regarding biodiversity**

*Eastern Cape comprises seven different biomes, of which the Grassland, Nama Karoo, Thicket and Savanna biomes are the most extensive. A total of 316 threatened plant species are found in the province, more than one fifth occurring in the Thicket biome. The Forest and Fynbos biomes contain the highest number of threatened plants per unit area. There are three centres of endemism in the province, namely the Albany, Drakensberg and Pondoland centres.*

*The province is home to 4 endemic freshwater fish species, 8 threatened marine fish species, 6 threatened frog species (4 of these are endemic), and 19 threatened reptile species (18 of these are endemic).*

*More than 10% of Eastern Cape's surface area is conserved in some way, but only 4.3% is formally protected as National Parks or Provincial conservation areas. The distribution of protected areas is skewed, with almost half of the Local Municipalities having no protected areas even though they may contain rare, threatened or vulnerable species. Those municipalities with few rare, threatened or vulnerable species are well covered by protected areas.*

### **Regarding environmental management and governance**

*Environmental management and governance in the Eastern Cape is the responsibility of all stakeholders who have an impact on the environment. Three key stakeholder groups that play a significant role in the Eastern Cape are the Department of Economic Affairs, Environment and Tourism (DEAET), local government through municipalities and the private sector. Some positive actions are being taken by these groups to manage the environment, including the current restructuring of DEAET to respond to changes in national environmental policy, and the commitment of the private sector to environmental management through the implementation of environmental management systems. Areas of improvement include the inclusion of environmental management as a priority issue at the local government level.*

### **Regarding marine and coast management**

*The marine and coastal environment of the Eastern Cape is an extremely valuable asset. The coastline is over 820 km in length, covering various habitats that host a wide range of*

*biological diversity and resources. High levels of infrastructural development have occurred between the Kei and Kromme estuaries, resulting in increased pollution and decreased aesthetic appeal of the region. Inshore resources are heavily exploited in the Province, particularly north of the Kei estuary where rural subsistence lifestyles are prominent. Offshore resources are heavily exploited by commercial fishers.(2007: 22).*

Peter Britz, a fisheries scientist at Rhodes University's ichthyology department, gave an example of the exploitation of marine resources in the Eastern Cape in an article in *The Herald* (16 April, 2007), which cited estimates that in the Eastern Cape "poachers are tearing out at least a million kilograms of the shellfish [perlemoen] worth some R200 000 million a year". Writing to the national Environment and Tourism minister, he stated:

*Poaching has got so bad in the Bird Island MPA [marine protected area] that we refer to it as a 'marine pillaging area'; the poachers are operating with impunity. (Rodgers, 2007)*

What Britz apparently intended to highlight was on the one hand the inefficiency and lack of will in government circles to properly manage marine resources and on the other the greed-driven efficiency with which the resources are being pillaged by commercial interests from all over the world. He continued: "Our research team continues to monitor the illegal abalone fishery, and poaching effort has not decreased in any way. ... [The interventions of the] MCM [the department's Marine Coastal Management Unit] have been undermined by a seeming inability or lack of will by the MCM to work effectively with other agencies. Compliance staff in PE are demoralized by a lack of support for their initiatives and resource needs from MCM management in Cape Town." *The Herald*, 16, April, 2007).

#### **6.6.4 Focus on the future through children**

This study also makes recommendations that go much deeper than the structural design of new settlements to restore human intercourse. It begins with the resuscitation of the core element of society, the family, where aesthetic relational values are naturally best placed to be nurtured, slowly brewed and engendered from childhood. Self-indulgence can be curbed by the power of self-control. This is best started at infancy. Children can "be trained from infancy to habits of self-control" (White, 1949: 181). Youth is, indeed, an "index to the future" (White, 1949: 186). If society, from the base of each home, can invest in inculcating in young minds the need for humanity to rejoin the "circuit of mutual beneficence", and can ensure that each child should

contract with nature by “conforming to nature’s laws” through obedience, then our world can rest in the hope of attaining sustainable development.

A keen student of child education and nature, Ellen White, once advised:

*“The only schoolroom for children from eight to ten years of age should be the open air, amid the opening flowers and nature’s beautiful scenery. And their only textbook should be the treasures of nature”* (1923:21).

According to her observation, taxing young children’s minds with lessons before they are able to endure mental effort is hurtful. She advised that:

*“Children should be left as free as lambs to run out-of-doors, to be free and happy, ...”* (1923: 21).

The effects of this plan are tremendous:

*“In order for children and youth to have health, cheerfulness, vivacity, and well-developed muscles and brains, they should be much in the open air, ...”* (1923: 22).

It is in the early exposure of children to the simple beauty and relational living in nature that children are enabled to see that a self-serving lifestyle is contrary to the harmony in nature, that nature’s laws engender ministering to the needs of others.

Nature’s laws are as close to each person as those that affect our physiological make-up. Before drawing attention to nature’s laws as they pertain to the natural world that surrounds us each child can be made to obey these laws as they affect his/her own body. When an effort is made, beginning at the family circle, to teach young ones from childhood about how their own bodies are constituted, they will see how wonderfully and awesomely built they are. As they become aware of the harmony that exists between the various systems in the body, the pulmonary, respiratory, digestive, nervous, circulatory and others, and how interdependent each of these is to the other, their own mind will be drawn to collaborate in this harmony, to jealously guard it, intelligently.

Not all the facts, academic argumentation and theories about sustainable development will be enough to startle mankind out of its drunken stupor on the highway to the total destruction that the recent tsunamis and rising climate changes are pointing to. Fear is never a reliable basis for beginning a transformation. It is in the home circle that the human character is developed and

patterns of relating to others are formed. This is something that cannot be left to public institutions. Indeed they are ill-equipped for such a task. By the time a person lands in a juvenile “correctional facility” it is too late. The foundation for the great principle of caring for others with the same care one gives to oneself is best laid at home. This is the “Law of Life”. This is the “only safeguard for individual integrity, for the purity of the home, the well-being of society or the stability of the nation” (White, 1903: 111); it holds great promise for just about every successful and positive relationship within the entire human and non-human environment. It is in the home circle that the challenge to meet the interests of others first raises its head. Fail at home and fail in virtually all other human relations.

### **6.6.5 Education planning: Preparatory ground for compassionate citizenship**

Advocates of transdisciplinarity seem convinced that this particular approach to living has to be supported by education, primarily at the school and university levels, as “we are all products of a certain education, culture, history, opportunities and constraints. Education plays a fundamental role” (Berdea, 2005: 2). We need an education that “addresses the open totality of the human being and not just one of its components” (Berdea, 2005: 29). While it is important “to learn to know” getting training in various methods of knowledge; “to learn to do”, which is about attaining a profession, it is also very important “to learn to be”. This, difficult as it is and “appearing as an insoluble enigma” involves the imperative of “discovering our conditioning, discovering the harmony or disharmony between our individual and social life, testing the foundations of our convictions in order to discover that which is found underneath” (Berdea, 2005: 29).

As pointed out in the introductory chapter, there first has to be a focus at the deep and fundamental capacities of the individual as the building block of society. In other words, for any education system to work, it has to focus on the quality of the individuals, as free moral agents able to take decisions freely, outside the dictates of any norm, custom, law or moral code, as independent thinkers and doers. Education, whether at home, church or at school or university, has to be purposefully aimed at producing individuals with the capacity for self-transcendence, as compassionate citizens, not only within their immediate national or regional systems but the entire universe.

Formal schooling can only affirm this development and support the young ones’ preparation for compassionate citizenship when society becomes aware of its social destiny, with education that

does not ignore but balances intellectual acquirements with “goodness” and “noble character”. White (1903: 110) calls this the education that “covers the whole Circle of Obligation” – to ourselves as individuals, to the natural, physical environment including others, and to its Master-Designer. The young have to be educated to “fuse their deeply personal desires with higher social ideals” (Bookchin, 1986: 157).

This education becomes a radical departure from current schooling, which lays more emphasis on human rights than on the obligation each individual has towards the needs of other humans. Current schooling tends to feed “self-seeking”, “selfish ambition” and “greed for power” in our youth as the direct consequent of disregarding the importance of devoting attention to this vital Circle of Obligation. There is little doubt that at this point in the history of post-apartheid South Africa the country is caught in what has been described by Auditor-General, S. Fakie, as a “destructive spiral”; “a vicious circle of downward spiral” of corruption (Boyd Webb, 2006: 6).

In the current climate of growing the national economy and achieving social transformation through Black Economic Empowerment amongst others means, there is a false expectation. It is believed that “a virtuous circle” will be formed in those retail companies that follow “broad empowerment” by including more black staff in corporate ownership, as shareholders and through employment equity, that more “black middle class” consumers will better interact “with the front end of these retail companies. So turnover could increase, which should drive earnings higher, which in turn would boost share prices and so create more wealth for all shareholders” (*Finweek*, 11 May 2006: 58). Such simplistic thinking borders on the misconception of “playing musical chairs”, that “with wealthy black people swapping chairs with wealthy white people” the goal of social transformation will be attained.

It is simply not enough to aim at blacks participating in all sectors of the economy. We may indeed experience a strengthening national economy and a better performing national stock exchange “as a result of higher corporate earnings” and the sealing of more Black Economic Empowerment deals – as conventional economist logic holds. Over 1100 BEE transactions were entered into between 1999 and 2005. In 2005 alone, according to the 15th Ernst and Young *Mergers and acquisitions* report, 238 transactions were concluded (in *Finweek*, 11 May 2006: 61). We seem destined to repeat the Malaysian failure, where “a handful of people with good connections” (whether political or corporate) “profit outrageously, with little or no trickle-down to the masses” (*Finweek*, 11 May 2006: 46–48). By their very nature, these are simply deals, monetary transactions that have more to

do with compliance with legislation and a desire to be “politically correct” and gain more access to state wealth. The main motive is gain.

All of this is a symptom of a society that has come to be driven by an acquisitive rather than a restitutive ethic. As aptly captured in the South African Presidency’s Policy Coordination and Advisory Services’ macrosocial study, it is a society in which “neighbours compete in conspicuous consumption, ... [where] households go into debt to finance unaffordable lifestyles” (2006: 38). If transformation does not take place at the level of individual values, we must expect that the current “new democracy” will breed more black-on-black animosity and sustainable development will remain an unattainable dream.

### **6.6.6 Leading the economy to serve society**

A solid beginning can be made to bring the imperative importance of aesthetic relational values to the fore of our national consciousness. We have had leaders who have attained both national and world renown due to their wealth in aesthetic relational values and the compassionate lifestyle that became their hallmark. South Africa can brand itself using these traits, requiring that they be manifested in its day-to-day business.

A good place to start would be in the procurement of services and products throughout government – from local to national – and its tributaries such as state-owned enterprises. Government should go beyond asking how much “Black Economic Empowerment” those from whom it procures services and products have facilitated. The concern should extend to the point of being concerned about how even the BEE beneficiaries will “plough back” their wealth into society, in ways that will help the state achieve its Millennium Development Goals and eventually realize social transformation. This is how the economy of the country can be directed to serve society.

In line with the current aspiration of becoming a “developmental state”, South Africa can begin to build social issues deeper into its government business so that they become a matter of mainstream economic importance. Government can lead the way in making aesthetic relational values a hallmark of South Africa’s political, entrepreneurial and civic life. Each political leader can be required to lead by word and deed in living compassionately. Every beneficiary of state business must be required to lift as they rise; every family that effectively applies the cultural practices such as *ukunqoma*, the personal efforts of lifting poor neighbours out of destitution, must be recognized.

We, therefore, must take this reasoning to its logical conclusion with regard to the state's commitment to Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment. This measure is intended to restore both social and economic rectitude in South Africa; not simply to enrich some. Society, including the state, must expect and require that everyone who benefits from its "preferential procurement" regime must become an agent for its wider programme of removing poverty and inequality among us. Every beneficiary of such programmes must be required to respect and practise restitutive development by extending the advantages gained to others.

This is the social contract that the state can and must lead in concrete, objectively verifiable ways. All the dimensions of society – civil society, private capital and the public sector – have to enter into a covenant for sustainable development, willingly, with society. They have to build issues that concern society into their core business models.

The example of the Emzini African Cuisine Restaurant described in the previous chapter – short-lived as it was – points to the feasibility of such a direction. The owner of the enterprise provided an outlet to rural women to market their indigenous produce in mutually beneficial ways. Such efforts have to be recognized and rewarded accordingly.

Thirteen years into the new democratic dispensation in South Africa, the President pleaded for an economy that "must embrace blacks", reported Amy Musgrave in the *Business Day* of 30 April 2007 (p. 3). Sustainable answers and strategy against these and other shortcomings in South Africa lie in remembering. As urged by Tiyo Soga, we must remember our roots of being. This is the first step to restoration and healing. A return to the vision of Seme, who had in mind a non-partisan movement, organized on the basis of individual agency and personal obligation, is possible. An inclusive society with an economy founded and driven by spirituality is possible. Our responses to poverty and inequality must be grounded and rooted in purposefulness to be sustainable. We need not imitate or borrow from outside in these matters. In the lives of Nxele, Go, Soga, Seme, Biko, Mandela, Makinana and thousands of other mothers who live self-sacrificially; these are models of human beings who became committed servants of the needs of their fellow humans. They lived to minister to the needs of others rather than taking advantage of people's weaknesses to enrich themselves. South Africa has enough models on which to base its own, home-brewed, education and development curricula of compassionate living.

Without a concerted effort to restore the eroded aesthetic relational values, those who claim to champion the development of the masses are bound merely to emulate and perpetuate the role of their former oppressors. The threat of black acquisitiveness, powermongering and indifference to the suffering of the masses will replace colonial callousness and cruelty. Only as we become conscious of and practice, compassionate living internally, among ourselves, can we become the model for all nations.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

This study leads to one major conclusion, that the denigration by humanity and the neglect and abandonment by Africans, in particular, of their rich heritage of cultural values and identity, the triumph and embrace by themselves of the European self-image over theirs, has been a fatal miscalculation. This has proven the most effective constraint to their sustainable development. African values and self-image being referenced, as this study has argued, and grounded in the knowledge of God as Creator and Giver of life (uMniki-bomi) impacted on clearly defined social relations among themselves and others. This knowledge and practice still has that efficacy.

As taught and practiced in the life of Christ, bringing to naught and transcending barriers like race and class to human relations, the knowledge and application of aesthetic relational values allows humans to coexist and interact in the beauty of harmony and compassionate living. This knowledge still stands as an alternative, and is proposed in this study as the most culturally accessible avenue by Africans, and indeed, one that needs to be acknowledge by all humanity towards the attainment of sustainable development.

The most prominent outcome of the neglect of aesthetic relational values, which evinces itself through the self-indulgent living that has become the most defining feature of human existence, everything, including the natural, physical environment, must now pay the price. As such, this self-indulgent living, in economics, politics, business, social behaviour and just about every facet of human living, amounts to nothing less than violence and self-mutilation. Social systems that are driven by the motive of individual, corporate or national self-exaltation are invariably rooted in strife and discention.

We have focused on two systems of worship that have been the dominant springboards of history and culture in our world. On the one hand is a system that pays homage to the object of worship that

*lives off* the subjects; on the other, is the object of worship that *lives for* the subjects. One system is governed by the tenet of self-centred living and the other by the law of self-sacrifice. Those who subscribe to the former subtract, withhold or deny others life in order to gain more of it for themselves, whereas those who believe in the latter extend what they have to others, denying themselves more of it in order that others may share the joy of the life they have, equitably. Economies in societies that live by either of these systems are not the cause but the result thereof. The one economy is motivated by fear of losing and therefore actively take measures to prevent the possibility of any loss by grabbing more; while the other is motivated by experiencing joy in the perpetuation of the life of others and therefore the fear of losing what is already possessed is despised.

Viktor Frankl aptly captured this sort of self-sacrificial living on the part of victims who sacrificed the little they had for others while themselves in the heat of Nazi suffering:

*We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread.* (Compassion quotes, 1995).

In the latter system we have found the advocacy of a wide set of admirable values that grace and lend beauty to the relationship each individual has with other forms of life. It is within such a system that beneficial individual agency is possible.

This study has dwelt on and considered the experiences of ancient people. In the model provided in the life of the Hebrew people and their ancestors, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, through to their descendants Jesus and Paul, we have had glimpses of the efficacy of aesthetic relational values. The model itself was designed to function on the basis of individual agency. The lives of various leaders influenced individuals within the larger nation to live lives of personal care and obligation towards the entire society. Each leader had to model his/her life after the everlasting, merciful, forgiving, abundantly good and compassionate YHW, the Jehovah from whom all life is believed to have originated.

From their ancestor Abraham, with whom the nation of Hebrews originated, the outcome was to “bless”, first through his own life and then through his “seed” (descendants), “all the nations of the earth” (Genesis 22: 18). The aesthetic relational values that adorned Abraham’s life were especially applied in the life of the Hebrews’ greatest king, David. History testifies that during his rule the Hebrew nation was at the zenith of its might and glory. The Hebrew people has never again

experienced the peace and world admiration that it enjoyed during King David's reign. The secret of this success was in King David's regard for and application of aesthetic relational values.

It was at the twilight of his life, as he realized that he was about to die, that he expressed his great wish that his son Solomon, the next king of the Israelites, would hold these very same values in the high regard he had done. King David's wish as expressed in Psalm 72, was:

*Give the king your judgements, ...*

*Then the mountains will bring peace to the people ...*

*He will bring justice to the poor ...*

*He will save the children of the needy,*

*And will break in pieces the oppressor, ...*

*Yes all kings shall fall down before him;*

*And all nations shall serve him.*

*For he will deliver the needy when he cries,*

*The poor also, and him who has no helper, ...*

*He will redeem their life from oppression and violence;*

*And precious shall be their blood in his sight.*

*Prayer shall be made for him continually,*

*And daily he shall be praised.*

*And men shall be blessed in him,*

*All nations shall call him blessed.*

The decline of the Hebrew nation, as history so clearly testifies, began when King Solomon started to disregard this lofty advice. He turned his back on aesthetic relational values. With this, all incentive for fair social relations, industry, just political governance, economy and international relations were lost. Since then, the history of the Jewish people has been that of a nation engulfed in misfortune as testified by events such as the Masada massacre and the Holocaust. The entire nation has never known peace, to this very day.

We have also traced the existence of these aesthetic relational values – described in the previous chapter as jewels of the human spirit – in the life of amaXhosa, as seen from various angles, by a wide variety of often unrelated observers, including those who consciously pursued a course of denying them their life. AmaXhosa, whose object of worship was originally *uQamata*, the God who created and sustains all life, cherished the qualities and values of this Creator and Life-giver, drawing their own identity from this God. As such, in their own personal lives they sought to display mercy, compassion, forgiveness, lovingkindness and a host of other such values, as these were considered core characteristics of their revered object of worship and admiration. They showed honour to their Creator by relating to other living beings through these very values. *Ubuntu bamaXhosa*, their humanness, to this very present day, is still measured, albeit to a subdued extent, by the existence of these values in each individual or group.

We have argued in previous chapters that it is during the state of destitution of these values among Western people that they came in contact with people of Africa. The economic plundering and the suffering that ensued are unmistakable evidence of their spiritual destitution. In Southern Africa, the drama that unfolded in the lives of the Khoi did not take long to repeat itself in those of amaXhosa. In a space of less than a century after the arrival of the trading Dutch, the Khoi were reduced to a helpless nation of beggars and virtual slaves, tending the flocks they were robbed of on the very land that they had freely roamed for ages. The same fate awaited amaXhosa.

We have seen amaXhosa being steadily dispossessed of their land and wealth, as were the Khoi, through skill and stratagem, the most devastating change being the inculcation of a lifestyle impoverished in aesthetic relational values. We saw their Chief, Sandile, bemoaning this fundamental poverty among them during the wedding of one of his daughters. This legacy has become the wellspring of the poverty unleashed by the destitution in aesthetic relational values that had emerged within nations that later became colonial powers. The destitution was readily absorbed by amaXhosa; today it continues to manifest itself externally in reproducing the material poverty that is so widespread in the Eastern Cape.

Nevertheless, remnants of these values still exist. Their efficacy is still manifest in the lives of many in South Africa. In recent times they have been graphically demonstrated before the entire world in the life of one South African, Rolihlahla Mandela, from the isiXhosa-speaking Madiba clan in the house of abaThembu, who share a common ancestry with amaXhosa, amaZulu and other clan collectives in Southern Africa. He set aside a potentially lucrative life as a young lawyer and took

up a life of struggle to reclaim the dignity his people had lost at the hands of European colonists. His self-sacrificial lifestyle touched even his jailers while he was incarcerated in the prison on Robben Island. He treated all, fellow prisoners and jailers, with human dignity and respect. As Walter Sisulu illustrated in the ABC NEWS documentary (1996), Nelson Mandela demonstrated the efficacy of aesthetic relational values in transforming the racist animosity, contempt and disdain of their European jailers to mutual respect and admiration. The values with which he had left his Eastern Cape Qunu Village constituted the freedom that reigned in his human spirit; in turn he used this spirit not only to regain his own dignity but to help his enemies regain their freedom from the captivity of racial hatred.

This is the power of individual agency in development that has yet to find appropriate appreciation in the lives of South Africans. Dazed by the gaze of the world, South African collective consciousness has not come to reflect on what it is that constituted the Mandela spirit. He, like Makana and Go before him, will soon be gone. The “downward spiral” of “corruption and personal enrichment” that has already started to raise its head amongst black leaders, as observed by President Mbeki (in Webb, *Sunday Times*, 31 July, 2005), the “mercenary acquisitive spirit” that “seems to have bewitched some of our leaders”, will corrode our lives like contagious leprosy. The effects will be as horrible as the craze and scramble for “Black Economic Empowerment” and the yawning gap of ever-widening inequalities among South Africans.

The two belief systems and modes of living manifest themselves in just about all the dimensions of human existence: in the political (governance, leadership), the economic (business, trade), the social (interpersonal and communal) and our relationship with the natural environment. All of these dimensions are simply symptomatic avenues where our values and motives are made manifest or displayed. One cannot subscribe to one belief system in one or more dimensions and to the other belief system in other dimensions. Each belief system cuts across every mode of one’s existence, touching every relationship one enters into. Life itself does not allow isolation; everything that lives by and for itself eventually perishes. Both these systems seek life, albeit differently and with varying results. So wherever there is a possibility for life each system will manifest itself. As such these systems – and their inherent values – become *transdisciplinary* in effect. Regardless of the dimension of human existence that an individual devotes time to (the political, social or any other, in any capacity, whether as a practitioner, activist or knowledge-seeker), the systems are *omnipresent*. It is to the degree that any individual, group of individuals, nation or group of nations

align themselves to these systems that the *development* of their life and that of other living entities around them becomes *sustainable*.

### **6.7.1 Towards sustainability and peace**

Sustainability as a development concept gained worldwide acceptance after the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, known as the “Brundtland Commission” since the Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland was its chairperson. Essentially, the main concern was about economic development, which was causing damage to the natural environment. Some way of achieving prosperity without irreparably damaging the beauty we already have in nature had to be found. The Brundtland Commission articulated this new way as: “development that meets the needs of the present generation without precluding the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland and Khalid, 1987).

Sustainable development thus found its conventional, widely accepted, definition. Clearly, with the threat of nuclear war being the main fear, future generations and what the present would leave behind for them was uppermost in the commission’s mind. The report, *Our common future*, had little to do with relations among nations.

Soon after Brundtland’s proposal, the concept of sustainable development was attacked as unattainable. It was argued that there is no possibility of sustainability in a world that pursues growth for its own sake, that the two are not reconcilable (Lele, 1991); others called it useless as it was ambiguous (Temple, 1992; Rist, 1997) and not unachievable (Norgaard, 1994 ).

It was only later, after the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, held to translate the work of the Brundtland Commission into Agenda 21 and other UN documents, that social aspects, particularly those of peace and security, were drawn out of the Brundtland Commission’s work. Allen Hammond (1998), a senior scientist and director of strategic analysis for the World Resources Institute (WRI) suggested a series of possible future scenarios for the world: “a) Market World, b) Fortress World, and c) Transformed World”.

Market world:

*reflects a vision of the future that is widely held today. It assumes that free markets, private enterprise, and global market integration are the best way to increase prosperity and*

*improve human welfare. Economic reform, privatization, and deregulation are, in this view, the key to the future.*

Fortress world:

*focuses on the potential of unattended social and environmental problems and the growing gap between rich and poor to diminish social progress and doom hundreds of millions of people in a world divided against itself.*

Transformed world:

*one in which social, political, and economic reforms create a better life, not just a wealthier one. It assumes that human ingenuity and compassion can extend opportunity to all of humanity. And it points to tentative changes, already underway, that may presage such a transformation. To reach a transformed world, we have to address the despair. Missiles and bombs will not do unless of course we “bomb them with butter”.*

The world is not becoming a safer, more peaceful place. This is the unfortunate reality of our time! Nations are not treating each other with compassion. Each is still driven by the destructive motive of fear. Economically each wants to out-manoeuvre the other; to *take* from it much more than it can *give*. There is just no commitment nor genuine desire to empower the poor nations to be ultimately socially and economically independent from the rich, such as is illustrated in the metaphor of *inkomo yenqoma* (the borrowed cow) in the response of amaXhosa to human need and suffering. The false compassion of the rich is well illustrated in the failure to perform towards meeting the promises made to halve world poverty by 2015.

In 1970, thirty-six years ago, the United Nations General Assembly, according to Global Policy Forum's Pekka Hirvonen in an article titled *Stingy Samaritans* (2005):

*adopted a resolution affirming that donor nations were to “exert their best efforts” to reach an aid target of 0.7 percent of their gross national product by the middle of the decade. By 1975, only two countries, the Netherlands and Sweden, had succeeded in living up to that promise. By 2005 “only five of the 22 Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries – Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden – have reached the goal”.*

Hirvonen makes this point:

*Measured as a proportion of gross national income (GNI), aid lags far behind the 0.7 percent target the United Nations set 35 years ago. Moreover, development assistance is often of dubious quality. In many cases, aid is primarily designed to serve the strategic and economic interests of the donor countries or to benefit powerful domestic interest groups. Aid systems based on the interests of donors instead of the needs of recipients make development assistance inefficient. Too little aid reaches countries that most desperately need it, and, all too often, aid is wasted on overpriced goods and services from donor countries.*

The World Trade Organization Doha Round trade negotiations are among the most definitive illustrations of the stinginess that defines relations of the better-off nations of the world in the twenty-first century. These dragging deliberations struggle to effect any significant transformations because the rich countries have no desire to make concessions in the areas of farm subsidies and agricultural tariffs.

We must agree with Hirvonen (2005) that generosity costs. It calls for some sacrifice. The main challenge, principally at the individual, then at the national and global levels, is self. “Selfishness is death”. Just as “no organ of the body could live should it confine its service to itself” (White, 1898: 417), every individual or nation that lives to serve itself is an enemy of sustainable development. Each one of us is a member of the great system called life on our planet Earth. Only to the degree that each part comes to revere the Law of Self-sacrificial living, that “we are members of one another”, will sustainability in the development of ourselves and our planet have a chance.

We therefore repeat what is now regarded as an axiom in this study. Nothing short of self-sacrificial living, made possible by the victory each must gain over selfishness, will bring ourselves and our world closer to lasting peace and sustainable development. Aesthetic relational values imbue each individual with freedom and agency. Each person, from early childhood, has to be made aware of their agency in bringing about sustainable development. It is with this consciousness that South Africa can rediscover, as a nation, a brand that set amaXhosa apart and made them an admirable people, an attitude toward life adorned with aesthetic relational values. One may be a David in Israel, a Dostoevsky in Russia, a Schweitzer in the tropical jungles of Africa, a Gandhi in India, a Luther King in the United States or a Go or a Mandela in South Africa, the greatest manifestation of the presence of these values in one’s life and the greatest evidence of their effectiveness and impact

on others is that while they cause you to admire others, you become admirable to them; in loving even the unlovable one becomes lovable, even to those that are considered incapable of loving.

What is being recommended here is not a short-term initiative but a programme of transformation that must last for as long as it is necessary. It must start with cultivating the public consciousness, in much the same way as Paul did in Philippi when he sowed the seeds that gave Europe its culture, so that the need for change is accepted as an imperative and driven from below, by individual homes, supported by socially connected public institutions.

At present, in the post-apartheid era we are in, leaders of society put more emphasis on economic growth; hence programmes such as the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA). As a result of this orientation the education of our youth is geared towards responding to pressures of the moment. This is a mindset geared to finding solutions to immediate problems. The content of the education in our institution is, consequently, minimal in terms of those values that must remain the same despite changing immediate needs.

What this study proposes readily resonates in sympathy with the human desire for something better than what we now have. But it is only when this intuition is married with patient and “coherent consciousness” that our lives, and our world, can be transformed for sustainability. Our happiness on earth, as noted by many, seems to be dependent on the recognition by all of us, irrespective of our time, place, society or culture, that “selfish ways of thinking not only harm others, they prevent the happiness we ourselves desire”, to quote the Dalai Lama (in [www.shambhalsun.com/revolving\\_themes/HHDL/compassion.htm](http://www.shambhalsun.com/revolving_themes/HHDL/compassion.htm)). White (1911: 12), decades before, expressed this vital point as one of “the pure doctrines” of “Christ’s Kingdom”, which seeks to “uplift and ennoble humanity”; that those who desire to become its members are “to find their happiness in the happiness of those whom they help and bless”.

Growing old is an unalterable phenomenon of life. Renewal, on the other hand, is an equally present reality. But its attraction for humans seems to be on the decline, hence our concern with finding a solution to our living habits that will result in the elusive sustainable development we are in search of. Right in front of our eyes, the biblical words of the Prophet Isaiah seem to be finding fulfilment:

*heavens will vanish away like smoke.  
The earth will grow old like a garment;*

*we all fade as the leaf. (Isaiah 64: 6)*

Renewal is not possible after the depletion of what we have. Humans are now depleting the resources that sustain even their own support systems of life. We have come to imagine that we can sustain ours by denying other parts of our great system of their own lives. The trend has become so entrenched that in many Western countries humankind itself is in recession, is becoming depleted. It is becoming obvious that we cannot deny others life without negatively impacting on ours.

### **6.7.2 Towards the Sabbatarian lifestyle of aesthetic relational values**

Our world staggers on from one crisis to another. There seems not to be a country, government, city, town or village where injustice, inequity and unfairness are not prevalent. The foundational culture behind these outcomes has not been more graphically encapsulated, as we continue the human journey into the twenty-first century, than in the September 11th 2001 event that rocked what most believed, and indeed what seemed to be, the most secure nation on our planet. Our economies, in whatever corner we are, are held by the scruff of the neck by this culture. We live lifestyles governed by fear, from the shacks in the squatter camps of Khayelitsha to the mansions behind the gated golf estates of Houghton.

Denuded of aesthetic relational values, mankind is caught in an inhumanity towards its very own kind and towards nature, which threatens to be the definitive feature of our world and is fast reaching a point of insanity. The Earth Policy Institute's Lester Brown (2006), for example, paints the picture of a world where motorcars and humans are locked in a competition for the consumption of grain food. More grain is used for the production of bio-fuels for vehicles than for human consumption in a world ravaged by hunger and poverty-related diseases.

There is a way of escape out of this self-mutilation. The aesthetic relational values approach to life may at first glance appear to be an extension of liberal individualism, as it is also based on each living life on the basis of reasoned individual choice. The difference, however, is that the choices are based on realizing and embracing human graces such as meekness and gentleness as standards

of individual living and relating toward others. These are not the conventional standards of living. These are what the writer Paul, in his second letter to the people of Corinth (10: 5), called “weapons”. They have “the power to demolish strongholds”. Indeed they are effective, as we have seen in the individual agency of various personalities who have lived by these aesthetic values. The greatest of all Israeli kings, David, has, for example ascribed his own greatness to this fact: “Thy gentleness hath made me great” (Psalm 18: 35). Mahatma Ghandi in India used them to bring to its knees the powerful colonial machinery of the British. Go and Mandela among amaXhosa received admiration, even from their enemies, for practising them.

AmaXhosa, in a way that is strikingly similar to the Hebrew model, acknowledged this system as having been in the control of a Master Designer, *uQamata*, the Creator-God. It is this Creator-God whose character they sought to reflect. They did not “use themselves to measure themselves”; they did not “judge themselves by what they themselves are” (2 Corinthians 10: 12). It is this *Qamata* whose character is defined by compassion and the numerous other graces it includes, which, when reflected in human relationships, make life beautiful, adorable.

The system has been thrown into confusion because there has been a deviation from the patterns embedded in the wells of life, expressed in our images of its Author. The Sabbath, that vehicle for keeping alive the memory of the Creator, and the relatedness and interdependence of one part to another in the system of life, has long been lost by humans. Each part that has the capacity to exercise reason has become self-absorbed. The system is not thriving; it is not sustainable. It will have a chance to do so when reasoning humans are transformed from the pattern of their present lifestyle, into that which defines nature; when each learns and decides to care about the well-being of the other parts in the great system of life, a condition, simply called love.

The invitation to individual agency – and the graces that aesthetic relational values are – was aptly articulated by the Isley, Jasper Isley musical classic *Caravan of love*.

*Everybody take a stand  
Join the caravan of love;*

*I'm your brother  
I'm your brother  
Don't you know?*

*Every woman every man  
Join the caravan of love;*

*Are you ready?*

Then, and only then, shall we in South Africa be on our way to realize the “Age of Hope” envisioned by President Thabo Mbeki in his 2006 state of the nation address in the South African parliament. He used the words of the Prophet Isaiah in imagining that “age”:

*For you shall go out with joy; And be led out with peace;  
The mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you  
And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. (Isaiah 55: 12)*

This is going to be an age that many a mother in the poverty-stricken world hopes for, where, according to the Prophet Isaiah, “No more shall an infant from there live but a few days” (Isaiah 65: 20).

It is an age where oppression and colonialism in all the forms of its greed will have no place:

*They shall build houses and inhabit them;  
They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit,  
They shall not build and another inhabit,  
They shall not plant and another eat.*

*They shall not labour in vain,  
Nor bring forth children for trouble. (Isaiah 65: 20–23)*

The South African President, Thabo Mbeki, other world leaders and everybody else who hopes for sustainable development must realize that at the centre of all of this, the main feature of this “age”, will be the restoration of one vital ancient practice:

*from one Sabbath to another,  
All flesh shall come to worship Me; says the Lord.  
(Isaiah 66: 23; NKJV)*

Humanity has a choice to make. It can recreate the planet into whatever it dreams or wishes it to be. Aesthetic relational values, therefore, provide humanity with a generative assumption. The theory puts within human reach a means to effect change from our self-mutilating tendencies.

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## Appendix I: Moving the Sabbath to Sunday

In the Harvestime Books version of E.G. White's classic, *The Great Controversy* (1998: 260–261), Protestants themselves reason as follows:

BAPTISTS (Dr E.T. Hiscox, and *The Watchman*):

*There was and is a command to keep holy the Sabbath day, but that Sabbath day was not Sunday. ... There is no scriptural evidence of the change of the Sabbath institution from the seventh to the first day of the week.*

*The Scriptures nowhere call the first day of the week the Sabbath. ... There is no Scriptural authority for so doing, nor of course, any Scriptural obligation.*

CONGREGATIONALISTS (Dr R.W. Dale):

*It is quite clear that however rigidly or devotedly we may spend Sunday, we are not keeping the Sabbath ... The Sabbath was founded on a specific divine command. We can plead no such command for the observance of Sunday ... There is no single line in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday.*

PRESBYTERIAN (Canon Eyton, Ten Commandments)

*There is no word, no hint in the New Testament about abstaining from work on Sunday. The observance of Ash Wednesday, or Lent, stands exactly on the same footing as the observance of Sunday. Into the rest of Sunday no Divine Law enters.*

ANGLICAN (Isaac Williams's Plain Sermons on the Catechism)

*And where are we told in the Scriptures that we are to keep the first day at all? We are commanded to keep the seventh; but are nowhere commanded to keep the first.*

METHODISTS (Amos Binney touches on more than just the Sabbath):

*It is true that there is no positive command for infant baptism. Nor is there any for keeping holy the first day of the week. Many believe that Christ changed the Sabbath. But, from His own words, we see that He came for no such purpose. Those who believe that Jesus changed the Sabbath base it only on supposition.*

SOUTHERN BAPTISTS (Joseph Taylor, *The Sabbath Question*)

*The sacred name of the seventh day is the Sabbath. This fact is too clear to require argument. ... Not once did the disciples apply the Sabbath law to the first day of the week, – that folly was left for a later age, nor did they pretend that the first day supplanted the seventh.”*

DISCIPLES OF CHRIST (Dr D.H. Lucas)

*There is no direct Scriptural authority for designating the first day ‘the Lord’s Day’.*

## Appendix II: Cofimvaba *Imbizo*: Extracts from final report



*Imbizo: The gathering at the Cofimvaba town hall*

The participants first deliberated and established the necessary rules for meaningful engagement and dialogue in the six groups (A-B-C-D-E-F) they were to belong to. The following was agreed upon in isiXhosa (the main language of deliberation):

Isivumelwano Ngentsebenziswano / Collaboration Contract	
<b><u>Abaququzeli / Facilitators</u></b>	<b>Abathathi nxaxheba / Participants</b>
<p><i>bobeka ixesha nomsebenzi / shall honour time</i></p> <p><i>iingxoxo zoquka igela ngokubanzi / everybody shall participate as much as possible</i></p> <p><i>bobeka injongo zendibano phambili nasembindini / the main purpose of the meeting shall be the main focus</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>bobeka ixesha / shall honour time</i></li> <li>• <i>boxhasana kumaqelana abo / there shall be cooperation within groups</i></li> <li>• <i>kophathanwa ngentlonipho pakathi kwamamaqela / there shall be inter-group respect</i></li> <li>• <i>iimbono zomntu ngamnye zomanyelwa, ze zishukuxwe pambi kokwamkelwa okanye zikhatywe / each person's views shall be listened to, discussed thoroughly before acceptance or rejection.</i></li> <li>• <i>yamkelani iingxaki neembono eziphikisanayo / where there is no agreement all opposing views must be accepted</i></li> <li>• <i>yonke into ibhalwa phantsi / all the views must be written</i></li> <li>• <i>izicwangciso zosuku ngalunye kovunyelwana ngazo zihlonitshwe / every day's proceedings shall be arrived at through agreement by all.</i></li> </ul>



*Intense discussion in one of the groups*

## Highlights from the groups

### GROUP A

#### ESINGAKUTHANDIYO ESINGAKUTHANDIYO (What we value and what we don't value)



- *Zingxaki zabantu abangabameli abanankathalo eluntwini bayakhetha / Our representatives have lost the spirit of caring and practise nepotism*
- *Asiluthandi ugquzulwano lwenkosi noceba kuba zibambezela uphuhliso loluntu*
- *Nangona ulutsha nomama benamalungelo basongena*
- *Asikuthandi ukumoswa kwezinto zikarhulumente eg imfono-mfono, amanzi netaps*
- *Ucingo olubiya indawo eziluncedo ezifana neclinics, indzikolo namahlathi*
- *Inkosi zemveli ziyathanda ukuthatha izigqibo ngaphandle kwabantu / Traditional leaders are prone to take decisions without consulting the people*
- *Ipolitiki mayingangquzulani nophuhliso / Politics must not stand in the way of development*

**GROUP B:**

**EKUHLALENI (About our social life)**



**ESISAKULANGAZELELAYO / What we still long for and appreciate**

- ***Izithethe namasiko / restore our customs and traditions***
- ***Ukuthomba kwentombi ithi xa ithe yenziwa lonto ubekhona umehluko***
- ***Kwakubakho ixesha lokuba intombi zicele inkobe zihamba ze kuba yayizintombi zokwenyani / need to re-appreciate virginity among young women***
- ***Ulwaluko yayilixesha lasebusika sigcine ixesha elifanelekileyo kumasiko ethu / conducting circumcision at the right time, winter***
- ***Ekuwagcineni kwethu amasiko ethu sikhulisa nezokhenketho ukuze babone indlela yamandulo yebuyambo / go back to our roots***

## GROUP C

### OKUNXULUMENE NAWE (Issues of personal importance) The Past vs The Present



#### ESINGAKUTHANDIYO ? What we dislike

- *Ukungabinankathalo / indifference and lack of care*
- *Izixhobo ezingekhoyo / scarce resources*
- *Ukugabadela kolwaphulo mthetho / lawlessness*
- *Indlala / hunger*
- *Ukungaba komsebenzi / scarce employment opportunities*
- *Ukuxhatshazwa / abuse*
- *Ucalucalulo / discrimination*
- *Amalungelo angengawo / false rights*
- *Unxibelelwano oluncinci / little communication*

#### SENZENI NGALEMEKO / What we ought to be doing about this

- *Amathandazwe / become of our nation*
- *Ukuba nonxanduva / restore the sense of responsibility*
- *Ibuyambo / recall our traditions*
- *Izincomo nezigxeko apho kuyimfuneko / to raise objections or give praise where it is due*
- *Unxibelellwano / communicate*

### *Isishwankathelo Segela / Group Summary*

1. *Zazilungile izinto ezazityiwa kudala kuba babempilonde bomelele abantu / Traditional diet was better for our health, longevity and strength*
2. *Kwakunxitywa iintsimbi nemibhaco nengcawe zise yimfuneko esizweni sethu kuba yimpucuko yaso / Our traditional garb is still vital as it reflects our identity as a nation*
3. *Sifana ngokuba sonke besicinezelekile kungekho phuhliso / Political oppression arrested our development*
4. *Sohlukile kuba kwangekho mfundo ngoku sifundile / Education has brought change among us*
5. *Xa sibaninzi simanyana singabheka phambili ngakumbi xa singaphathisana siluluntu / Development requires unity and collaboration*
6. *Xa sinokuthi sifundiswe ukuphatha amshishini neproject zethu singathi siphuhliseke kudaleke imisebenzi kuphele nolwaphulo mthetho / If we can be taught industry jobs will abound and lawlessness that comes with idleness will diminish*



*Discussions in Group C*

### *Highlights of Group C discussion*

*Konke obekuqhubeka ngexesha lobandlululo bekungezi nakamva ebantwini / the years of racial discrimination arrested people's development*

*Ekunyamezeleni ukhona umvuzo kangangokuba asilahlekwanga bubuntu bethu esibunxulumanisa nokhenketho / perseverance has benefited us; we have not lost our "ubuntu" (positive human values) which can bring benefits in our tourism endeavours*

*Ukulibala kwethu ngezinto ezibuhlungu ebezisenzeka kusenza singene kwikamva eliqaqambileyo / putting behind us all the negatives of the past will allow us to focus on a bright future*

## GROUP D

### ESINGAKUTHANDIYO ESINGAKUTHANDIYO (What we value and what we don't value)



#### ESIKUTHANDAYO / What we appreciate

- *Sinazo izinto ezinxulumene noqoqosho kangangoko / We have some resources vital to economic development*
- *Imfuyo, imihlaba, abantu, amanzi, amadama, imilambo engatshiyo, iikwari, imisebenzi yezandla, isakhono semveli, imiqolomba, imbali etyebile kwipolitiki, inkcubeko, amalungelo kunye nolwazi / livestock, land, human resources, minerals, perennial rivers, indigenous skills, rich history*

#### ESINGAKUTHANDIYO / What we do not appreciate

- *Imfuyo ayisingeniseli ayinaxabiso, imisebenzi yezandla, isakhono semveli, imiqolomba, imbali etyebile kwipolitiki, inkcubeko, amalungelo kunye nolwazi / Our livestock is not valued, and neither are our works of art, indigenous talents and resources, our caves, rich political history, culture and knowledge*
- *Amagosa ezolimo awabonakali eluntwini, iprograms ze-agriculture ziphelela ephepheni aziyi ebantwini ezenzelwe bonal / Government officials have*

become indifferent, they do not implement state programmes effectively, these only remain on paper

- *Imfuyo yimigqutsuba exakileyo, umhlaba awufumani kuncedakala, iikomanishi azisekho / Our livestock is sickly and of little value, our communal land is degraded and uncared for*

#### **ABANTU / People**

- *Uninzi luyonqena / There is too much idleness*
- *Ulwazi lesininzi aluphangalelanga, abantu banomona bayarhwaphiliza / Many lack skills; so much envy and corruption*
- *Izakhono zemveli aziphuhliswa abakhuthazeki/ Indigenous skills are not being encouraged*

#### **INKCUBEKO / Culture**

- *Siyijongele phantsi kwathina /We have no appreciation for our own culture*

#### **SENZE NTONI NGALEMEKO**

- *Siyazama ukuvuselela / We do not stop trying, we struggle on and try to revive each other*
- *Siyayikhuthaza le mbizo / We support and encourage such dialogues*

## GROUP E:

### OKUSISINGQONGILEYO (Regarding our environment)



### ESIKUTHANDAYO What we appreciate

- *Intaba ezimpompoza imijelo yamanzi / Our mountains from which flow our rivers*
- *Umthombo- utsala abakhenkethi / our water sources are of tourism value*
- *Imfuyo, amayeza agrunjwayo eg. African potatoes amadumbe, namakhala / Indigenous medicines*
- *Izilwanyana zasendle nengxangxasi / wild animals*
- *Kufumaneka amatye amahle okwakha afana nelitye lenyengane, asinayo imigxobhozo / rare stones*

### IMITHI / Our trees

- *Ikhusele umoya imizi yethu ingemki / provide shelter for our homes*
- *Sifumana amaplanga / provide timber*
- *Umoya opholileyo / provide cooling*
- *Ibiza invula yenze nenkuni / provide, influence rainfall*
- *Imithunzi yemfuyo / shelter for our livestock*
- *Amayeza esintu / provide indigenous medicines*
- *Inqanda ukhukhuliseko lomhlaba / reduce, prevent soil erosion*

### **IMILAMBO / Rivers**

- *Amaziko onkcenkcesho*
- *Imfuyo nabantu basele nabalobi bathenga intlanzi*
- *Umbane uyafumaneka kunye nesanti yokwakha*

### **UCOCEKO / Environmental cleanliness**

- *Uhlaza / verdure, green vegetation*
- *Amasimi achume inkomo zitye / green fields*
- *Amathuba emisebenzi / provides jobs*

### **ESINGAKUTHANDIYO / What we do not appreciate**

- *Imililo yamadlelo / veld fires*
- *Imizi yabakhuthuzi / hideouts for criminals among us*
- *Ukomba ngokungathali kufuneka umhlaba ungakhukhuliseki / careless mining that puts our soil at risk of degradation*
- *Indywabasi lenza kome, utshungu luveza indonga / alien trees and vegetation*
- *Abantu bayazidlekisa xa bengcwaba / people victimize themselves through expensive funerals*