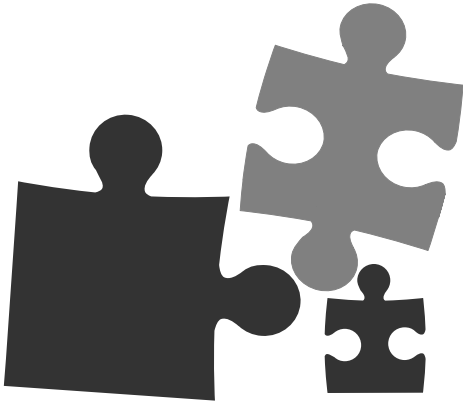


Unfinished Business?

Faith Communities and Reconciliation

in a Post-TRC Context

Unfinished Business?



**Faith Communities and Reconciliation
in a Post-TRC Context**

CH Thesnaar & LD Hansen (Eds)

SUN M@DIA

Unfinished Business? Faith Communities and Reconciliation in a Post-TRC Context

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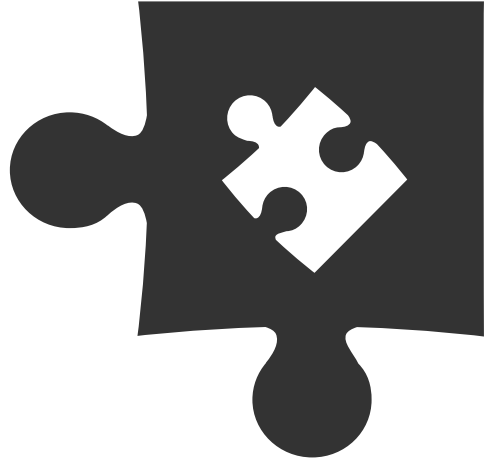
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Editors' notes

When picking up this publication, it will be quite understandable that a few questions may arise in the reader. “Why yet another book on the TRC?”, may be one. Why only now a publication on an event that took place five years ago? Have the authors and editors not perhaps missed the proverbial bus with this one? It is, therefore, necessary to explain exactly why this publication and why now, why only in 2019. Chapter three of this publication, chronicles the re-enactment consultation of the TRC Faith Communities' Hearing in 2014. At the end of the consultation, Dr Frank Chikane chaired a session on “The way forward”. During this session Chikane acknowledged that, despite the many successes and progress made in the years following the TRC hearings, there was a distinct feeling among delegates that “[a]s leaders and members of the communities of faith we are conscious of unfinished business in the process of transformation in our nation.” A suggestion from the floor called for the establishment of a “Truth and Reconciliation Continuation Group”. It was clear during and immediately after the consultation there was renewed excitement and new found energy for working towards reconciliation and justice. It was hoped that efforts toward reconciliation and justice will once again take a prominent place, not only on the

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main agenda of the South African Council of Churches, but also on those of the faith communities that were represented at the consultation. Today, five years after the consultation, we realise that the process of reconciliation based on the original recommendations of the TRC and the recommendations made by the consultation will for long remain challenges our society and to a large extent remain in a vulnerable position of being “unfinished business” – hence, also, the name of this publication. It is our hope that revisiting the re-enactment and via this also the original TRC Faith Communities’ Hearings readers of this publication will ponder the state of reconciliation in our communities today, what this may require of them individually and as faith communities and that it may once again inspire and renew energy and commitment to pursue reconciliation in South Africa.

The publication consists of two parts that follow on a foreword written especially for this publication by Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Reverend Mpho Tutu van Furth, who both played a key role in the re-enactment consultation five years ago. In the first section of the publication two well-known South Africans share some of their memories of the run-up to and the Faith Communities' Hearings of the TRC. Piet Meiring, a well-known Dutch Reformed theologian at the time was nominated to serve by TRC commissioner, Desmond Tutu, himself. Brigalia Bam served as General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, that was instrumental in the establishment and determination of the composition of the TRC. These two contributions – on the preparations for hearings by Bam and the hearings themselves by Meiring – tell more about the behind-the-scenes events and emotions, the deliberations and considerations, the hopes and expectations of, not only the TRC commissioners and chairpersons, but also of President Mandela himself for the extraordinary reconciliatory responsibility placed on the Commission.

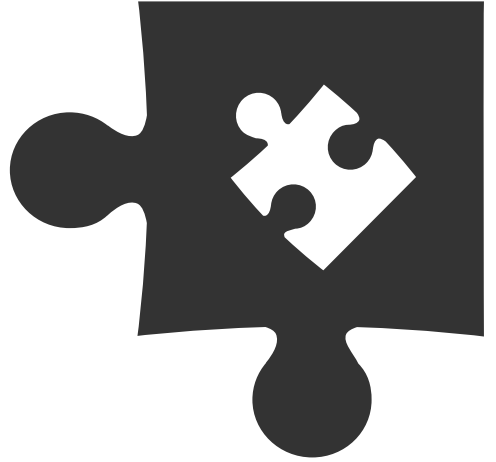
The second part of the publication begins with a summary of the two-day re-enactment of the TRC Faith Communities' Hearings. To give a full account of the depth and breadth of the seventeen submissions made by faith communities at the occasion will be impossible and outside of the ambit of this publication, so we highlight the central achievements, but also the unfortunate failures of faith communities that did not live up to the promises made before the TRC two decades ago. In the process, many new challenges emerged in our communities since that time and that should be put on all faith communities’ agendas. These are identified and it is shown in most submissions how, today still, addressing the old and the new challenges are intricately connected with a lack of justice and reconciliation in our country.

The above-mentioned chronicle is followed by a collection of six essays that reflect on the TRC, the re-enactment thereof and/or the past, present and future challenges we face as a nation. A number of local and international scholars from diverse denominational and religious backgrounds (Jaap Durand, Vincentia Kgabe, Eddy van den Borgh, Nico Koopman, Marichen van der Westhuizen, Rashied Omar and Martin Leiner) were asked to reflect, from their own contexts, on what they had heard and what they made of the submissions during the re-enactment consultation. Most were present at the consultation and shared their experiences with the meeting on the last day of the consultation. Others did so only later and are included in this publication.

With this in mind, we would like to thank all those who shared their memories and perspectives with us – be it in the form of essays or submissions during the TRC re-enactment consultation. Thank you for entrusting us with these. We would like to thank the Beyers Naudè Centre for Public Theology and the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation for initiating and hosting the re-enactment and for supporting this publication after all these years. We are also grateful to the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University for its Hope Project that financed the consultation, as well as this publication. We also wish to thank our publisher, African Sun Media for the professional way in which they made the publication of this book a reality.

As editors we are extremely grateful for the privilege to have worked on this publication. Although five years down the line from the re-enactment event, we believe it remains relevant, even necessary, to revisit that memorable event, especially in a time when increased racial tensions and polarisation in our society seems all but a fact of life. May this publication contribute to rekindle the dream of and the commitment of all South African people of faith towards justice, peace and reconciliation.

Christo Thesnaar & Len Hansen
Editors



Foreword

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission marked a seminal moment in South African history. Born out of the negotiated settlement that created the post-apartheid South Africa, the commission was an attempt to lay the foundation for a genuinely peaceful future for all South Africans. It was the task of the Commission to air and cleanse the wounds of the past and to sow the seeds of future flourishing.

The faith communities had played a pivotal role during the apartheid era. Some were responsible for creating and upholding the theology that undergirded the system of government. Others banded together to lead the opposition to apartheid. But, even those who stood firmly in the anti-apartheid camp had to admit that their communities were compromised. Submissions to the Faith Community Hearings of the TRC (convened in East London, Eastern Cape from 17 to 19 November 1997) made it clear that many faith communities in their structures, leadership and practices mirrored apartheid society. Many faith communities had been muted in their opposition to the regime – some out of fear, some out of conviction. No community escaped our tormented history unscathed. All came to the hearings wounded in some way. Whether it was the unconscionable hurt of

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having their places of worship desecrated as a consequence of apartheid laws, as was the case for many Hindu and Muslim congregations; or the repression of religious and cultural values experienced by all religious communities that were not Christian; or the closure of schools, mission stations and other facilities that was experienced by communities of most faiths; or the targeting and harassment endured by individual communities and interfaith alliances that stood in resistance to apartheid; the faith communities were wounded. But all who came emerged from the Faith Community Hearings with a commitment to contribute to the healing of our land.

On 8 and 9 October 2014, the Beyers Naudè Centre at Stellenbosch University partnered with the Desmond & Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation to convene a re-enactment consultation on the Faith Communities' Hearing of the TRC. The need for the original hearings in 1997 had been questioned by many who did not believe that the faith communities had anything of value to add to the process. What, it was asked, would they confess? What need had they for reconciliation? As it happened, the original Faith Community Hearings offered an opportunity for reflection, repentance and a commitment to lead the healing work of reconciliation.

The re-enactment consultation prompted some of the questions the original hearings had provoked. But, once again, the faith communities proved their worth and their wisdom. They took this effort seriously. All the commissioners who sat at the original hearings were in attendance. All of the faith communities that had sent representatives and depositions to the original hearings were also represented. Some who, for various reasons, were not present in 1997 came in 2014. They enriched all of us with their presence.

The presentations were thoughtful, deeply self-reflective and offered with genuine humility.

The bright hope of inter-religious engagement in the healing process for our land faded with the passage of years. The truths we had told and heard were searing. The national trauma we had endured was real. The faith communities retreated into their silos either to lick their wounds or to engage in the necessary work of reconciliation within their own groupings.

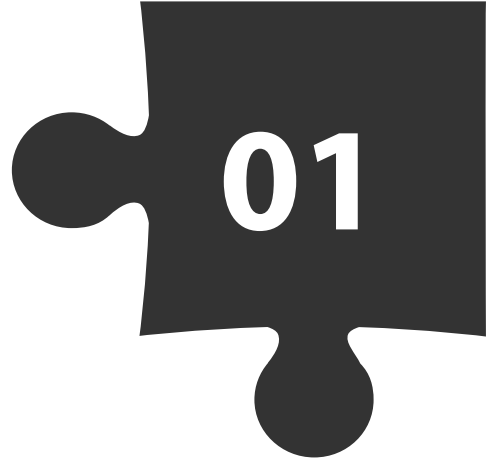
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Many of those who came to the consultation expressed a yearning to re-engage with the work of national reconciliation that had been pushed off their agendas by the multiplying needs of the post-apartheid South Africa. We pray that the renewed engagement will become a reality, the hard work of reconciliation is not yet done.

***Archbishop Emeritus Desmond M Tutu &
Rev Mpho A Tutu van Furth***



LOOKING BACK



The South African Council of Churches

A kaleidoscope of memories

Brigalia Bam¹

Introduction

Yes, much still needs to be done in the field of reconciliation in South Africa. And I have been thinking, like all of us at this consultation, of all the things we did not do at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC); the things we should have thought about. It has become clear to South Africans that reconciliation and forgiveness cannot happen quickly ... but we knew no better and we lacked models.

However, it has been wonderful to be here over the past days of the consultation. I felt that I was coming home after having worked for so many years with the churches and organisations in the ecumenical movement. I have missed you! The fourteen years of working with political parties were very challenging because of the nature of politics and politicians, but you continued your support especially in assisting the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) with mediation and

¹ This chapter records the memories of Dr Brigalia Bam, Deputy General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) from 1988 to 1994, and General Secretary from 1994 to 1999. Dr Bam played a major part in the deliberations on and planning for the new democratic era in South Africa. She was deeply involved in the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), as one sees from her account in this chapter. She was appointed a commissioner of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in 1997. In 1999, when her term as General-Secretary of the SACC came to an end, she was appointed chair of the IEC.

democracy education. I must say, though, that there is one thing that churches and political parties have in common. Political parties are nearly all male-led. And I see my own home has not changed very much in this respect: the church leaders here today are male, virtually all of them!

Selection of the TRC commissioners

You will hear quite a lot from me about President Mandela, the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and the TRC. Let me give some background to the President's confidence in the churches. In the last few months of his detention, Madiba asked the SACC to coordinate visits by those who wanted to see him at Pollsmoor; he also requested the SACC to assist in removing the football club from Mrs Winnie Mandela's home. He seems to have trusted us.

Let us compliment the panel that had the responsibility for interviewing potential TRC commissioners, those who would lead the Commission. You know, I often say to people that one of the hardest assignments the panel had was choosing suitable South Africans to do the impossible job of listening to these gruesome stories day by day. What kind of people did we need? What kind of people could we choose who would have the passion and the compassion to listen to the stories and have the strength of mind to consider what positive use we could make of them?

Choosing these people was difficult! There were fifty-six candidates. We decided we were not going to have discussions amongst ourselves about the candidates before they appeared before us – because we were also inexperienced! None of us had ever done anything like this before. Thus, we would not discuss any candidate after their interviews. We decided to score our candidates without adding our names and to feed the scores into a computer. But I have to tell you: when you looked at the results you could not help wondering – who did not support my candidate? You would look in the list and if your preferred candidate got 8 out of 10, you would look around and say, "Mmm ... somebody didn't like my candidate." At one stage, we had a very colourful person who was to be interviewed: Desmond Tutu. We had one member on the panel who did not particularly like liberals; nor did the member like blacks! In fact, he was a great supporter of apartheid. Then the results came back and Desmond had 10 out of 10 from everybody. We thought, "Oh, how did he manage this perfect score?" I remember this person saying, "I know why you are all looking around. I also voted for Archbishop Desmond Tutu. And the reason? It was when he started to talk about what the TRC should be able to do that I was converted." That was the term he used, converted!

So, I do think you should compliment us. We did a good job, as you can see! When we proposed the name of Archbishop Tutu to President Mandela, Tutu had already made arrangements for a one-year sabbatical, teaching in the United States – I think he had already signed all the contracts and I am sure he had packed his bags! To the great credit of the Anglican Church, the bishops were supportive, enabling the Archbishop, who had spoken with such conviction on reconciliation and forgiveness, to accept his appointment as chair of the TRC.

President Mandela's views on the TRC

I would like to share with you what President Mandela had in mind with the TRC. This story is not widely known. We, at the SACC, had long discussions and conversations with Madiba about the TRC. He often spoke to me at the time because I was the General Secretary of the Council of Churches. He wanted the Commission to be under the Council of Churches because he thought that South African churchmen and women would be the best people to oversee the process of telling the truth and to lead the country on the road to reconciliation and forgiveness. Mandela was aware that, after all the interviews and submissions made to the TRC, we would still need to work for many, many years on issues of reconciliation. In the drama and rush of the time, we were never able to discuss this with President Mandela in the thorough way it really required. One of the mistakes we made was not to think through how the other processes that were related to truth and reconciliation were to take place: issues of justice and restoration, as well as land and reparations. At the time, we were concentrating on the truth, and I think that was where, probably, we lost focus on a number of important things. But Mandela's major emphasis was on reconciliation and forgiveness. This very much reflected his own journey toward reconciliation after all manner of humiliation and deprivation while in jail for twenty-seven years. He felt that the churches would be on their own ground because, you know, these were really religious themes: reconciliation, forgiveness and truth.

Dullah Omar eventually convinced Mandela that the TRC could not be a church-led institution; that it had to be an independent commission. But, when I was asked by the panel to submit the names, we were proposing to Mandela, he was very disappointed that no member of the Inkatha Freedom Party was proposed. He also insisted that there should be a representative of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, NGK) on the list. It was not the first time he had said that to me. He often did! Of course, it was very difficult when President Mandela instructed you, not to obey! He was not really bothered with

whom else we brought along, as long as those who were Dutch Reformed had their place on the Commission. And, I want to say this – and I hope the members of the Dutch Reformed Church who are present will listen carefully – why did he feel so strongly about this inclusion? He felt that in order to have reconciliation, we would need to get the Afrikaner church on board. We would need you to re-interpret your own theology that had over the years accepted and defended apartheid. It was essential that you be part of the reconciliation process. This was the reason that Mandela insisted on having Oom Bey Naudé, as we called him, as part of the ANC delegation when he went to Cape Town for the Groote Schuur meeting in May 1990. He said that when you talk to Afrikaners, you have to talk about their church and their religion. When you speak to them, you must bring someone like Beyers Naudé with you, a person who, in spite of his community's hostility toward him, commanded their respect, because he was an Afrikaner, but above all, because he was a selfless, devoted and steadfast Christian.

When we brought the list of suggested commissioners to Madiba, it was the worst morning I ever had with him. He was always very nice to me, you know. He would call me by my clan name, Mkiwa. That is how we addressed each other. But that day, he did not. What a pity. He looked at the list, and he said: "Anyone here from Inkatha?" "No Sir, we were not doing it in that manner. We were not looking at Inkatha." And then he said: "Let's see now: the churches. Dutch Reformed, are they here?" "Yes." Then he was very happy. I want to assure you.

"The Methodists?" he asked, referring here to his own church. "Alex Boraine is on the list, Sir. He has been doing a lot." "No, no, no, no, no! Put Mgojo in the list," Madiba replied. Now I was really apprehensive, but I had to tell the President of the country, "I can't do that." "Yes, you've got to! Mgojo must be on the list now," he insisted. So I had to go back to the group to say Bishop Khoza Mgojo is now on the list. For those of you who wondered about this, this is how he got onto the TRC. Mandela was making these comments because, he said, "The Methodists are big. They are everywhere. They need to; they must assist us." I have told this to the Methodists. They have to assist us! So the Methodists, there you are. The Dutch Reformed – and many others, the churches that you are representing – made it to the TRC as well. Remember: our hope is in you!

Reparation for the victims and their families

Now, one of the things that we were hoping to do in the SACC was to, at the end of the TRC process, get money from the government – lots of money! No, no, this is

true! We wanted to re-open a very important department that had been established before my time by my predecessors – people like Archbishop Tutu, Beyers Naudé and Frank Chikane. This was the Dependents’ Conference. It was a big department into whose work a lot of our money had gone. This was the department that had responsibility for looking after the families of political prisoners and for enabling their visits to Robben Island. It paid the lawyers’ fees in many, many court cases. It was also a department where we started to work on issues of land.

Some of you might remember our famous German theologian, Wolfram Kistner, who headed the Division of Justice and Reconciliation. Kistner worked extensively on the issues of removals from the land and reparation. The idea was that at the end of the TRC process, this department, supported by the government, would be able to take responsibility for reparations. Those were our hopes. I shared our plan with the Swedish government, who supported us, and they gave us a substantial grant. Then I quickly recruited an Anglican to come and help. I thought as I am an Anglican, let me get an Anglican bishop on board. And so I recruited Bishop Matolengwe. I asked him to return from Milwaukee in the United States as soon as he could. And he did! This was the department, we thought, that would see us through the years of reparation and rehabilitation. The South African government would assist us, we argued. We would not get the money, as we used to, from donors in many parts of the world. It was right and affordable for us as South Africans to carry the cost. That was our plan.

The first phase would be the counselling process. We identified the victims and their families. That was where mistakes probably happened. We, as the SACC, had to identify the families because we had worked throughout the country. We had decentralised into fourteen offices in South Africa at the time. So we relied on the information we got from this country-wide network, and we were the major source of such information. At the time, there was no substantial research on the issue. We listed the people we had in our files. We hoped that through our lists each and every family in South Africa that had been violated – whether through death, through arrest, or through removals – would be helped. We had a very long list we had prepared of people who would benefit and who would be assisted through counselling the families. That was the plan. Unfortunately, we failed. It did not happen. In the end, we left everything to the government and leaving this whole responsibility to the state turned out to be very unfortunate. I hope that Mandela’s dream will still come true. I do not think it is too late. There are new challenges for us, new plans to be made.

Economic justice and land reform

The greatest excitement for me is that the discussions over the past days may lead us to the resurrection of ecumenism in this country. That, as we begin to talk about our own unity today, we will be looking seriously at the challenges for all of us; the challenges of nation-building, of accepting one another as human and the challenges of economic justice. We need to do this together. I think we cannot move on without a body like the SACC. And I think this is taking place at a very opportune time because retired General Secretary Frank Chikane has been recruiting us for the past twenty months to see how we can revive the SACC and to challenge the SACC once again to accept its role in the country.

Of course, the agenda has changed. I have to share with you my conversations with my late brother. He was known to some of you, his name was Fikile Bam, and he was Judge President of the Land Claims Court. I should say to you that he asked me several times: "Hlophe, why are the churches not helping the people on the issue of land claims?" And he would say, "The churches were working very hard in assisting us in many ways when we were political prisoners. We were assisted in court by the churches. But now there is a crisis in the land, and the churches are not doing anything." Now maybe you did something, but that was what he thought. He felt that, if people had been assisted in the processes and the procedures, given the information that they needed and if they had been informed how they should go about making claims, they would have come out in a better position. I just thought that, since that was the way he felt and he no longer is with us, I need to share this with you. We need to remember that people had certain expectations of us that probably we were not able to meet post-1994.

The special role of the churches and church leaders

Just to say, finally, something about my personal survival as chair of the Electoral Commission (in 1999, Dr Bam was appointed chair of the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa). When you who are bishops were appointed to your posts, you did not ask, "Why have you appointed me?", because the people may change their minds! But some years ago, I did ask, and I think I must share this with you so that I can live in peace, "Why was I elected to the Electoral Commission?" I was not a judge or a lawyer. I was just a churchwoman working in the church. Later I was told – unofficially – that I was appointed for two reasons:

1. One was because I had been working with the churches in South Africa and the churches were operating in each and every part of the country. South African voters, the majority of them, gave allegiance to a religious organisation and would trust a religious leader – who had also been a trade unionist – heading the process.
2. The second reason was equally important. It had to do with the relationship we had had with the world out there, with anti-apartheid groups and, in particular, with the World Council of Churches (WCC). We needed all the advice and contact that we could get, and I had worked with the WCC and the International Labour Organization.

It is also important to remember the amazing trust politicians had in those early days in the churches, as well as the confidence the people had in the leaders of the churches of this country.

And so, when I met difficulties as I often did in my job as a commissioner, people would ask me, “Why don’t you ask the churches to come and help us?” You will all remember the problems of mediation and the role the churches played in the 1991 Peace Accord when innocent people were being attacked on trains, and there was terrible violence in KwaZulu-Natal and in Gauteng between hostel dwellers and surrounding communities. You know all the things that we were called upon to do in those days. It is my hope that the position that we, the churches, once held can be restored again; that we can become the hope for this society, and that the trust that people had in us, looking up to us to continue our support to them through this ecumenical movement, will be regained.

Let me finish with a story from Bishop Dowling, who showed me a note he had made of something Mandela once said to him. It is wonderful. I asked the bishop to write it down for me. “Now is not the time”, Madiba said, “for the churches to return to the coziness of the sanctuary.” Bishop Dowling said that he will always remember what Mandela had said. So should we. Thank you very much.

"The best of all hearings."

The South African faith communities appear before the South African TRC

Piet Meiring¹

East-London, 17-19 November 1997

Archbishop Desmond Tutu was in his element. It was Sunday afternoon, 16th of November 1997. The pews in the Abbotsworth Christian Centre, East London, was filled. Large numbers of people from local churches, as well as delegates from many parts of the country had arrived during the day. Choirs were singing. There was a sense of anticipation: at long last, the faith communities had come to East London, to take their stand and to report on their role in the Truth and Reconciliation process in the country.

The Arch's sermon was about small beginnings that may produce surprising results. Jesus used a little boy's meagre meal of bread and fish to feed five thousand people. Jeremiah thought that he was too young to be of service. Mary could not believe that God chose her, a simple girl from a backward village, to be the mother of his Son. But this is how God works! He uses the most humble and improbable to be his co-workers. In South Africa, there are many unsung heroes, men, women and children who have been used by the Lord in wonderful ways. The miracles of forgiveness and reconciliation brought about by ordinary people are deeply

1 Emeritus Professor, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria and former TRC Commissioner.

moving. In the coming days, Tutu added, church leaders, representatives from many faith communities, will contribute their stories, will discuss the issues of guilt and forgiveness, of love and reconciliation. Leaders will have the podium, he said, but the stories will be those of ordinary people who were appointed by God to be His ambassadors in a confused and broken society.

The Truth and Reconciliation process

In 1994, when Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as the first president of a new democratic South Africa, there was universal jubilation – as well as deep concern. The scars of apartheid were evident in every sphere of life. Mistrust, guilt, anger, ruled the lives of many. Politics was dangerous. Societal problems were many. Everyone knew that. However, the general feeling was that things could change. Idealism and expectation was in the air. The establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission was envisaged – with high hopes for a new South Africa and for the role that the Commission with its allies in civil society, in politics and especially in the religious communities, would be able to play, in tackling the vexing problems of the day.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was instituted by an act of Parliament in July 1995. It had a mandate to paint a complete picture of South Africa's apartheid past and to facilitate the granting of amnesty to perpetrators of gross human rights violations. It would grant the opportunity to victims of these violations to relate their accounts of what they had experienced and to recommend reparation measures in this respect. Finally, the TRC was required to report on its findings, with recommendations of measures to prevent future violations of human rights in the country.²

The mandate of the TRC was indeed impressive:

- To provide a historical bridge between the past of a deeply divided society characterised by strife, conflict, untold suffering and injustice and a future founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful co-existence for all, irrespective of colour, race, class, belief or sex.
- The pursuit of national unity, the well-being of all citizens, peace and reconciliation and the reconstruction of society.
- The recognition of the need for understanding, but not for vengeance, the need for reparation, but not for retaliation, for *Ubuntu*, but not for victimisation.³

2 RSA (Republic of South Africa). 1998. *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report* (forthwith TRC Report), 1, 148ff. Cape Town: TRC.

3 TRC Report, 1, 55-57.

During its work, the TRC Committee on Gross Human Rights Violations invited thousands of victims, as well as perpetrators from many communities – political leaders, security force personnel, military officers and activists guilty of various violations – to submit their statements at 140 hearings held across the country. With that finished, the TRC requested representatives of special interest groups – the medical fraternity, lawyers, the media, big business, academic institutions, political parties, the police and correctional services, women’s groups, the youth – to do the same. The very last of these ‘special hearings’ was devoted to the South African faith communities. It was decided that the event was to be held in the port city of East London, where 17 months earlier the first of the TRC victims’ stories were heard.

Representatives from the South African faith communities called to the podium

For three days, religious leaders, congregants, as well as delegates from many countries and human rights specialists met to evaluate the role of the faith communities in South Africa during the apartheid era and to discuss the contribution that these communities may make in the process toward national reconciliation. Throughout these three days, the hall where the hearings took place was packed. Television cameras and journalists saw to it that news of the proceedings reached audiences all over the world. A panel of TRC members joined the Archbishop at the table, to facilitate the hearings – inter alia Yasmin Sooka, Hlengiwe Mkhize, Glenda Wildschut and myself.

The invitation to the religious leaders in South Africa to attend the hearings was preceded by a serious debate within the ranks of the TRC. A number of commissioners questioned the wisdom of having such hearings at all. Surely the faith communities – even the Afrikaans churches that for many years publicly supported the policy of apartheid – were not guilty of gross human rights violations? What would they confess? However, countered the rest of the commissioners, the churches as well as the other faith communities were so closely involved in everything that happened in South Africa, on both sides of the struggle, that it was inconceivable not to invite them to address the TRC. The pastors and the priests, the bishops and the moderators, the imams and the rabbi’s needed an opportunity to tell their stories. Stories of guilt and shame, pain and suffering, but also stories of courage and conviction, of forgiveness and reconciliation.⁴

4 TRC Report, 4, 59.

In total, forty-one faith communities made written submissions or gave representations at the hearing. While some churches (among them the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk, NHK) and the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, NGK)) chose not to accept the invitation, the leaders of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), the mainline Protestant churches, the Roman Catholic Church, as well as of Pentecostal, Charismatic and African Initiated Churches (AICs) were present in full force, sharing the podium with the Chief Rabbi of South Africa, representatives of the Ramakrishna Institute of Spirituality and Hinduism, the South African Hindu Maha Sabha, the Jamaitul Ulama Transvaal, the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC), the Call of Islam, the Buddhist Dharma Centre, as well as with spokespersons of the Baha'i Faith.⁵ Each of the representatives was asked to address four questions primarily: To what extent did the community suffer under apartheid? Were there some in the community that overtly or covertly supported the racist policies of the past? Was the community – or members of it – involved in the struggle against apartheid? Lastly, what contribution may be expected from the community in the process of nation-building and reconciliation?

The faith communities as agents of oppression

The first issue the representatives of the different faith communities were asked to address, was the role that their institutions, or its members, played to promote or to uphold the racist policies and structures of the past. To what extent had the community overtly or covertly support apartheid? In most cases, faith communities claimed to cut across divisions of race, gender, class and ethnicity. As such, they would seem by their very existence to have been in opposition to the policies of the apartheid state and, in pursuing their norms and values, to have constituted a direct challenge to apartheid policies. However, contrary to their own deepest principles, many faith communities mirrored apartheid society, casting doubt on their profession of loyalty that transcended social divisions.⁶

Acts of commission

At the East London hearing, there was great interest in the submission of Rev Freek Swanepoel, moderator of the NGK that not only condoned apartheid, but over many years provided a theological argument in support of the policy of 'separate development'. Although the NGK never saw or referred to itself as the 'state

5 TRC Report, 4, 60.

6 TRC Report, 4, 65.

church', many did regard the NGK as the 'government at prayer', harbouring many former 'willing executioners of apartheid' within its ranks. When Swanepoel took the stand, he brought with him a confession adopted by the General Synod of the NGK three years earlier that stated its support of apartheid was sinful and heretical. The church, Swanepoel said, owed a heartfelt apology to fellow South Africans who were hurt by the NGK's stance, to the wider faith community in the country, as well as to its members who over many years were led astray.⁷

Entering into the spirit of the hearing, other Christian denominations that did not officially sanction apartheid, also confessed to actions and practices that, from time to time, belied their official statements. Acts of commission, according to the findings of the TRC, took different forms:

Participating in state structures

The appointment of military chaplains was of great concern to many. Not only Afrikaans churches supplied military chaplains, but chaplains were also appointed from the ranks of the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Apostolic Faith Mission and Roman Catholic churches. Whatever the motivation of the chaplains – who wanted to provide pastoral care to congregants serving in the defence force – their participation served to "reinforce the acceptance of the apartheid cause in the minds of church members, and often justified the 'demonisation' of their opponents".⁸

Other state structures, too, were served by members of the Christian churches. The Apostolic Faith Mission reported that a large number of its members were employed in government structures, many holding senior positions in former apartheid organisations. The Reformed Presbyterian Church confessed that some members took part in homeland structures in the 1960s, defending the Bantustan policies and the right of the state to suppress 'unlawful subversion'.⁹ Individuals, as well as groups within the Muslim community who – some for idealistic, other for pragmatic reasons – chose to collaborate with the regime, was also mentioned. When the government introduced the South African Indian Council, the Coloured Representative Council and subsequently (in 1984) the Tri-Cameral System, some Muslims decided to participate, leading to violent recriminations from Muslims in many parts of the country, causing rifts that to this day have not completely

7 Piet Meiring. 1999. *Chronicle of the Truth Commission*. Vanderbijlpark: Carpe Diem, 270ff.

8 TRC Report, 4, 67.

9 TRC Report, 4, 66.

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healed. There were also cases of Hindu leaders, who worked with the apartheid regime, although the Hindu community's submission to the TRC made only passing reference to this fact.¹⁰

Suppressing and censoring dissidents

Some faith communities confessed that not only did they fail to give sufficient support to anti-apartheid activists in their midst, but that they suppressed, censured and condemned dissidents, even to the point of branding them 'heretics'. A case in point is that of the Rev Frank Chikane (former Secretary-General of the SACC and a leader of the black section of the AFM), who was tortured under the supervision of a white elder of his denomination.¹¹ The NGK confessed to the very bad treatment of members, such as Ben Marais, Bennie Keet, Beyers Naudé, David Bosch, and others, who repeatedly warned against the unacceptability of apartheid.

While Chief Rabbi Harris did not elaborate on the Jewish community's support of apartheid or on the failure of South African Jews to speak out against racism in the country, an important publication with interviews with several Jewish leaders, published during the time the TRC was in session, voiced strong criticism. The Jewish Board of Deputies – that only took a grudging anti-apartheid stance late in the day – was often uncomfortable with the actions of activists and labour leaders in their midst. After 1990, Ronnie Kasrils remarked in an interview, that it has become fashionable to identify with the pioneers and prophets of the past: "The Jewish community has lionised these individuals to some extent now that it is kosher to do so, but in the past, many of them were condemned as people who were bringing notoriety to the community."¹²

Internalising racism

Despite their claim to loyalties that transcend the state, South African churches, whether implicitly or as a matter of policy, allowed themselves to be structured along racial lines, "reinforcing the separate symbolic universes in which South Africans lived".¹³

10 Ebrahim I. Bham. 1997. Submission by the Jamiatul Ulama – Transvaal at the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) hearing, East-London, 17-19 November, 285; Piet Meiring. 2009. Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa. Hindu experiences and concerns. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 60(4), January 2009:5. <http://doi.10.4102/hts.v60i4.633>

11 TRC Report, 4, 68.

12 Immanuel Suttner (ed). 1997. *Cutting through the mountain. Interviews with South African Jewish activists*. 1st Edition. London: Viking, 280.

13 TRC Report, 4, 68.

Besides the Afrikaans churches, the Apostolic Faith Mission, the Lutheran Church as well as the Seventh Day Adventist Church were racially divided. Conservative-evangelical organisations followed suit. Even churches that adhered to the principle of non-racism in their structures were not without guilt in their everyday practice. The Salvation Army confessed to tacit support of racism. The Roman Catholic Church, looking back in history, stated that “effectively there was a black church and a white church”. It was equally true of the English-speaking churches, where Sunday morning and evening worship services constituted “the most segregated hours of the week”. Black leaders were not sufficiently empowered to take their rightful positions in the church. Stipends were drastically different for black and white clergy, reinforcing racial stereotypes of lifestyle differences. “The same contradictions that are prevalent in society are present and often reflected in the life of the church”, the Rev James Buys, moderator of the Uniting Reformed Church, told the hearing.¹⁴

Discrimination was also prevalent in the non-Christian faith communities. Imam Rashid Omar of the Claremont Mosque, Cape Town, reported to the TRC that theological distinctions between Indian and Malay Muslims reflected ethno-class distinctions, as exemplified in the Ulamas and the Cape Muslim organisation respectively.¹⁵

Propagating ‘state theology’

A serious charge against not only the Afrikaans churches but against several conservative-evangelical and Pentecostal denominations was the propagation of a ‘state theology’. The term was coined by the so-called Kairos theologians who, in a document published in 1985, accused some South African churches of propagating a view that gave theological legitimacy to the apartheid state. The effects of state theology were to “bless injustice, canonise the will of the powerful and reduce the poor to passivity, obedience and apathy”.¹⁶ Moss Nthla, General-Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa, acknowledged that Evangelical churches often played in the hands of government agencies by ‘neutralising dissent’ and by encouraging their congregants to refrain from ‘meddling in politics’. Some Apostolic Faith Mission pastors taught that opposition to apartheid was “Communist-inspired

14 James Buys. 1997. *Submission by the Uniting Reformed Church of SA at the TRC hearing*, East-London, 17-19 November; cf. TRC Report, 4, 69.

15 Ibid.

16 Kairos Theologians. 1985. *Challenging the Church. The Kairos Document*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 17.

and aimed at the downfall of Christianity". Others admitted to promoting state theology by persuading their congregants that it was in the interests of 'Christian civilisation' to support the state's 'total onslaught' strategy.¹⁷

Acts of omission

Acts of omission, according to the TRC Report, revolved around three things: an unwillingness to accept responsibility, the failure to act and the failure to support members who were involved in anti-apartheid activities.

Avoiding responsibility

Virtually all the religious groupings, looking back, expressed regret at their failure to speak out effectively against injustice. They had a moral obligation to serve as a conscience to the nation, but for a variety of reasons did not protest loud enough and effective enough to make a difference in the country. For the Roman Catholic Church, this was perhaps its greatest sin. Even the Uniting Reformed Church (URC), which over many years has been consistent in its opposition against apartheid, confessed to "taking too long to make a stand, particularly against the migrant labour system. Such a failure indicated 'silent approval' of state actions."¹⁸

Fariel Esack accused the Muslim leadership of being guilty of the same failure, as did Ashwin Trikamjee of the Hindu Maha Sabha. The unwillingness of Hindu leaders to speak and to act against apartheid created the idea that Hindus were part of the system. The community itself was at fault too, Trikamjee argued. They should have removed the 'irresponsible' leaders from office.¹⁹

Similarly, Chief Rabbi Harris acknowledged the fact that many leaders in the Jewish community did not make themselves heard strongly enough to make a difference.²⁰ Dr Franz Auerbach, speaking for the World Conference of Religion and Peace that through the years coordinated inter-faith actions against apartheid, wryly commented on leaders "who were only reluctantly drawn into the struggle. They came kicking and screaming and often did not go beyond adding their signatures to a diluted anti-apartheid statement".²¹

17 TRC Report, 4, 70.

18 Buys, *Submission at TRC hearing*, East-London; cf. TRC Report, 4, 73.

19 Trikamjee, A. 1997. *Submission by the President of the South African Hindu Maha Sabha at the TRC hearing*, East-London, 17-19 November, 289ff.

20 Cyril Harris. 1997. *Submission by the Jewish Religious Community at the TRC hearing*, East-London, 17-19 November, 269.

21 Franz Auerbach. 1997. *Submission by the WCRP at the TRC hearing*, East-London, 17-19 November, 216.

One reason for not accepting responsibility was simply a lack of courage. Representatives of the Church of England, the Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church, even the (Black) African Initiated Churches admitted that they should have acted more courageously, but refrained from doing so, sometimes for fear of putting themselves at risk, at other times for fear of alienating their flock – especially their wealthier congregants whose financial interests were at stake. The Catholic Church cited its precarious position as the ‘Roomse gevaar’ (‘Roman danger’) in a predominantly Protestant country, as the reason for its initial reluctance to act.

Explaining why the Jewish community was often reluctant to oppose the apartheid regime, Rabbi Harris pointed out that the Jewish community was very small, consisting of immigrants in a foreign country, often feeling very insecure about their position. The trauma of the holocaust and the fear of anti-Semitism within the ruling National Party made them fearful of giving any impression that they were against the state.²²

The seasoned politician Helen Suzman thought the reaction of many of her fellow Jews to be far too timid:

I thought that the Jewish Board of Deputies should have spoken up more against apartheid. Of course they have changed over the last ten years, and became very much outspoken in their condemnation. Prior to that I think they were just dead scared to bring Jews under the beady eye of people like Dr Verwoerd, who [was] outspokenly anti-Semitic.²³

In the Muslim community, too, the refusal of the leaders of the Jamaitul Ulama Transvaal to speak out against apartheid was severely criticised by Imam Solomon and Faried Esack. The Transvaal leaders had lost their nerve. “They obstinately refused to be moved from their record of silence on any political issues which would appear to be anti-state.”²⁴

Failure to act

It was not only the failure to speak, but the failure to act that compromised the faith communities’ position. Many communities who took strong decisions against apartheid, found it very difficult to translate their resolutions into practical action. James Buys of the URC emphasised that this was far greater than a logistical

22 Harris, submission at the TRC, East-London, 269.

23 Suttner, *Cutting through the mountain*, 431.

24 Gassan Solomon. 1997. *Submission by the Muslim Judicial Council at the TRC hearing*, East-London, 17-19 November, 292.

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problem. Such failures represented “a blatant omission and silent approval of the conditions and main cause of human rights violations”.²⁵

One of the most moving confessions of guilt in this respect was from Beyers Naudé and Nico Smith, two stalwarts in the struggle against apartheid. Their Open Letter was circulated in church circles before the hearing and co-signed by a large number of pastors. Most South Africans were amazed: Oom Bey, of all people – the man who had suffered so much because of his fight against apartheid, said: “I have not done enough.”

How is it possible that our preaching was so ineffective, that our actions were so timid, that we did so little to ease the pain of the victims, to confront the rulers of the country, the exponents of the ideology of apartheid?²⁶

Failure to support anti-apartheid activists

The failure of the faith communities to support the activities of members who spoke out against injustice, or who worked to bring an end to the apartheid regime, was mentioned in many submissions. The NGK confessed that it treated the ‘prophets within its midst’ shoddily. The Church of the Province apologised to Archbishop Tutu for its failure to support his call for economic sanctions against the former regime. The Baptist Convention accused the Baptist Union of refusing to acknowledge Baptist activists who were detained at Robben Island Prison. In a similar vein, the Jewish Board of Deputies was blamed for not supporting – but strongly criticising – rabbis who spoke out against apartheid.²⁷ Farid Esack, speaking on behalf of the Call of Islam, castigated the Muslim leadership on their ‘thundering silence’ after the death in detention of Abdullah Haron in 1969.²⁸

Not only individuals suffered for lack of support from their peers, institutions that were engaged in anti-apartheid activities and had the apparent verbal support of faith communities were often left similarly unsupported. A case in point was the Christian Institute of South Africa that was declared an ‘affected organisation’ by the Schlebusch Commission in 1975 and thus prevented from receiving external funds. “Little or no material support came from those churches that had verbally supported it in synods and assemblies”, the TRC was told. “When it was banned two years later, along with its executive leadership, little action was taken and little support [was] given to many of those who were affected.”²⁹

25 Buys, submission at the TRC, East-London, 6.

26 Meiring, *Chronicle*, 115.

27 Harris, submission at the TRC, East-London, 270; Suttner, *Cutting through the mountain*, 616.

28 Meiring, *Chronicle*, 265ff.

29 TRC Report, 4, 75; cf. Beyers Naudé. 1995. *My land van hoop*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 109ff.

Faith communities as victims of oppression

To what extent did faith communities suffer under apartheid? A question also put to representatives appearing before the Commission. The various answers given may be summarised under three headings:

Direct attacks by the state on members and organisations

From time to time, members, as well as institutions of different faith communities, suffered from direct attacks by the apartheid state. Numerous examples were given.

The banning of the Christian Institute in 1977 and the subsequent house arrest of its director Beyers Naudé, received attention. The ‘ongoing battle’ between the government and the SACC was waged on numerous fronts – through media disinformation, the appointment of the Eloff Commission, security raids, the arrest and torture of staff members, culminating in the bombing of Khotso House (the headquarters of the SACC), in 1988. Six weeks later, arsonists destroyed the headquarters of the SA Catholic Bishops’ Conference and detained and tortured the General-Secretary, Father Smangeliso Mhkatshwa. In its submission, the Church of the Province mentioned Father Michael Lapsley, who lost both his hands and an eye in a parcel bomb attack in 1990 (two months after the unbanning of the liberation movements) as “a living icon of redemptive suffering within the church”.³⁰

In his submission, Pankaj Joshi made a similar reference to Hindu leaders – Monty Naicker, Nana Sita, JN Singh and others – who over the years suffered, were imprisoned and died, for their resistance against apartheid.³¹ Moulana Bham gave homage to Muslim activists like Abdullah Haron, who were detained, imprisoned, tortured, banned, exiled and in some cases killed.³² The Jewish community, Harris pointed out, produced proportionally more heroes of the struggle than any other so-called white group. Some were imprisoned, some went into exile, some were martyred, such as Ruth First, and some others almost martyred, such as Albie Sachs.³³

30 TRC Report, 4, 76.

31 Pankaj Joshi. 1997. *Submission by the President of the Ramakrishna Institute of Spirituality and Hinduism at the TRC hearing*, East-London, 17-19 November, 355ff.

32 Bham, submission at TRC, East-London, 284.

33 Harris, *submission at TRC*, East-London, 270.

The closure of buildings, institutions and schools

Inevitably, faith communities were affected by the notorious Group Areas Act. Congregations were often forcefully relocated from 'white areas' to the proper 'group area'.

Christian communities also reported heavy losses: Historic buildings like the London Missionary Society Church at Graaff-Reinet (built in 1802) and the stone church at Majeng in the Northern Cape (built in 1874 and bulldozed in 1975) were lost in the process. The Moravian Church lost numerous buildings in Port Elizabeth and Cape Town. Congregations were often forced to sell their properties at ridiculously low prices, hindering their efforts to re-establish their congregations after removal. The Bantu Education Act forced the closure of numerous mission stations and mission schools, some with long traditions of service to the community. The Methodists lost Healdtown and Kilnerton; the United Congregational Church Adams College and Tiger Kloof; and the Reformed Presbyterian Church Lovedale and Blytheswood. Several submissions referred to the closing of the Federal Theological Seminary in Alice. Many mission hospitals were also affected.³⁴

For the Muslim community, the loss of a mosque was especially painful. More than a building, the MJC's submission explained, a mosque is regarded as a sacred site and must never be abandoned. Group Areas legislation was a direct attack on this principle, assuming that the sacrality of such spaces was transferable to wherever the state decided to resettle the community. Sometimes the Muslim community's vehement protests carried the day, but in most cases, mosques, as well as land used for prayer, were desecrated.³⁵

The Hindu community equally suffered, Trikamjee reported. For more than sixty years, the life of the Indian community has been seriously affected by the periodic introduction of laws governing land tenure. Each new enactment deprived the people of existing property rights, radically reducing the areas where Indian occupation and ownership were permitted. The most serious and painful legislation was the Group Areas Act of 1950. Settled communities were uprooted and relocated, having to abandon schools and temples they have built for themselves with great care over the years. In Cato Manor (Durban), Indians suffered great hardships because of the act. Institutions for children and disabled people were lost. In Johannesburg temples, schools and cultural centres were left

34 TRC Report, 4, 76f.

35 Bham, *submission at TRC*, East-London, 284.

behind. Family life, as well as communal life, were severely harmed. To compound the problem, Trikamjee reported, religious sites set apart by city planners in the new Indian areas were generally purchased by Christian churches, who had access to the necessary funds, leading to many conversions to other faiths, especially to Christianity.³⁶

The repression of religious and cultural values

Even though South Africans adhere to many different religions, the apartheid state saw itself as a guardian of 'Christian civilisation'. Christian National Education was imposed on non-Christian communities, much to the chagrin of Hindu and Muslim parents and religious leaders who feared that their religious values in education were repressed for the sake of religious-alien values. Muslim children were indoctrinated into "a Christian National philosophy which denigrated an Islamic perspective of life", Moulana Bham told the TRC.³⁷ In some Christian communities, such as Ibandla amaNazaretha, children were forced to remove their hair, dishonouring taboos concerning shaving, causing ritual defilement.³⁸

The second cause of concern was the repression of religious law, especially in the case of Hinduism and Islam. "In the legal system of the day", Moulana Bham explained, "Muslim personal and family law was not recognised. Muslim marriages were not legally valid, resulting in children being considered illegitimate or born out of wedlock."³⁹ The Muslim Youth Movement (MYM) pointed out that the state sometimes tried to use religious laws to suit its ends. In 1986 the Ulamas were co-opted on a South African Law Commission committee to draft legislation on the recognition of Muslim marriages. The MYM called it:

... a cynical attempt on the part of the state to gain the approval of the Islamic community – an attempt that was thwarted by the MYM who pressured the Muslim leaders to withdraw.⁴⁰

Hindu cultural life, too, was disrupted. Contact with the motherland, India, was difficult, also because of the cultural boycott instituted by the Indian government against South Africa in protest against the apartheid policy of the National Party – a boycott that lasted the better part of fifty years.

36 Trikamjee, *submission at the TRC*, East-London, 289ff.

37 Bham, *submission at TRC*, East-London, 284.

38 TRC Report, 4, 77.

39 Bham, *submission at TRC*, East-London, 284.

40 TRC Report, 4, 77.

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Up till recently, we were not allowed to invite religious scholars or cultural artists to promote these values. Family members from India were not allowed to visit us.

... Hindu marriages were not recognised and were considered to be illegitimate! We could not use seating facilities in restaurants and had to stand outside and eat our food for which we paid the same price. We were regularly insulted by Whites, at the least provocation. The legal system was practised on double standards. The darker the skin colour, the stricter the punishment. Such were some of the atrocities.⁴¹

The religious values of the Baha'i Faith preclude opposition to the state, a position that is often contested by other communities. It put them in a precarious position. Because of their racially-mixed worship and black leadership, they were often under government surveillance. In the eyes of some in the black activists, the 'Black Baha'is' were seen as traitors, resulting in the tragic execution of four black Baha'is in Umtata and Mdantsane.⁴²

The fact that some Christians, often under the influence of state propaganda, played their part in victimising other religious communities, distorting their values and creating caricatures often compounded the situation. In extreme cases, Bham reported, "Muslim places of worship were attacked or desecrated by unknown persons, allegedly right-wingers who saw Islam as a threat to Christianity."⁴³

Faith communities as opponents of apartheid

Answering the third question on the involvement of the faith communities in the struggle was complicated. What did "opposition against apartheid" entail? For the leadership of the Zion Christian Church, instilling pride and teaching their black congregants to stand up straight in their institutions was a strong repudiation of the treatment of their members in apartheid South Africa. For the Hindu Maha Sabha, following in the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi, passive resistance was the answer. The Church of England and the Afrikaans churches mentioned private meetings with government officials. For the SACC, the watershed came when it began to identify itself with the liberation movements. In its Report on the Faith Communities' Hearings, the TRC chose to speak of a "continuum of opposition" that takes into account positions taken by the faith communities before as well as after the Soweto uprising in 1976.

41 Joshi, *submission at the TRC hearing*, East-London, 17-19 November, 352f.

42 TRC Report, 4, 77.

43 Bham, *submission at TRC*, East-London, 284.

Alternative institutions

For more than a century, black Christians expressed protest against white domination by creating separate black institutions, under black control, using black cultural resources. The AICs were mainly concerned with creating an alternative to white churches but were from the start deemed by the authorities as a possible political threat, destabilising the state's grasp on the hearts and minds of its subjects. The Zion Christian Church and the Ibandla amaNazaretha strongly argued that instilling pride and moral discipline among their members was a very effective way of opposition.⁴⁴

Petitions and private appeals

Many churches and other faith communities reported on their petitions to the government, as the preferred way of expressing opposition to apartheid. The Church of England in South Africa, as well as the Afrikaans churches, used this method, stating that public opposition was often counterproductive. Private discussions on various issues were held, but, the NGK admitted, seldom to call the apartheid policies in question, only asking that they should be applied "with compassion and humanity". The Baha'i leaders, positioning themselves as "politically neutral", chose to meet officials in private as well, to discuss matters of concern to them.⁴⁵

Official statements and resolutions

Throughout the years, many official statements were published by the faith communities, to express their misgivings. Numerous statements and resolutions were discussed at the hearing.

Special attention was given to the important statements coming from the ranks of the Christian churches: the Cottesloe Statement (1960); the SACC's Message to the People (1968); the Resolution on Conscientious Objection and the Resolution on Non-Cooperation that urged Christians to withdraw from state structures (1974); the Kairos Document (1985); the 'Ope Brief' (Open Letter) by 123 NGK theologians; as well as the Belhar Confession, the first Christian confession to be produced on South African soil.⁴⁶

44 TRC Report, 4, 79f.

45 TRC Report, 4, 80f.

46 TRC Report, 4, 81-84.

Theological resistance was not limited to the Christian churches. Shortly after the Cottesloe Statement, the MYM and the MJC, together with other Muslim organisations, produced "The Call of Islam Declaration" (1961):

For too long a time now we have been, together with our fellow-sufferers, subjugated, suffered [the] humiliation of being regarded as inferior beings, deprived of our basic rights to earn, to learn and to worship according to the Divine Rule of Allah. We can no longer tolerate further encroachment on these, our basic rights, and therefore we stand firm with our brothers in fighting the evil monster that is about to devour us – that is oppression, tyranny and *baasskap* (mastership).⁴⁷

The publication of the Declaration was followed by a packed meeting in the Cape Town city hall (on 7 May 1961), where the MJC solemnly declared that "apartheid in any form cannot be condoned by Islam". In 1964, a national conference called by the MJC protested against the Group Areas Act, admonishing Muslims that under no circumstances, mosques should be abandoned. In the 1980s, Muslim leaders participated in the United Democratic Front's 'Don't Vote' campaign, arguing that a vote for the Tricameral Parliament was *haraam* (prohibited).

Withdrawing from state structures

One of the most effective acts of opposition was withdrawal from state structures. In the Christian community, a serious debate developed on whether Christians should be involved in the military. Some churches – the Seventh Day Adventists and the Quakers – objected to military service per se, while some clergy and congregants from other churches were unwilling to serve in an apartheid army, fighting to defend an unjust system. Actions taken against conscientious objectors were often severe. The SACC and its member churches that launched its End of Conscription Campaign, did their best to support objectors. Some churches, out of pastoral concern for members who served in the armed forces, decided – albeit reluctantly – to keep their chaplains. Other denominations – the Presbyterian Church and the United Congregational Church – decided to meet with representatives of the liberation movements, to discuss the possibility of appointing chaplains to their armies.⁴⁸

In Coloured and Indian communities, resistance to cooperating with state structures reached a boiling point with the installation of the Tricameral Parliament. Although every effort was made to co-opt Muslim, Hindu and Christian leaders

47 Solomon, *submission at the TRC hearing*, East-London, 17-19 November, 289.

48 TRC Report, 4, 85.

into the system – and although some were willing to do that – there was a strong consensus in the two communities that becoming part of an apartheid structure was unacceptable.

Opposition in the Hindu community was admittedly not unanimous. Twenty per cent of the community did go to the polls to vote for their representatives in the new parliament.⁴⁹ In the Muslim community, however, it was seen as “contrary to the spirit of Islam”. Partaking in the new parliament became an issue in Christian churches within the Coloured community as well. The United Congregational Church urged its members to distance themselves from the Tricameral Parliament and removed participants such as Rev Alan Hendrikse and Rev Andrew Julies – two former chairs of the church – from their ministers’ role.

Civil disobedience and passive resistance

A fourth way of expressing opposition to the apartheid government was by deliberately disobeying state laws. In the Hindu community, a long tradition of civil disobedience existed. It was never easy, Pankaj Joshi explained in his submission. For Hindus, who regarded all forms of life as being endowed with the Supreme Spirit, resisting apartheid, joining the struggling did not come naturally. While Hindus were strongly opposed to any form of discrimination, they are equally opposed to any form of violence against any living being, Joshi stated in the preamble of his submission.⁵⁰ In the early years of the twentieth century Mahatma Gandhi, who spent 21 years in South Africa, provided an answer to the Indian community.

In the eyes of thousands of Indians, Gandhi personified the attempt of practising Hinduism in daily life – the very essence of the message of the Bhagavad Gita. The foundations of the practice of this philosophy of Satya-Graha (non-violent non-cooperation) found root in the very soil that we are born and living – South Africa.⁵¹ But this philosophy also created conflict in the minds of dedicated Hindus: How do we oppose the tyranny of racial discrimination? Through armed retaliation? Through non-cooperation? “This ideal”, Joshi concluded, “was manifested in general in the Hindu response: non-violent non-cooperation. It is also an ages-old Hindu tenet that one should learn to love your enemy, who may enslave your body, but never your mind and spirit.”⁵²

49 Joshi, submission at TRC, East-London, 352.

50 Ibid., 351.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

Many Hindus in Natal and Transvaal joined the First Massive Resistance Campaign of 1906-1914, launched by Gandhi soon after his arrival as a lawyer in South Africa. They shared in the imprisonment and hardships of their leader.⁵³ Four decades later, the Second Passive Resistance Campaign followed when thousands of Indians protested against the passing of the Pegging Act (1943) and the Asiatic Land Tenure Act (1946). More than 2 000 men and women, who resisted passively, ended up in jail. In recent years, other leaders have taken up the cause of civil disobedience – among whom Nana Sita, president of the Transvaal Indian Congress, who despite his advanced age and acute arthritis served his term in jail.

In the Christian community civil disobedience became an issue many years later, when the Presbyterian Church embarked upon a campaign of defying laws on mixed marriages, group areas, deliberately quoting banned persons and publications. The Catholic Church decided to open its schools to all races in 1976, sparking a dispute with the government that would last until 1991. Other communities, Muslim as well as Baha'i, flouted apartheid laws by promoting mixed worship and study sessions.

Solidarity with liberation movements

After 1976, when the struggle against apartheid intensified, the faith communities were increasingly faced with the dilemma of whether they should show solidarity with the liberation movements? Most of the churches chose a middle way, preferring not to lend full support to either the liberation movements or the state. But after Soweto, and especially after the launch of the United Democratic Front (1983), several denominations realised that they had to take sides. Contact with the liberation movements in exile was maintained throughout the 1980s. The interfaith Conference on World Religion and Peace met with ANC leaders in Zambia to discuss the role of religion in a post-apartheid South Africa.⁵⁴

The Catholic Church mobilised its structures and opened parish halls to popular organisations to hold meetings, aiding and assisting activists in many ways. When the activities of die UDF and COSATU were severely restricted, faith community leaders began to fill important leadership roles, solidifying the relationship between the faith communities and the liberation movements. A bone of contention during these years was the support – or lack of support – of churches for economic sanctions against the government. Many church leaders opposed sanctions or

53 Trikamjee, *submission at TRC*, East-London, 299f.

54 TRC Report, 4, 87.

were ambivalent on the issue. The Church of the Province, despite Archbishop Tutu's repeated requests, only belatedly (in 1989) decided to support sanctions. The Catholic Church "fearing a great increase of poverty and unemployment" supported sanctions with reservations.⁵⁵

The faith communities' role in South Africa's transition

The role of the faith communities did not end with the unbanning of the liberation movements in 1990. Much still had to be done to prepare South Africans for the transition that was to come, and the faith communities were called upon in numerous ways to play their part.

Muslim organisations joined in a national conference as negotiations between the National Party government and the liberation movements got underway. The World Council of Religion and Peace held an interfaith conference called "Believers in the Future" to discuss religious rights and responsibilities in the new South Africa. The SACC and the SA Catholic Bishops Conference joined the liberation movements in a National Coordinating Committee for the Repatriation of South African Exiles in 1991. Several churches and Christian organisations met at Rustenburg to discuss their future responsibilities. Confessions from participants at Rustenburg anticipated those made at TRC hearings.

In September 1991, the National Peace Accord was launched, again with heavy involvement from the SACC and its member churches. Catholics and Protestants worked together to prepare South Africans for the coming elections, with numerous voter education programmes. The Church Leaders Forum, representing a wide collection of denominations, met with political leaders to urge them on the path of a negotiated settlement. When the Conference on a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) broke down, church leaders worked hard, sometimes behind the scenes, to restart the negotiations. And, when the elections came, the WCRP, the SACC and the SACBC formed a Panel of Religious Leaders for Electoral Justice, to monitor the electoral process.

The TRC Report concluded that this does not mean to say that all denominations and Christians were equally committed to the transformation of the country. It was often individual leaders who shouldered the responsibility, while many were hesitant to enter the fray.

55 Ibid.

| "The best of all hearings." |

What is the specific contribution that the faith communities can offer in terms of healing, reconciliation and nation-building? This was the final question put before the bishops, pastors, imams and priests. Each of them used the opportunity to discuss their community's role in this regard. There were high expectations. All future healing processes and reconciliation efforts deeply depended upon the role that Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, African Traditionalists, and the rest, were willing to play. Tutu emphasised that "[r]eligion is central to the process of healing". The Archbishop wrote this, six months into the life of the TRC. "We need to reach the deep spiritual wells of our different religious traditions ... to draw strength and grace with which to address the challenges of healing and nation-building."⁵⁶

The role of religion

Not all South Africans – and not all TRC commissioners – were overly enthusiastic about the role that religion was allowed to play in the truth and reconciliation process. The way that Tutu facilitated the proceedings raised questions. The TRC process was a legal process; it was said and should be conducted in a juridical style. For them, Tutu arriving at most hearings wearing his archbishop's vestments, opening and closing each day with a hymn and a prayer, was unacceptable. However, the Archbishop maintained that, when issues of guilt and forgiveness, reconciliation and healing – each of them loaded with religious beliefs and experiences – are at stake, one cannot but allow religion to play its part.⁵⁷ Criticism, too, was also levelled at the 'Christianisation' of the TRC process. "It contributed significantly to Muslims remaining on the side-lines", Faried Esack told a post-TRC conference in Holland.

On the day of my testimony, I spoke critically of the symbolism of having Jews, Muslims and Hindus coming to testify to an all-Christian panel, headed by an archbishop sitting under a huge crucifix in a church hall.⁵⁸

Privileged position of Christians

Another obstacle on the road to reconciliation, was the privileged position of the Christian churches in South Africa. To strive towards reconciliation is a wonderful ideal, Rabbi Harris explained, but it should never be taken for granted. Christians had it easy in the past. They were in the majority. But being a member of one of the

56 H. Russel Botman and Robin M. Peterson. 1996. *To remember and to heal*. Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 8.

57 Piet Meiring. 2000. The baruti vs the lawyers: the role of religion in the TRC Process. In: C Villa-Vicencio (ed). *Looking back. Reaching forward*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 13f.

58 Esack was mistaken. Ms Yasmin Sooka, a Hindu, sat on the panel as well. PM.

minority religions in a South Africa that considered itself to be a Christian country, was not always easy. Understanding one another, accepting one another, working towards healing and reconciliation may take time.

If we talk of the past, we should not only think of apartheid, security legislation and all those things, Essack added. Christian 'triumphalism' was also an issue. In an avowed 'Christian state' adherents of other faiths often ran into difficulties. "If you were a Muslim – somebody who was part of the so-called 'Muslim threat' – you were often regarded as an enemy of the state and treated as such." It was ironic that as recently as 1986, the year when the NGK for the first time started to take leave of apartheid, the General Synod still referred to Islam as a 'false religion'.⁵⁹

Desmond Tutu was aware of the hurt. Looking at the audience and into the television cameras, he solemnly declared:

I am certain that all my fellow Christians in South Africa will agree with me if I express our deep apologies to you, the members of the other faith communities in the country, for the arrogant way in we as Christians acted – as though ours was the only religion in South Africa, while we have been a multi-religious community from day one.⁶⁰

Answering the challenge

With all of this in mind, the TRC expressed its fervent hope that the faith communities will take up the challenge of healing and reconciliation. At the East London hearing, all the representatives of the different communities categorically stated their commitment to work together for the healing and reconciliation, nation-building. It would be a costly process, they agreed. But the willingness to reach out to one another was apparent. There was a willingness, too, to share the guilt of the past. It was not only members from the Afrikaans-speaking churches who harboured negative feelings against Muslims, Rashied Omar maintained, but also members of most Christian denominations were as guilty. Actually, the imam said, none of us should be pointing a finger.

Pankaj Joshi, speaking for the Hindu community also entered into the spirit of reconciliation. In his concluding remarks to the hearing, he said:

⁵⁹ Meiring, *Chronicle*, 272.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

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There is a lot ... to be done, a lot of issues ... to be addressed, before we can call ourselves non-racial, democratic, etc. We need to change our spirit truthfully, sincerely wishing to make [the] change, and not only seeking our own advantage. If we want true healing to occur, we must stop talking of our hurt only. Let us forgive.⁶¹

Geoff Siffrin, speaking for Geshar (Jewish Movement for Social Action) expressed similar sentiments. Forgiveness does not necessarily come easy, but without forgiving those who harmed you, you can never truly be free:

For reconciliation to happen, people have to face each other. The offended party must be willing to offer forgiveness. Forgiveness does not mean that we accept or accommodate the evil that has been perpetrated. Rather, without in any way condoning the act, forgiveness is the ability to let go of the resentment towards the person responsible. If you don't do that, you are not free. There still is a lot of resentment in South Africa today. Virtually all sections of society harbour these resentments. Victims, as well as perpetrators, are crippled by their resentments. To move towards reconciliation, Geshar called upon all South Africans, as a national priority, to explore ways to help people to understand one another's resentments, and to find ways of getting rid of these feelings, so that we can be free to build a healthy, strong society.⁶²

Working together on practical issues to incorporate the marginalised in society, to promote a culture of tolerance, to create structures to address the needs of the destitute, even to organise religious ceremonies, creating liturgies for healing and reconciliation – according to the challenges of the TRC – would not create problems. It had been happening and will continue to happen.

Meeting one another on a theological level, entering into a serious dialogue on the foundational truths and convictions of the different faiths – and how these truths and convictions impact on the joint process of healing and reconciliation – may prove to be more difficult. But it can and should be done. Already in the TRC submissions, as well as in a number of subsequent publications, perspectives have been offered on how Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and African Traditionalists, may learn from another and complement one another in this regard.⁶³ Of course there were differences that need to be respected, but in the words of Beyers Naudé, one of the “grand old men” of the struggle, taken from

61 Joshi, submission at the TRC, East-London, 354; cf. Audrey Chapman and Bernard Song (eds.). 2003. *Religion and Reconciliation?* London: Templeton, 260.

62 Geof Siffrin. 1997. *Geshar (Jewish Movement for Social Action): Reconciliation – a Jewish View*, 279.

63 Cf. Piet Meiring. 2003. The Muslim voice in South Africa – in the era of Truth and Reconciliation. *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif (NGTT, Dutch Reformed Theological Journal)*, 44(3/4); Meiring, Hindu experiences, *HTS*, 60(4):5; Piet Meiring. 2004. Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa. *Jewish Voices and Perspectives. Verbum et Ecclesia*, 25(1).

his autobiography written just as the TRC was commencing with its work: The issue at stake is not the extent of our differences, but the where and how we can work together.⁶⁴

High expectations of the future role of the faith communities

On Thursday afternoon, November 19th, the hearing came to a close. In his final remarks Archbishop Tutu adjudged the Faith Community Hearing as “probably the best of all TRC hearings”. Many others were in agreement.⁶⁵ Contrary to the expectations of critics, it did serve a purpose, bringing important insights and information – sometimes painful and shocking, at other times humbling and encouraging – to the fore. Listening to the small and humble voices to whom Tutu referred to in his sermon, proved profitable. The faith communities, seemingly, were ready for the challenge.

In its final six-volume Report, the Commission’s high expectations of the role of the churches in years to come, were reaffirmed. Looking back, much had been achieved. The stories of 22 400 victims were recorded and 7 112 amnesty cases have been heard. Special hearings for various other interest groups and political parties were conducted. Much of the truth of the past had been recorded and interpreted. In terms of national healing and reconciliation, however, the Report stressed, the process had only started. All institutions in the country had a responsibility in this regard, but the TRC expressed its fervent hope that the faith communities, above all, would take up the challenge of healing and reconciliation:

Faith communities enjoy a unique and privileged position in South African society. They are widely respected and have far-reaching moral influence. As such, they should play a key role in healing and reconciliation initiatives.⁶⁶

In the final TRC Report, specific challenges to the faith communities were put, challenges that needed serious attention from the faith communities:⁶⁷

- In terms of healing, the TRC asked the faith communities to take the lead in devising processes and procedures of healing, to initiate the building and staffing of trauma centres in the communities of South Africa.
- In terms of the redistribution of sources the churches were challenged to set an example by empowering the marginalised and sharing their own resources with the needy. Land

64 Naudé, *My land van hoop*, 143.

65 Alex Boraine. 2000. *A country unmasked*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 179ff; Meiring, *Chronicle*, 265.

66 TRC Report, 5, 316.

67 TRC Report, 5, 316ff.

| "The best of all hearings." |

audits needed to be made. Consideration was to be given to return land acquired by the churches over the years to its rightful owners – or to put the land to use in such a way that all benefit from it. Would the faith communities, as in the past, accept co-responsibility for schools, health services, and for community development?

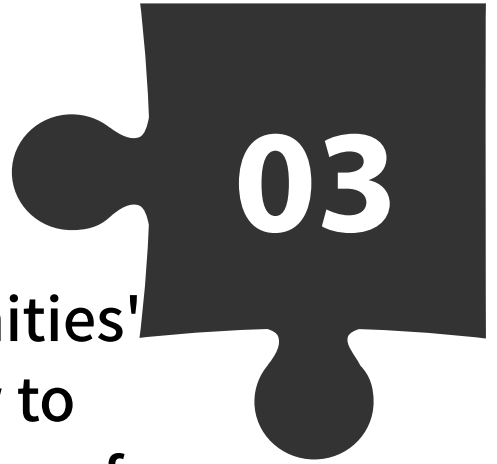
- Concerning the relationship between the religious sector and state, a number of recommendations were made, especially on the role of the future chaplaincy in the military, police and correctional services.
- It was especially in the field of reconciliation that six very specific recommendations were recorded. The faith communities were asked to:
 - seek ways to communicate with one another as a basis for eliminating religious conflict and promote inter-religious understanding,
 - seek ways to incorporate marginalised groups into their communities,
 - promote a culture of tolerance and peaceful co-existence,
 - inspire their members to work together in a peace corps to help communities in need,
 - organise reconciliation ceremonies, creating liturgies to heal and celebrate the reconciliation that we do experience in the country,
 - and, finally, develop theologies designed to promote reconciliation and a true sense of community in the nation.

Did the churches as well as the other faith communities rise to the occasion in the years that followed? Were Desmond Tutu's and indeed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's high expectations met? These are the questions that this consultation and publication hopes to answer.



TAKING STOCK AND
MOVING FORWARD

Chronicle of the re-enactment of the TRC's Faith Communities' Hearings with a view to the present and future of a Post-TRC South Africa



8-9 October 2014, Stellenbosch

Christo Thesnaar and Len Hansen¹

Introduction

On 8 October 2014, the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology in the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University, in collaboration with the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, hosted the re-enactment (also called a re-enactment consultation) of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' (TRC) Faith Communities' Hearings. During the TRC's Faith Communities' Hearing in 1997, different faith communities in South Africa, including Christian churches and some religious organisations, submitted presentations on their role in the apartheid history of our country. They also commented on their commitment to reconciliation and a reconciled future for South Africa. It was no coincidence that the re-enactment coincided with the 20th commemoration of the birth of a democratic South Africa, as at the time, and following it, there was an increase in the divisions and friction

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within South African society in general and, in particular, on the role that the faith communities play or should play in this regard. Therefore, the re-enactment aimed to find, amid the 20-year celebrations, ways to again put the process of reconciliation back on the main agenda of all faith communities in the country. The re-enactment further attempted to make a significant contribution to reconciliation and national unity in the current South African context. It hoped to contribute to the development of responsible and realistic reconciliation strategies for the faith communities and to offer practical suggestions on how to address the challenges of reconciliation and nation-building at the southern-most tip of our continent.

In telling the story of the re-enactment, the structure of this chronicle will first describe the events leading up to it; next, it will give an overview of the two days of the re-enactment; and, finally, it will end with a general conclusion.

Run-up to the re-enactment

In the lead up to the 20th anniversary of democracy and the 15th year of the conclusion of the TRC process, it was clear that the drive to reconcile the nation had all but disappeared from the agendas of faith communities, government and civil society. What was not easy to understand, was that this development took place over time and amid growing challenges to transformation, economic justice and land distribution, to name a few, but also an apparent increase in levels and incidences of racism, hatred, violence, frustration and anger. It also subsequently became clear that neither the religious sector, civil society, nor government expressed a fundamental urgency, are willing to or have the capacity to address the original recommendations made by the TRC. Against this backdrop, it was decided to host a small symposium on the challenges of reconciliation in a post-TRC South Africa at the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University from 10 to 11 February 2014.

Apart from discussing the decreasing focus on reconciliation, delegates at the symposium were also eager to discuss how to address unresolved trauma, deal with unresolved issues and anxiety from the past, how to promote the so-called healing of memories of both victims and perpetrators and to revisit the commitments made by the churches at the TRC hearing in 1997. In terms of methodology, it was decided not to follow a conference type of symposium where participants would present papers followed by limited time for discussion. We rather asked a few participants to share their understanding of current challenges and then allowed for interactive open sessions with ample time for discussion and deliberations.

On the first day of the symposium, Dr Fanie du Toit, the then Director of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, shared his views on the current state of reconciliation in South African. Dr Deon Snyman, from the Restitution Foundation, did the same based on his engagement with a process of reconciliation in the town of Worcester, in the Western Cape. The key themes raised after constructive discussions and reflections were the following:

1. How does one define reconciliation?
2. What are the conditions needed for effective reconciliation?
3. What is the role of religion in processes of reconciliation?
4. What is the role of the church in reconciliation?
5. What to do regarding generational guilt?
6. How to go about harnessing our social resources, organising courageous conversations, remembering the past, justice, etc.

On the second day, Fr Michael Lapsley, Director of the Institute for the Healing of Memories in Cape Town, shared important perspectives shared on the perspectives from the first day of the symposium. In short, the first day's discussions made clear that the faith communities should play a key role in assisting perpetrators under and beneficiaries of apartheid to deal with their guilt; faith communities should guide the latter on a journey of reconciliation and they (faith communities) should also become advocates for the needs of the victims of apartheid and should be active in the transformation of society. Then delegates from the international community, who also participated, shared their experiences of reconciliation and healing within their contexts, to establish whether South Africans may learn from the processes in their countries. Dr Wilhelm Verwoerd reflected on reconciliation in Northern Ireland (where he worked for several years); Prof Ralf Wüstenberg on reconciliation in a post-unification Germany; and Prof Martin Leiner on both the processes in Germany, but also in post-genocide Rwanda. It was during the conclusion of the symposium in discussing possible ways forward, that the seeds were sown for the organising of a re-enactment of the Faith Communities' Hearings of 1997 and a symposium on war veterans, hosted in March/April 2015.

After some deliberations between Piet Meiring and Christo Thesnaar, it was decided to approach Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu to enquire whether he was willing to support the concept of a re-enactment of the TRC Faith Communities' Hearings. He was overwhelmingly in favour of such a re-enactment consultation and offered the assistance of the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation. The latter also paved the way to approach former commissioners (some of whom were, in fact, present during the Faith Communities' Hearings in 1997) to participate in the re-enactment. We were overwhelmed by and extremely grateful for the positive response to our invitation from the former commissioners as well.

Intending to revisit the past to address the present and to contribute towards building a united future, we invited the faith communities that attended the original TRC hearings in East London. We would offer them an opportunity to revisit their contributions made in 1997. However, we also decided to invite faith communities that did not attend the original hearings, or that could not attend them. We wanted to provide them with the opportunity to contribute to the topic of current challenges facing our country concerning reconciliation. Thus, we requested each faith community to reflect on their contribution during the 1997 hearing and then to prepare a short presentation on their faith community's vision, responsibility and commitment to reconciliation within the current and future South African context. The idea was that, where possible, the person who testified before the commission in 1997 would present their reflection and that a younger member of the community would expand upon their vision, responsibility and commitment towards reconciliation now and in future. Although impossible to reach the latter ideal in all cases, the response from the faith communities to participate was very positive.

The re-enactment consultation

Structure

From the outset, we decided to set up the re-enactment in a similar format as the Faith Hearing in 1997, with the seating and the structure arranged accordingly. Tutu chaired the 1997-hearings and would do the same during the re-enactment – however, during the re-enactment Tutu also chose to share chairing responsibilities with other (former) commissioners who attended. The commissioners who took part in the re-enactment was Ms Yasmin Sooka, Prof Hlengiwe Mkhize, Ms Glenda Wildschut and Prof Piet Meiring.

Day 1 and the morning of Day 2 consisted of contributions (submissions) by the various faith communities and a submission by the South African Council of Churches (SACC). The afternoon session of Day 2 was reserved for contributions and reflections by local and international participants that did not represent specific South African religious traditions or denominations. The re-enactment concluded with a session on a possible way forward. The section below gives a more detailed picture of the programme of the two days and the different participants.

The programme

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY 8 OCTOBER 2014	
09:00	Welcome: Prof Nico Koopman, Dean: Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University
09:05	Opening and reflection: Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu
	Introducing the panel: Ms Yasmin Sooka, Prof Hlengiwe Mkhize, Ms Glenda Wildschut and Prof Piet Meiring
	Submissions by faith communities: Chair: Ms Glenda Wildschut
09:45	Anglican Church of Southern Africa: Dean Michael Weeder
10:00	Methodist Church of Southern Africa: Dr Dion Foster; Rev Vuyani Nyobole
10:30	Catholic Church: Bishop Kevin Dowling and Archbishop Jabulani Nxumalo (unable to attend)
11:30	Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa: Prof Jerry Pillay and Rev Douglas Bax
12:00	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA): Rev P B Mathe; Bishop Horst Müller (ELCSA-NT); Dr Hanns Lessing (a short 10-minutes presentation on research on German-South African church relations)
12:30	Baptist Union of Southern Africa: Rev Angelo Scheepers; Rev George Ngamlana; Rev Deon Malan
14:00	Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, NGK): Rev Freek Swanepoel; Dr Kobus Gerber; Prof Nelus Niemandt
14:30	Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa: Rev Peter Grove and Prof Mary-Anne Plaatjies van Huffel
15:30	Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika, NHK): Rev E G Fourie
15:45	Reformed Churches in South Africa (Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika, GKSA): Rev Cassie Aucamp; Prof Amie van Wyk
16:15	The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa: Dr Frank Chikane and Pastor Daniel Andrews
16:45-17:00	Concluding remarks
DAY 2: THURSDAY 9 OCTOBER 2014	
09:15	Opening and Reflection: Rev Mpho Tutu
	Submissions by faith communities (continued)
09:45	United Congregational Church of Southern Africa: Rev Thulani Ndlazi

DAY 2: THURSDAY 9 OCTOBER 2014 (cont.)	
09:30	TEASA: Dr Nadine Bowers du Toit (presenting a written submission by Dr Moss Nthla)
09:45	South African Council of Churches: Dr Brigalia Bam and Bishop Malusi Mpumlwana
10:15	Muslim Community: Mr Thandile Khona (President of the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa) and Maulana Abdul Khaliq Allie (Secretary-General of the Muslim Traditional Council)
10:45	Hindu Community: Mr Ballen Gangen (South African Tamil Federation) and Ms Nalini Gangen (Representative of the Maha Sabha)
11:45	Jewish Community: Mr Leonard Shapiro (South African Jewish Voices for a Just Peace); Written submission by the Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein (to be read)
	Comments and Reflections: Prof Jaap Durand; Prof Eddy van der Borgh; Prof Nico Koopman; Dr Rashied Omar and Dr Vicentia Kgabe
	Discussion: The way forward (facilitated by Dr Frank Chikane)
16:00	Closing comments: Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu

Summary of Day One

Prof Nico Koopman, on behalf of Stellenbosch University, opened the historical proceedings with prayer and welcomed delegates to the re-enactment. In his prayer, he reminded the participants of the importance of reflecting on our country, calling, past, but also on our future. He expressed the hope that this consultation will advance the hunger for healing and dignity, for reconciling justice, equality and the freedom of all.

Archbishop Tutu then thanked all for their presence and expressed his surprise at the turnout. He reflected on the very challenging context South Africa finds itself in then, given the lack of funding to ensure justice for all and the tasks facing them, both manifold and hard. He reiterated that it is extremely difficult to stand up against one's comrades as they, since elected in positions of power, have also made mistakes, including involvement in corruption, for which they need to be criticised. He concernedly shared that, in his mind's eye, he has an image of God crying – because God sees Syria, Gaza, South Sudan, the Central African Republic; God sees the suffering, the violence, especially the appalling rape statistics of women and children in South African. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that all present at the re-enactment will, over the next two days and in future, look at the world through God's eyes to try to find a way to wipe the tears from God's face.

Commissioner Glenda Wildschut chaired the first session of the re-enactment and announced that the consultation would start with the submission of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa. In the absence of Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, Dean Michael Weeder, Dean of St George’s Cathedral, presented the submission. The initial submission before the TRC in 1997 was done by the then Bishop Michael Nuttall, the Bishop of Natal. Dean Weeder titled his submission, *An Endangered Address*, derived from a poem by Jeremy Cronin. In the poem, Cronin reflects on a submission made by a former torturer, a Special Branch police officer. In the latter’s police officer’s submission, he speaks of a fellow that struggled with the reality that he had been party to, namely sending a parcel or letter bomb to a family with whom he had stayed with and the little girl, a child he had known personally, eventually killed in the mission. In the poem, the address where the parcel was sent is called ‘an endangered address’. Dean Weeder’s submission then reflected on what he called the variety of endangered addresses in our society at that time.

Dean Weeder raised key questions from Nuttall’s submission in 1997:

But much more, much more important: What are we going to do for the healing of this land? That is going to be the major challenge. What are we going to do to carry out the ministry of reconciliation that has been entrusted to us?

As he addressed this question, Weeder acknowledged, amongst other things, that the church had not yet developed a ‘healthy language’, in terms of verbs and adjectives related to race. He pleaded for the church to deconstruct the language of faith in a way that people, who are not necessarily part of regular congregations, will understand. The problem, Weeder indicated, is that we have found comfort in the localised, what the late Albert Luthuli called ‘ghetto identities’ that will contribute to the making of a greater nation, but that we have since gotten stuck in those identities. The ‘Endangered Address’, according to him, will cause further impoverishment to occur if you are encountered in your status amongst the poor. Therefore, it remains a challenge, but we need to grapple with our inability as churches to recognise that in the Western Cape one finds a national minority being a regional majority and the poor are found in great numbers in that demographic. We must find a way to sustainably deal with key issues in these communities, such as gangsterism in Mannenburg or vigilante attacks in Khayelitsha.

Dean Weeder concluded his submission by emphasising that the church needs to find a way to engage business and encourage them, not just for their own sake, but also in the interest of the community, to reinvest in a much more patriotic act,

in the youth, in women and other most vulnerable groups in society. Not for the sake of maximum profit and gains, but for the sake of a better quality of life for all South Africans.

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa was the second faith community to make their submission at the re-enactment. Rev Vuyani Nyobole and Dr Dion Foster represented Bishop Ziphozihle Siwa, who was unable to attend. The original Methodist submission, in 1997, was made by Rev H. Mvume Dandala.

Nyobole began his submission with a quote from the 1997-submission that referred to a confession the church made in 1960:

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa recognises that Christian people and groups, whilst responsible for contributing towards the solution of the problems of humanity in interpreting the mind of Christ in the situation of South Africa, they themselves are deeply involved in those problems. We as a church confess that many of our own members are guilty of race prejudice and are prone to the very sins that we regard as our duty to condemn.

Nyobole concluded his reference to the 1997-submission by stating that this was true for the past but also remained true for today: That we find it is easy to make those confessions and statements but find it difficult to live up to them. In this regard, he referred to the shortcomings of the act that established the TRC. He emphasised that it was a compromise negotiated via the Codesa process and, as such, it mostly favoured the perpetrators more than the victims. The point Nyobole wanted to make was that amnesty was immediately awarded to the perpetrators, while victims still awaited reparation. Commissioner Yasmin Sooka affirmed this when she commented on the submission of Nyobole by saying that she was struck, as was the victims group Khulumani, a few months ago when the churches requested government to release Clive Derby-Lewis (found guilty of the murder of Chris Hani) and that they should release Eugene de Kock (former Vlakplaas operative) from prison. In their reaction to the call by the churches, Khulumani stated that they had not heard a similar request from the church leaders to government regarding the fact that reparations remain an outstanding issue. Nineteen years down the line, according to Sooka, the President's Fund is still sitting on a huge amount of money, while community reparations have not been paid and while the pardon process has constantly been used as an attempt to grant more amnesties and it is left to victims or survivors to oppose this state of affairs. Sooka confessed that, whenever reference is made to the prophetic voice of the church, she always asks herself, why the churches remain silent on the issue of reparation.

Nyobole also regretted that the statute establishing the TRC placed more emphasis on truth than on reconciliation. He indicated that the vision of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa was to make every local church a centre of healing and transformation and that churches should also strive towards having their pastors, their clergy act as agents of that healing and transformation within their local contexts. This vision, however, remains a challenge and cannot be imposed on the clergy. Thirdly, Nyobole indicated that, up to then, faith communities have not clearly defined their new, post-apartheid roles in relation to government, leading to a paucity within faith communities of critical theological reflection on their role and responsibilities – also a paucity of collective critical theological reflection. To him, the implication of this paucity is the moral decay people experience in our society. Nyobole for the most part blamed churches for this, since those who are corrupt in government are also (often) church members, sitting in church pews! However, the problem is that churches seem not to have reached out to them to hold them accountable.

In support of the comments made by Nyobole in his submission, Dr Dion Foster made a significant point by stating that the church has lost touch with a people's theology; that churches and faith communities have forgotten that they represent the people of this nation who remain largely impoverished and disenfranchised. Foster also emphasised the critical importance of interfaith and ecumenical cooperation as well as churches and faith communities' recognition of their culpability for what is happening in our country and amongst its people. What this entails, Forster said, is that the church has to bear responsibility for the fact that our teaching and our discipleship, our witness and our work, have not been consistent with the values that we hold.

The Roman Catholic Church (RCC) was the third faith community to make its submission. Bishop Kevin Dowling did so in the absence of Archbishop Jabulani Nxumalo. Dowling, together with Archbishop Buti Tlhagale (who was unable to attend) also represented the RCC at the 1997 Faith Hearings. In a powerful submission, Downing not only talked about taking responsibility for the past but also offered guidelines to address current challenges. He started his submission by referring to the 'ambivalence' and 'complexity' of the Roman Catholic community of South Africa in terms of its response to apartheid atrocities by indicating that, for example, both Chris Hani and Janusz Waluś (the person that gunned Hani down) was and is part of that community. He referred to the years that the Catholic community was a missionary community, particularly in terms of its leadership. The church was inwardly focused, but also became increasingly challenged by the

fact that the vast majority, 85 per cent of its members, were from the oppressed majority. Dowling referred to the theology of, for example, Albert Nolan that played a major role in the way the church became aware of the challenges faced by many people in our country.

In his submission, Dowling also referred to statements made by the church that did not necessarily reflect a conversion process, particularly in the privileged minority of the church – something he believes remained a problem. He is, therefore, convinced that unless the privileged minority in this country undergoes a conversion process, personally and as a community, it will be impossible for them to be on the same page as those experiencing daily injustices. If we are not able to sit down and take the hand of someone who has HIV and Aids, the landless, the poor and those whose human rights are abused, the vulnerable (children and women), we will not be able to make a difference.

Dowling also felt very strongly that South Africa needs transitional justice, but that the starting point toward this should always be from the experience of the victims and survivors. The transitional justice process has to include the recovery of the truth and the issue of economic transformation and restitution. He said this against the background that he firmly believes that not only the victims of human right atrocities, but also the victims of apartheid, and the millions of poor that we have in our country was sold short. In this regard, Downing stated that the church may continue to make statements, but that its real future role will be at the grassroots level where it has to walk with the people so that they can become the agents of their transformation. He said that this is the role he hopes churches continue to play in all communities. Concerning this role and the question of who will then take us forward, Dowling affirmed that only the empowered poor, disenfranchised and violated can take us forward. It is with them that churches and faith communities are uniquely called to be not in isolated ivory towers, but sitting in the shacks of the poor. It is also here where theology needs to be done and where people should be enabled to, once again, believe in their dignity. It is enabling people through our programmes on the ground, however long they take, that churches are going to change the current situation so many still find themselves in.

Downing further emphasised that we can no longer hold on to the perception that 'government must be seen to be doing everything' because government cannot do everything. Faith communities, NGOs and big business must take co-responsibility for the task ahead of us all. He did, however, propose that the government play a leadership role in this regard. But, faith communities have to challenge the government to move away from political opportunism around election time,

have to come together with the communities, with the activists, with the skills that are available in NGOs and faith communities and should consciously commit to a social compact to deal with these critical issues. Dowling identified several critical issues, in line with those already highlighted during the re-enactment, such as migration from our rural villages to the cities and people ending up in the appalling shack settlements, jobless and hopeless, often the targets of xenophobia and, above all, the unacceptable rate of unemployment among the youth. In terms of redistributive justice, Dowling reminded those present, that the biggest beneficiaries of this remains the business community and mentions a proposal to the government of a special tax on the business community that may be allocated to development programmes. Government, however, did not take this up and so we are still all complicit in this regard.

The United Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (UPCSA) was the fourth faith community to present its submission, led by Prof Jerry Pillay and accompanied by Rev Douglas Bax. Bax was one of the persons who made the UPCSA submission before the TRC in 1997. He started his submission with reference to the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church of South Africa that were united in 1999 to become known as the UPCSA. For this reason, at the TRC Faith Communities' Hearings in 1997, there was not one submission as now, but two – one from the Presbyterian Church of South Africa and one from the predominately-black Reformed Presbyterian Church. Dr Gideon Khabela made the submission to the TRC on behalf of the latter.

Bax also referred to statements they made as a church over the years against apartheid and issues such as conscientious objection, which caused internal dissent in the church, even leading to some congregations breaking away from the church. Bax spoke about unequal stipends in the Presbyterian Church; something that has never been the same and a still unresolved issue. Referring to 1973, he remembered the little confession of faith, a liturgical confession against apartheid and against the prevalent pietism that separated the gospel from politics. He also mentioned that, in 1975, in the process of preparing for a conference of churches organised by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches – then still including the NGK – the Presbyterian Church produced and adopted a document later called, *A Different Gospel*, that analysed and repudiated the exegetical basis of the theological justification and rationalisation of apartheid. Bax paid tribute to the work done by Rob Robertson, a minister in the church, as it is due to his efforts that the Presbyterian Assembly adopted several resolutions in 1981 that were non-violent active resistance, instead of just statements. These resolutions included

defying the government by, for example, quoting from banned literature, defying the Group Areas Act by housing ministers in their congregations even if they were of another race and not allowed in the area; and most importantly, defying the Mixed Marriages Act. The church also consistently backed conscientious objectors and called for allowing conscientious objection. The church also refused to serve on the Chaplains' Board and refused to serve on the Board that adjudicated on the treatment of conscientious objectors.

Bax stated the reasons why the church unified – it was what God wanted and both biblically and theologically justified; it was also due to the political situation, the economic situation and the need for reconciliation in the country. Pillay then addressed the question: "So, what have been some of our contributions to the reconciliation processes in South Africa as the UPCSA?"

In his reflection on this question Pillay said, firstly, that the UPCSA focused on the aspect of being a reconciled community, the need for reconciliation and healing, and the reason why the UPCSA mission priorities are 'health', 'wellbeing' and 'securing justice'. UPCSA realised that health and wellbeing are often affected by injustices, oppression and abuse, and, therefore, it committed itself to address injustice, such as economic and gender injustice. He affirmed that there could be no reconciliation without justice. He was also the first person who, in his submission, emphasised the challenge of gender injustice and questioned the lack of women representation in the leadership of the faith communities present. For this, Commissioner Sooka thanked him. Pillay also emphasised that, as a church, they had to face the issue of culture and had to find ways to address what it means to be a human being.

Secondly, Pillay, indicated that the UPCSA see the need for reconciliation and unity on three levels. First, they have to deal with apartheid, colonialism and all the related evils and bring white and black folk together. That still has to happen in many congregations as the need for practical ways to engage reconciliation and healing has been swept under the carpet and, therefore, the hurts of the past still have to be dealt with in many places.

At a second level, there exists a need for internal reconciliation within the UPCSA, and church structures still need redress. The third emphasises that redress will require empowerment and capacitating the church's leaders to exercise leadership in ways that are needed now – for example towards redistributing economic resources of the church to local churches and presbyteries and working towards cross-cultural mission and ministry. To do this, Pillay acknowledged that their church needed training.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA), ELCSA-NT and ELCSA Cape were the fifth faith community to present a submission. These three churches were not present at the TRC Faith Communities' Hearings in 1997 and, at the re-enactment, they presented separate submissions as they were not yet united in South Africa. Rev PB Mathe represented ELCSA (as the General-Secretary of ELCSA and on behalf of the presiding bishop, Rev Dr Ndanganeni Phaswana, who was abroad at the time). Bishop Horst Muller represented ELCSA-NT, and Bishop Gilbert Filter represented ELCSA Cape. In his submission, Mathe referred to the importance of Article 16 of the Augsburg Confession, part of the confessional basis of the Evangelical Lutheran Church worldwide. Article 16 addresses the issue of the role of Christians in civil affairs and the fact that the church formed part of the ecumenical community in the fight against the apartheid system. Mathe stated that, in terms of the current context, we would need to challenge the three Lutheran churches to come closer together and, in this process, they need to face the issues of properties, ownership of buildings and other issues that still separate them. Mathe further emphasised the challenge of education and indicated that, although they have lost almost all their schools and hospitals at the hand of government, the church should seriously look at education at school and university level. On a practical level, Mathe referred to a programme, *Lutheran Action against Gender-based violence*, in which the ELCSA-NT participated. He expressed the hope that the rest of the Lutheran family of churches will participate in this programme as well. The church also started training for informal traders on micro MPA – an entrepreneurship programme on how to expand one's work on the ground and start nutritional gardens. Mathe concluded his submission by stating that the church needs to develop people to their full ability.

Muller (ELCSA-NT) started his submission with an explanation that they represent the hope and the failure of South Africa, as they represent three churches – ELCSA, ELCSA-NT and ELCSA Cape that, for 30 years, have been engaged in attempts at unification, still unsuccessful. Muller and Filter then read from a statement they made in 1997:

We are aware that we have failed to live according to our own basic theological principle, which is our understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the gift of his unconditional forgiving and suffering acceptance. But accepting and enjoying the privileges of the apartheid era ourselves, as members of the white society, and failing to speak out sufficiently against the exploitation and suffering of the majority of the black community, we have hurt many people, not only in their God-given dignity but also in their capability to cope with their daily lives. Yes, by doing so, we have betrayed and denied God's unconditional love of all people, irrespective of race, class,

culture, education, achievement, gender or creed. We also realise that in contrast to Martin Luther, the initiator of our tradition, we have failed as a church to speak out critically and boldly against overt public injustice and the abuse of power, such as the forced removal of communities from their traditional homes; job reservation; the denial of citizenship; rights to blacks in the country of their birth; police brutality; the break-up of families due to race classifications; vast disparities in education opportunities between black and whites or other policies which affected and hurt the human dignity. We are aware that both as church and individual members we were deeply implicated in injustice of the apartheid era as a whole and wish to put our acknowledgement and sincere regret of this fact on record.

Muller then continued to talk about what has happened since the above statement. He referred to the disappointing challenges in our society, such as increasing corruption, deteriorating infrastructure, soaring crime statistics (especially violent crimes that go unpunished) and the failure of the education and health systems. He emphasised that churches are silent on these issues, but cannot address them on their own. The bishop indicated that the legacy of the old system was that it was legalised injustice and that, although not legalised (due to our wonderful constitution), a lot of tolerated injustice remains. He, therefore, appealed to churches, positioned at the grassroots level, to start building bridges between South Africans and addressing these challenges. To him, this also meant that churches should participate in training their members in what democracy is all about.

Mathe indicated that they had addressed the land issue in their church by donating 95 per cent church-owned land back to communities. Muller, in turn, reiterated the role faith communities might play in equipping those who care for pre-school children daily so that these children should by the time they enter the school have a solid foundation.

The Baptist Union of Southern Africa was the sixth faith community to present a submission, done by Rev Angelo Scheepers (General-Secretary) and Rev George Ngamlana. As a union of churches, the Baptist Union initially appeared before the TRC on the 26 June 1997. Ngamlana said after their appearance before the TRC; they went back as a union to start to deal with the 'elephants in their room'. They have journeyed far on issues such as language and theology and now have their first non-white general-secretary.

Scheepers indicated that he is happy to report that in 2001 the five separate church bodies came together, reconciled their differences and apologised to each other. They committed themselves to work together as one alliance, resulting in the

formation of the South African Baptist Alliance. He said that during this event, the President of the Baptist World Alliance addressed them and spoke on reconciliation. Except for the Northern region, the other six regions and at a national level, they have witnessed a transformation in leadership. The leadership of almost every one of the Alliance's regions is now fully multicultural, and it is wonderful to see the different cultures working together for the extension of the Kingdom.

Scheepers also told of a special communion service organised by the Alliance in Port Elizabeth to create a space for people from different cultures to apologise to one another and to confess wrongdoing to one another. This event culminated in a Prayer of Confession and Repentance and the making of peace within the different cultures of the Union. However, he also indicated some challenges remained regarding the integration of cultures in the local churches, especially in the Afrikaans churches, the cross-pollination of pastorates and the economic struggles of churches in poor communities. He reported that they have managed to address the challenges facing poor churches by asking the financially stronger churches to assist and help facilitate the development of the economically challenged churches, resulting in at least 40 per cent (86) of the latter churches currently being continually assisted. Scheepers also indicated that the church has other very effective ministries that make a difference in society: the Deeds of Love (a compassionate ministry to orphans and vulnerable children); Living Hope Ministry (a huge frail and an Aids care centre); Living Way (a skills centre in Fish Hoek); a prison ministry in Pollsmoor and God's Mission, our Compassion (a ministry focusing on the alleviation of poverty).

Ngamlana indicated that they are continuously dealing with basic Baptist principles, in terms of the difference between State and Church, not an easy reality to address. Scheepers added that they do believe with all their heart that the Church needs to have a prophetic critique on State and society, and it needs to engage the State where it is out of line. He indicated that he used to attend regular meetings between the Church and the State organised by the president's office during the time of President Mandela and President Mbeki, but the current president has unfortunately stopped this. Ngamlana told the consultation that they spend a whole day dealing with the race issue in their church and that it was probably the most important day in their history as people were completely honest during this process.

The NGK was the seventh faith community to make a submission, as in 1997, done by Rev Freek Swanepoel. Prof Nelus Niemandt, the Moderator of the NGK at that time focussed on their journey post-1997. Rev Kobus Gerber, the General-Secretary

of the NGK, assisted him in telling this story. Swanepoel began his submission by posing the following question: Did the TRC need the NGK, or did the NGK need the TRC? According to Swanepoel, the NGK needed the TRC as it needed reconciliation. Niemand, in his submission, would affirm this. Swanepoel remembered how they went to East London to confess and say to churches and faith communities: "We are sorry." They needed to do this publicly, and they appealed to the other faith communities and churches to teach and trust them. They wanted to be part of the solution – they wanted to change. The NGK came to East London to say that they wanted to be servants after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and to ask for the acceptance of the other faith communities.

In his submission, Niemand acknowledged the leadership role of Swanepoel that opened a new avenue in the NGK when he (Swanepoel) participated in the TRC hearing in 1997 and admitted their complicity in the history of apartheid. This admission helped the NGK to experience that truth indeed brings new freedom. Niemand reflected on how Tutu approached the NGK after they made their submission in 1997. To him, this is a case study of how truth can bring reconciliation and an important turning point in the ecumenical re-establishment of the NGK as it started a journey back to the broader ecumenical society within South Africa and, indeed, globally. Niemand, however, also admitted that the process that started with the TRC submission in 1997 was painful since it required of the NGK to acknowledge deep and fundamental theological mistakes it had made in the past, requiring a kind of kenotic self-offering, but one that was experienced as a new journey toward healing for the NGK. It also resulted in a series of decisions and declarations during the years that followed. In 1998, for example, the General Synod officially rejected apartheid; in 2002, it drafted a Declaration of Commitment to Southern Africa and Africa, with explicit focus on healing and reconciliation; in 2004, the General Synod expressed itself positively in terms of the new Constitutional democracy in South Africa; and, in 2007, the NGK issued a declaration of committed to the new democratic South Africa.

Prof Niemand referred to the role the NGK currently plays via its network of formal service organisations under the various synods. He stated that only about 10 to 20 per cent of the beneficiaries of these services are in fact members of the NGK. He further expressed concern about social cohesion; growing racial tension; crime; corruption (the misuse of the riches of the country and public funds) and growing poverty. Niemandt commented that, in terms of economic justice, it is important to re-imagine a new economic system, one where churches can offer something very different from the ugly face of capitalism, but also something different from

the problems associated with socialism. Niemandt confessed that perhaps the NGK took itself, as a church, too seriously, thereby not taking communities and the context serious enough. He also stated that it is with deep regret that in one of the most important tests of the transformation of our church we have yet again failed and continued to fail, namely the search for unity among the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa (URCSA), RCA and NGK.

Sooka, in her response to the submission of the NGK, asked a very pertinent question: How do we build a sense of accountability amongst the broader beneficiary community? Kobus Gerber responded that the NGK do not see themselves as a European church; it is here to stay and is committed to justice. As a member of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the NGK, for example, adheres to the Accra Declaration committing itself to the struggle for economic and environmental justice, fighting the empires that oppose this. The NGK, according to Gerber, will play a facilitating and prophetic role to help make South Africa work for the sake of Him who put it (the NGK) here to be with other churches a witness and a light to our continent, Africa.

URCSA was the eighth faith community to make its submission. Rev James Buys, who presented the submission to the TRC in 1997, has sadly passed away and, therefore, Rev Peter Grove, and the moderator of the General Synod, Dr Mary-Anne Plaatjies van Huffel made the submission at the re-enactment. Grove started his submission with a critical remark about repeating the 1997 TRC faith hearing as he believed it would not necessarily help us towards deeper reconciliation. He then continued to highlight four specific points in his submission. The first point was that we live our lives between the tension of memory and expectation between the past and future. Both are highly contested categories, but we make a fundamental mistake if we only look toward the future and forget the past. In the 1997-submission of URCSA, an attempt was therefore made not to read the past in binary and discrete categories, as the past is ambiguous. According to Grove, this ambivalence relates to the compromises made by the oppressed – sometimes to survive, sometimes for self-advancement. Some among the compromised ones of yesterday become the leaders of today. The past was ambiguous and, therefore, we need to recognise that we may re-interpret what we see and, perhaps, even see alternative possibilities. Grove believes that many of the atrocities and violations of the past remain very real and, therefore, cannot just be forgotten.

Secondly, Grove indicated that the churches and faith communities all carry the marks of its broken and sinful contexts, the reason why URCSA only slowly emerged as a non-racial church and continues to struggle in its efforts to find a greater

Gospel expression with its white counterpart. Grove appealed for the embodiment of what a Godly community should be (according to that community's confessional traditions) as it will go a long way towards enhancing reconciliation. He also indicated that within their church (URCSA), the sad reality is that they still do not cross all the divides within itself. We prefer to stay in our familiar, safe spaces.

Thirdly, Grove affirmed the importance of the acceptance of the Confession of Belhar – the product of the work of both black and white theologians – for the unification efforts of the four sister churches in the Reformed family of which URCSA is part. Embodying this Confession will allow differences to serve a true unity; it will be a sign of embracing the reconciliation wrought already by Christ; and, therefore, ultimately will help these faith communities to grow into a new identity. According to Grove, Belhar argues for downward mobility towards the poor; to stand where God stands; and, in the process, to save ourselves against the pursuit of riches by the white and black elite through systematic material accumulation and the progressive denial of the deprivations of the poor. Therefore, the religious community needs to regard the poor as a higher priority.

Grove's last point was that a vision for a new society that should inform policy and strategy is largely absent today. Thus we need people that truly have the resources to come together to state what we want, without excluding anybody, also entailing a need to adopt the hurts and pain of others. We need symbolic acts of reconciliation, in particular acts of remembrance of those who lost their lives in the struggle.

In her submission, the moderator, Dr Mary-Anne Plaatjies van Huffel, provided the consultation with some background on URCSA and confessed that it is still struggling to re-unite racially segregated churches, specifically the NGK, the NHK, the RCA and URCSA. However, Plaatjies van Huffel also indicated that, despite these difficulties, something beautiful happened in 2012 and 2013 when the NGK and URCSA at their respective synods approved a road map and a memorandum of understanding toward unification. She also applauded the facilitation in this process by Prof Jerry Pillay, on behalf of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. Echoing other church leaders that spoke before her, Plaatjies van Huffel referred to the value of the Religious Leader's Forum that regularly met during the time of President Mandela and President Mbeki. The Forum was committed to the construction of the new values in the society.

In terms of restoration, Plaatjies van Huffel reported on the utilisation of skills and resources to provide trained leadership to disadvantaged communities across South Africa via joint programmes of URCSA and the NGK in several communities.

For her, it is an absolute necessity that such sharing of resources should occur. She also referred to and supported the call by the TRC for a land audit and, in her reference to the court cases between the URCSA and the NHK regarding property ownership, she acknowledged the impact it had on the church and stated the need to further the reconciliation between these two churches. Plaatjies van Huffel further indicated that a General Fund had been established in URCSA for victims of apartheid, but this also proves to be a tiresome and difficult process. It seems that the congregations, even Synods and people at large are clinging to their resources, their land, their capital, and their social capital and human resources. Plaatjies van Huffel also referred to the commitment of the URCSA to the interreligious process as they approved the Charter of Religious Freedoms and that this Charter is helping URCSA to evaluate its concern about how to go about embracing people from different religious groupings.

Finally, Plaatjies van Huffel referred to challenges that URCSA still faces about language differences among its members; challenges in terms of addressing the gender imbalances for which the church is in the process of drafting and approving a gender policy; and the need to take up discussions about wealth tax and on the issue of eco-justice.

For many delegates, the submission by the Reformed Church of Africa (Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk – NHK), the ninth submission, represented one of the most poignant moments during the re-enactment. The NHK did not make a submission to the TRC in 1997. Rev Fourie of the NHK, however, presented a personal submission, expressing his disappointment that his church did not send him in an official capacity. With this reality in mind, Fourie indicated that he wished to present the NHK as a case study to affirm why the work of the TRC is still vital for faith communities years after the hearing was concluded. He, then, referred to a pastoral letter the NHK issued in 1973 that gave an extensive explanation of why the NHK decided to maintain a membership restricted to white people only (Article 3). He quoted from the pastoral letter where the NHK states that it “rejects any form of integration between church and state”. Fourie then stopped, admitting how painful it was for him to read the following from the statement, namely that “[a]partheid has been described as the only honest and Christian policy that would prevent the domination by one group by another ...” The pastoral letter further stated that “the church wishes to state emphatically that these measures” – i.e. segregation within Church and State – “are not temporary, but are permanent and unchangeable and founded on scriptural principles”. These general principles are in short, the following:

- The existence of different nations is part of God's creation.
- The development of the Afrikaner nation in Africa is part of Divine Providence.
- The policy of segregation protects not only white people but also black people from domination and exploitation.

Based on its theological support of apartheid, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches suspended the membership of the NHK (together with that of the NGK) in 1982. In 1990, another pastoral letter was issued by the church; with different wording and a movement towards change. "The church rejects as incompatible with Christian responsibility, any humiliating measures or acts between people, as well as over-emphasis of honour and dignity and respect at the expense of the happiness and prosperity of other people." In 2001, at the NHK General Assembly, another shift came with the following decision taken:

The NHK calls for a confession of guilt before God and fellow man to new life where the love of God determines our conduct towards all people. This, the General Assembly is deeply aware of our church's sin – sin to its fullest, terrifying extent as the Bible depicts it: hate, animosity, rebellion, lovelessness, disobedience and negligence towards God and fellow man. The church, therefore, calls upon all functionaries and members of the church, but also on all the other churches and people to sincerely confess their guilt before God and towards each other continually in public worship and in our personal lives for everything that was wrong in the eyes of the Lord and in our eyes. This confession of guilt must be supported by a new life without any animosity or hate.

In his reflection on this letter, Fourie indicated that the problem with this decision was that this decision only addressed the implementation of apartheid and the acts supported by apartheid. It did not address the NHK's underlying support of apartheid on theological and biblical grounds. It also did not refer the NHK's view that different races are fundamentally irreconcilable. In 2004, Fourie indicated, he had the privilege to be part of a delegation to the WARC, meeting in Accra, Ghana, where the NHK started putting out feelers to ascertain what was needed for the *status confessionis*, declared by the WARC in 1982, to be lifted and for the NHK to be readmitted to this body. Three conditions were set in 1982: Firstly that black Christians should no longer be excluded from church services, especially from Holy Communion; secondly, that concrete support in word and deed must be given to those who suffered under the system of apartheid; and thirdly that an unequivocal Synod resolution that rejects apartheid in the sphere of church and politics be made. In 2005, 2006 and 2007 NHK delegates met with the WARC and could show that the first two conditions have been met. The article restricting membership was removed from the NHK Church Order in 1999. In 2010, the following resolution was tabled at the General Assembly:

The Sixty-Ninth General Assembly pronounces unequivocally that it was wrong to defend a certain government policy – apartheid; that apartheid cannot be theologically justified. The church rejects the approval of apartheid because it is contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ; is based on idea mutual irreconcilability; defends injustice; harms the image of God in human beings.

The Synod put the resolution to the vote. Fourie was in charge of the electronic voting process and was the first person to see the result. He told the consultation how, when the result of the vote came up on his screen, he burst into tears and could not stop crying. The chair had to ask him three times for the result. The result was 57 per cent to 43 per cent in favour of the resolution. Then chaos ensued in the Synod meeting. About 100 delegates from the dissenting group stood up and formed a group calling themselves ‘Die Steeds Hervormdes’ [The Still Reformed].

In the wake of the above decision, the NHK then declared that the political policy of apartheid put into practice in South Africa, could not be theologically justified and recalled all the church’s past approvals of the policy. “It was contrary to the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” accepted by 30-70 per cent of delegates and led to a schism in the church. Where the NHK found itself at that moment, Fourie explained is why he wanted to put the NHK before the consultation as a case study of why reconciliation is still necessary. He said the NHK, when it comes to the ‘school of reconciliation’, was in a different class from many others. He referred to it as a ‘special needs class’. These needs included:

- For its past, for pronouncements it made in the past, it has a special need for forgiveness.
- For the delicate times it finds itself in, it has a special need of understanding.
- For the difficult times that lie ahead, it has a special need of support.
- For the challenges, the opportunities that lie ahead for it – also being a church of Africa, the *Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk of Africa* – it is also moving nowhere, it wishes to remain in Africa. For the challenges that lie ahead, it has a special need for an embrace.

Fourie ended his submission with a plea: “Please embrace my church on the way forward. We are late bloomers. We need your support.” At this moment and upon this appeal, all at the consultation stood up and some of the church leaders of mainly black churches, including Tutu, went forward to embrace Fourie as a sign of their commitment to respond to his plea.

The GKSA was the tenth faith community to make their submission. Like the NHK, the GKSA did not make a submission to the TRC in 1997. However, a group of theologians presented the TRC with a confession. Prof Amie van Wyk (one of the authors of the confession) made the GKSA submission at the consultation

together with Rev Cassie Aucamp. Van Wyk started his submission by stating that it was in Stellenbosch where he wrote the first draft of a confession of guilt during a meeting of the International Reformed Theological Institute in June 1997. This draft was finalised by four academics: himself with Proffs Ponte Venter, Bennie van der Walt and Rev Alwyn Du Plessis from Potchefstroom. Van Wyk proceeded to read from the confession, stating that he believes a confession of guilt never loses its relevancy:

1. The undersigned hereby make a public confession of guilt regarding their share in and neglect with regard to apartheid. The dictates of their conscience have urged them more and more to do this.
2. We hereby confess before God and our neighbour that we have failed in word and action, in church and society, privately and publicly, to testify adequately and unambiguously against the embodiment and execution of the ideology of apartheid, which had an invidious and even ruinous effect on lives of so many of our fellow believers and fellow citizens. With Daniel, we confess in the sight of the Lord, that we have sinned and done wrong; we have been wicked and rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws.
3. We confess that we were not courageous enough to testify that we did not pray faithfully enough; did not believe actively enough; did not love fervently enough; did not have enough empathy in the situation of individual and social injustice in which our country was plunged for four decades and more. We acknowledge in great humility that we were guilty of the violation of fundamental human rights. And we acknowledge that we have a share in the directionless movement of our country during times of crisis.
4. We confess that we are deeply guilty in the sight of God and our fellow man [sic] and that this gross neglect and reluctance on our part can only be removed by mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation.
5. We seek forgiveness from God in the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ, but we also plead forgiveness from our deprived and wronged fellow believers and fellow citizens for what we did to them. From our side we undertake, as far as humanly possible, to make amends in word and action for the injury which we did to them through the unfair, discriminatory system.

In the second part of the confession, Van Wyk explained, the motivation and the reasons for the confession are given: "With this confession of guilt an attempt is made to serve the cause of the Kingdom of God ...". Van Wyk emphasised that the authors of the confession of guilt were convinced that it would encourage forgiveness and would promote reconciliation. It would contribute, therefore, to personal, ecclesial and social healing. According to him, what is needed is hopeful people in all possibilities and difficulties that seek the reality of the coming Kingdom of God – that is, after all, a kingdom of joy, peace, freedom and justice.

Aucamp said that Christian hope stretches itself out toward the future. However, it also requires a true and sound evaluation of the past and the present. An

evaluation is needed that recognises mistakes and wrongs, but it also requires open eyes and thankful appreciation for what God has already accomplished in our lives and the lives of the people of our country. Aucamp made a second point indicating that twenty years ago, the danger of and the divide caused by non-reconciliation in South Africa was a divide between black and white South Africans. Today it is the divide between black and black, white and white, between rich and poor. According to him, the big issue in South Africa is now more one of class, than of race. Thirdly, he indicated that reconciliation in South Africa would not be achieved because of politicians, but 'despite' them. What is needed are people who and organisations that set their eyes on the next generation. Lastly, Aucamp indicated that the reconciliation agenda had been overshadowed in the past years by an ineffective and failing transformation agenda, leading to polarisation. The way the government has implemented transformation has left white people to feel marginalised and alienated. The government did not make sufficient attempts to co-opt them in issues such as land reform, social development and economic transformation. Minority racial and religious groups, in general, are disenchanted by the hegemony that government implementation of transformation enforces on society. Language rights, religious rights, cultural rights are increasingly coming under attack, especially within the education sector. National unity will not be realised if the right of diverse people is not respected. He concluded by saying that the GKSA is committed to reconciliation also through the preaching and enactment of the gospel of love in our lives. The message of reconciliation belongs to the core of the gospel. Aucamp stated that he believes that we have advanced a long way in South Africa and should never let the batten fall. We cannot become complacent, and we need to take our people with us.

The eleventh faith community to make a submission was the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM). The AFM did make a submission to the TRC in 1997. Dr Isak Burger was unable to attend and asked Dr Frank Chikane, the president of the AFM International, to make the submission assisted by Pastor Daniel Andrews. Dr Chikane started his submission by stating that the AFM has been the best representation of what apartheid was all about as it consisted of separate churches for whites, Coloureds, Indians and Africans. However, in 1993, the AFM won the battle for unity when the black churches united and, in 1996, the black and the white AFM churches united. According to Chikane, reconciliation, healing and true history of the church cannot be emphasised enough. He said that this is important because it is necessary to revise history since it is often distorted, false and thus not an accurate reflection of what the church was all about. This revision was critical to him; one's history is critical because it has to do with one's identity.

Chikane also emphasised the importance of building bridges, communication, social responsibility and dealing with issues of poverty and other issues within the church. He remarked that a challenge to the AFM was its success in uniting at a national level, but not at a local level. To him, the church must address this discrepancy because if true unity fails in the church, it will be difficult to succeed in society. Chikane also referred to the AFM's commitment to the so-called decade of reconciliation (from 2002-2012), that focussed on these matters because of the realisation that it would not happen without active work towards it. He quoted the following from the master plan (2010) regarding this: "Having been an apartheid church, we see a church accessible to all people, celebrating our unity and God-given diversity; empowering our members for carrying and changing communities to the glory of God." In 2006, the AFM introduced a wellness plan to start to talk also about reconciliation beyond the AFM.

Chikane acknowledged that he could not say whether the AFM have defeated the demon of racism. Other remaining issues are class differentiation, the gender divide (though there has been progress made in this regard), social responsibility and prophetic witness. He indicated the importance of the development of the collective intervention in dealing with socio-economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, education, skills development, the fight against crime and the promotion of social cohesion, as these are all critical to the church.

Andrews affirmed the importance of the church to take responsibility for the next generation. He then identified some lessons that he shared taken from Alan Boesak's *Radical Reconciliation*. In this book, Boesak reflects upon the Reitz hostel abuses at the University of the Free State. The first lesson from this incident is that one must see what is happening first through the eyes of those who suffer (whether victims of racism, sexism or even ageism or classism). Reconciliation does not begin with neutrality, but it begins with the intent, as the Belhar Confession puts it, to stand where God stands. Secondly, reconciliation is not possible unless the unequal power dynamics are addressed. Thirdly, reconciliation is never cheap but is a response by God's grace to the woundedness of others. Fourthly, there exists a place for rightful anger. Finally, genuine, radical reconciliation is perhaps the only way that people can walk away from the past as a family, forgiven, healed and restored.

At the conclusion of the first day of the consultation, Archbishop Tutu commented that he was very deeply moved by what he had experienced. He said that he was grateful, albeit surprised, at how the faith communities responded to the invitations to share in the fashion that they did during the day. He admitted that

he thought it might merely be a kind of academic discussion that would ensue. However, given the honesty, passion and commitment reflected in the submissions made during the day, he again realised what an incredible privilege it had been to have been part of the TRC process with such gifted people. Tutu expressed his conviction that he had little doubt that God's Spirit was present at the consultation as at the original hearing in 1997, and that God was smiling on both occasions, smiling through the tears. God has again placed God's reputation in the hands of people and, therefore, if this country is going to get better, is going to be healed, then it is and will be up to us.

Summary of Day Two

The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) that made a submission to the TRC in 1997 was the first faith community to make a submission on the second day of the consultation and the twelfth overall. In 1997, it was made by Rev (Prof) Steve de Gruchy (who has since tragically passed) and Rev Dr Des van der Water. At the consultation, Rev Thulani Ndlazi made the UCCSA submission. Ndlazi called his presentation, *Being comfortable with the devil that we know*, and began it with an excerpt from the 1997 UCCSA submission that stated:

... in many ways, the revelations to the Truth Commission have not come as a shock to the ministers and members of the UCCSA. Our membership is overwhelmingly made up of those who were victims of apartheid. We knew all along that these things were happening, and this is why we said what we said and did what we did. Nevertheless, we recognise the profound impact the truth will have on the future generations of our country. There are sins to be forgiven; wounds to be bound up; hatreds to be reconciled; buildings to be rebuilt; peoples to be taught; leaders to be held accountable. This is the task of the church of Jesus Christ. We are a small church, with few resources, yet we acknowledge this calling, and commit ourselves to nurturing this truth, healing the nation, and building a culture of tolerance and justice so that our children and their children may never again suffer the evil, which has so plagued our life in this nation.

Ndlazi then confessed that they did not honour their commitments to the best of their ability and, therefore, UCCSA has felt more comfortable with "the devil that it had known for many years under apartheid". He said that it had accepted a situation in which an abnormality was viewed and accepted normality; where it divided itself by race, it allowed language to become a political tool in the hands of government; it failed to (re)distribute land; it had lost much of the history and culture of its members; it was complicit in limiting religious expression in the country and its public education system. Despite these failures, Ndlazi reaffirmed the UCCSA's commitment to proper health care:

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- the fight against sexual violence against women and children,
- efforts to deal with Afrophobia,
- reviewing of identity practices, seeking the celebration of all ethnic identities, cultural backgrounds and fighting for and promoting equal treatment of all languages,
- creating spaces for dialogue on the importance of being inclusive church communities,
- encouraging cross-cultural pulpit exchange,
- addressing violence and oppression,
- executing justice and righteousness,
- participation in and support of land struggles and progressive dialogue between landed and landless communities,
- bringing back a culture of religious expression and teachings in public schools, and
- promoting inter-faith tolerance.

The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa (TEASA) was the thirteenth faith community to make a submission at the consultation. Dr Moss Ntlha made its submission to the TRC in 1997, but since he could not be present at the consultation, his submission was read on his behalf by Dr Nadine Bowers du Toit.

The submission began by referring to the 1997-submission of TEASA to the TRC when it was said:

As representatives of the Evangelical Movement, we stand before the Commission and a nation in search of truth and reconciliation, with heads bowed in shame for the way our movement failed God and South Africans by not standing sufficiently with the poor and oppressed in the years of apartheid. This went against the biblical witness which we are committed to uphold. We are mindful of the fact that many South Africans might well be tempted to reject God on account of the way we represented Him. Instead of preaching Good News to the poor, we found it easier to conform to the ways of the wealthy and powerful. Instead of rejecting racism, we not only institutionalised it in our own churches, but we proclaimed the gospel as though the sin of racism and the violation of human rights did not matter to the God we serve.

The current submission then called for the acknowledgement that the government is ill-suited to deal with heart matters, what reconciliation is ultimately about, and that reconciliation was always going to be a peoples' mission because a government is restrained by political imperatives, such as amnesty without remorse; victims of human rights being limited to the few who appeared before the TRC; economic limitations in terms of how far reparations could hope to compensate people for the losses they suffered, to mention but a few. In this regard, TEASA set out to take responsibility and to move into action. Firstly, they created the TEASA Reparation Fund. The rationale behind this was that TEASA churches – many of whom were complicit in supporting apartheid – could find a way of at least taking ownership

in the process of reconciliation and, in particular, in assisting victims of human rights violations. This assistance was mainly in the following forms: educational support for children of victims; medical assistance support; and income generation support. TEASA's experience in this regard was that there was enthusiasm amongst local churches to respond to the plight of victims of human rights abuses identified by the TRC. The challenge was, however, that white churches felt that they were asked by TEASA to buy into the narrative of the State that all whites were guilty of apartheid abuses. TEASA also participated in preparatory meetings to the Khulumani class action against US companies that benefited from apartheid, as this aspect of reparation was also important to them.

The second focus of TEASA was to address the churches'/denominations' reconciliation processes within. Significant efforts ensued towards structural unity within denominations – many of the latter were fragmented along apartheid lines. Sadly, however, reconciliation has not been achieved by the event of signing off on structural unity. The latter was in many ways the beginning of much labour and a struggle to sort through the complex web of apartheid relations and issues that, in the main, continue to fragment broader South African society.

The third focus of TEASA was the Reconciliation Summit, held in 2002, with its goal to explore whether or not there was life beyond confessions made at the TRC. According to TEASA, there was not a clear pastoral plan of how a different praxis could be imagined. The Conference accepted a ten-year commitment with each denomination deciding for itself how it would change its patterns, structures and systems to move away from the legacy of apartheid towards a more faithful Kingdom witness that could manifest unity and reconciliation. This fact was well accepted, but there appeared to be no energy left for vigorous engagement on these issues. However, while denominationally the reconciliation process seemed to face some structural challenges, on the ground, local churches and individuals embarked on reconciliation efforts of their own, leading to heart-warming stories of wealth redistributions, land redistribution and scholarships for the poor. New cross-cultural friendships have been and are being built among Christians and churches collaborating in joint mission projects in poor communities and believers continue to wrestle with what it means to be agents of reconciliation in their communities. The TEASA submission concluded with the statement that what was missing in the national discourse on reconciliation was the voice of the church.

Dr Bowers du Toit indicated that she would answer the questions by the panel of commissioners on her behalf as presenter of the TEASA submission. She referred to, amongst others, plans that were underway in 2016 to commemorate

the Soweto Uprising and to re-engage with that issue again. In terms of grave economic injustice, Dr Bowers du Toit indicated that she believes the answer lies at the grassroots and that the new challenge lies in local communities of the poor. They have a voice and need to speak out and together we need to speak of justice. According to her, in bridging that divide formal denominations and movements can assist in bringing people together. Dr Bowers du Toit further indicated that our hope lies in the youth and, therefore, we need to have more young people participating in these open and safe forums.

In her comments on the submission of TEASA, Commissioner Sooka indicated that the commissioners also have to acknowledge that they had made enormous mistakes. They, for example, confined the Reparation list initially to only people who appeared before the TRC. Only later on, in acknowledging that mistake in the 2003 report, it said that it had to be recognised that some survivors were not ready to speak about their experiences at that time, but it did not mean that they had not suffered the same violation. Sooka said the TRC further divided many communities. She recalled President Mandela saying, "Let's leave an opportunity for the South African corporations to come to the table around reparations. As long as you don't sue them, I will support your action." Khulumani lost the class action after many, many years in the United States, not because the action was wrong, but because at a policy level the United States government has impressed on the courts that they need to close the space for actions like that. However, the South African corporations did not come to the party and, Sooka said, the question needs to be discussed of how we can make up to the broader universe of victims out there.

The SACC was the only organisation that made a submission during the re-enactment. Dr Brigalia Bam and Bishop Malusi Mpumlwana made the submission. Bam began the submission by commending the SACC for taking up the responsibility, given by President Mandela, for the recruitment of commissioners. Bam specifically mentioned Mandela's view of the need for the role the NGK had to play in the reconciliation process. He felt that to achieve reconciliation; the NGK needed to re-interpret its theology that had for long legitimised apartheid. Bam remembered Mandela saying this as he knew that the NGK had influence and credibility among many South Africans and the members of the NGK are people 'who fear God'.

According to Mpumlwana, the SACC exists amongst other things to lead common Christian action toward moral witness in South Africa, addressing issues of social and economic justice, national reconciliation, the integrity of creation, the eradication of poverty and contributing towards the empowerment of all those who are

spiritually, socially and economically marginalised. He referred to the important remark made by Beyers Naudé in 1961 regarding the role of the church, when the latter declared that the Christian church must be an advocate for the poor, the oppressed, the hungry, the voiceless and the unjustly treated, whether they are black or white. To emphasise the role of the church further, Mpumlwana also referred to the famous letter that Desmond Tutu wrote to Prime Minister Vorster in May 1976 in which he said:

We all, black and white together, belong to South Africa, and blacks yield place to no-one in their passionate love for this our beloved country. We belong together. We will survive or be destroyed together. I write to you, Sir, because like you, I am deeply committed to real reconciliation with justice for all, and to peaceful change to a more just and open South African society in which the wonderful riches of wealth ... and wealth of our country will be shared more equitably.

Mpumlwana also referred extensively to Mandela's vision for the TRC, as his goal was to help South Africans of all races to open their hearts to one another, to appreciate their common destiny and to work together towards the reversal of the social and economic impact of the unreconciled apartheid past. Hence, Mandela said, "this Commission will emphasised not only to reconciliation but also to reconstruction and development." Mpumlwana observed the need to note that Mandela included social and economic justice in his understanding of reconciliation, but that the broader agenda for national reconciliation, mandating a social and economic agenda that would radically transform the fortunes of the black majority, somehow was side-tracked.

According to Mpumlwana, twenty years after 27 April 1994, we face a growing number of social and economic challenges. These challenges include a high unemployment rate (especially amongst the youth), increasing levels of desperation amongst the poor, rising discontent with the levels of inadequacy of service delivery (housing, sanitation, productive land, policing and crime prevention), the growing impunity of corruption, declining standards of education, declining levels of public morality and the dearth of voices of conscience and moral reason. In the face of this, the SACC has had to confront the challenges that have limited its effectiveness, including a changing funding environment, addressing the institutional gap, and attending to the decline, if not incoherence, of the witness programme of the church. National reconciliation cannot and shall never be a matter of engagement by single denominations, but always had and always will require collective ecumenical engagement and, in fact, the collective participation of all faith traditions. With this statement, the bishop reiterated the importance of the ecumenical and inter-faith movements and their ability to address reconciliation and justice issues.

The Muslim community was the fifteenth faith community to make a submission at the re-enactment. Imam Hassan Solomon, who unfortunately has since passed, made the original submission on behalf of the Muslim community and the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) to the TRC in 1997. Mr Thandile Khona (President of the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa) and Maulana Abdul Khaliq Allie (Secretary-General of the Muslim Traditional Council) made the submission at the re-enactment. Khona referred to the very slow and negligible progress towards reconciliation within the Muslim community. According to him, a culture of exclusion and marginalisation has taken root in Muslim communities – particularly, the exclusion and marginalisation of Africans and women. He regretted, for example, that the clerical institutions of the Muslim community were not at all representative of the demographics of the community. He believed that this made African Muslims in the house of Islam feel like stepchildren at best, and at worst, like slaves. In conclusion, Khona stressed that the Muslim community needed to begin with uncomfortable conversations amongst themselves en route to true reconciliation.

Maulana Abdul Khaliq Allie referred back to a section of the 1997-submission by Imam Solomon:

... On behalf of the Muslim Judicial Council, I would like to express our appreciation for this opportunity in the spirit of hope, to contribute to the truth of the past and peace and reconciliation for the future. History has planted Islam and Muslims in the Cape and South Africa now more than 315 years ago. Under conditions that were not unfamiliar to the majority of people in our country, Muslims were brought to South Africa either as captured freedom fighters against Dutch colonialism in the Far East; slaves to their European masters; or as indentured labourers. The socio-political relations of domination at the time ensured that Islam remained a subjugated religion of a minority, enjoying neither equality nor the right to free expression. As slaves and political exiles, besides the right to worship freely, they were denied the erection of places of worship and burial grounds.

Allie further indicated that Imam Hassan made a reference to the fact “that the MJC believes that it cannot divorce itself from the rest of the oppressed and those with the same ideals in the formation of a United Democratic Front to oppose the system of apartheid in South Africa.” Allie, also spoke of the commitment of the Muslim community, and specifically the MJC, towards the TRC and to work together with the inter-faith community. He emphasised that we should appreciate that we have religious freedom in this country and, therefore, we need to allow ourselves an opportunity to pause and reflect and to listen to that history as well.

Allie stressed that the Muslim community, as the MJC, believes that South Africans are waiting on the religious leaders today to lead them through the current crises, as they did in the years of the struggle. Allie then emphasised the need for true spirituality, truth and reconciliation to be placed at the centre together with restorative and social justice. As an example of this, Allie referred to the role they have played to nurture healthy and clear communication with all foreign nationals, to assist them in integrating into the richness of our communities. He further indicated that the Muslim community had established itself in all walks of life and are committed towards nation-building, cementing our democratic principles and continuously striving towards human dignity.

Khona responded to a remark made by Commissioner Piet Meiring. The latter commented on the wonderful work done by an organisation such as the Gift of the Givers, where the Muslim community is committing millions of Rands for example, to people in Gaza, Syria and to other places in the world where there are strife and suffering. To Khona, this remark raises a real concern for how we, in South Africa, live with ourselves when, right next to us, people are living in appalling conditions. He further referred to the challenges in South African society of inequality, the issue of the sharing of wealth where to the Muslim community is not immune. In their answer to a question regarding the role of the youth of our country, the Muslim representatives emphasised the importance of the youth, the need for dialogue between the young people of different faiths and addressing challenges such as gangsterism, which is rife among the youth of all faiths in some communities.

The Hindu community was the sixteenth faith community to present a submission. Mr Ashwin Trikamjee, the President of the South African Hindu Maha Sabha, was present at the 1997 hearing and made the submission to the TRC at the time. At the re-enactment, Ms Ballen Gangen (South African Tamil Federation, SATF) on behalf of the President, Mr Karthi Moothsamy, who could not be present, made the submission together with Ms Nalini Gangen (Representative of the Maha Sabha). Mr Gangen started his submission with reference to the preamble of the constitution of the SATF, founded in 1968. It reads:

Recognising the necessity to protect and promote the Tamil language policy and traditions, and endorsing the need to do so in the manner consistent with the objectives of Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, including those relating to the advancement of human rights, the South African Tamil Federation representative body shall, in pursuing its objectives, operate in a non-racial, non-sexist and non-sectarian manner.

Mr Gangen then recalled the role of the Indian community in the struggle for human rights in South Africa. He referred to the recent strategic conference of the SATF, at the beginning of 2014, where issues concerning the youth and women were on the agenda. One of the resolutions accepted at that meeting was that all SATF structures would have a 50 per cent female representation and the intention to launch a youth forum.

Ms Gangen started her submission by referring to its logo and motto of the Maha Sabha, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, meaning 'the world is one family'. This motto resonates with the African concepts of *Ubuntu* and the *Batho Pele* (People First). The values on which Maha Sabha activities are based are selfless service, accountability, respect, fairness, social justice and unity. Gangen described in detail how the Indian community came to South Africa, the appalling circumstances they had to live and work in, the lack of education, et cetera. She also referred to the role the Indian community played in the fight against apartheid, for example, the iconic Mahatma Gandhi, Dr Yusuf Dadoo, Dr Monty Naicker and the role of the Natal and Transvaal Indian Congresses. She also reminded the consultation of two issues raised by Trikamjee in his 1997 submission, namely the celebration of religions and the issue of the non-recognition of Hindu marriages. Gangen further reflected on the recommendations made in 1997 and indicated that they did not do too badly in reaching these recommendations. She referred to the Maha Sabha's role in the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative to bridge the gap and jointly address issues such as road safety, its role in the 16 Days of Activism and initiatives concerning the challenges of gangsterism.

Finally, Gangen acknowledged that the Indian community still faces human rights issues and that they are often discriminated against when it comes to affirmative action. In terms of the future, she referred to the importance of the telling of the stories and future generations. In her conclusion, she proposed that faith communities, business and government work very closely for the next three years.

Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein, invited to make a submission on behalf of the South African Jewish community, could not attend due to the Festival of Tabernacles and therefore participated via a written submission. It was, however, not read due to time constraints. Mr Leonard Shapiro made a shortened submission from the South African Jewish community to the consultation, representing the South African Jewish Voices for a Just Peace (JVJP). Shapiro started his submission by indicating that the JVJP are a group of South African Jews who reject equating the religion and culture of Judaism with the political project of Zionism. They recognise that Palestinians

live under a particularly brutal military occupation, based on a violation of their rights; they support the formation of a society based on equality and respect for human rights for all who live in what has now occupied Palestine and what can also be called Israel-Palestine. As such, this grave concern also played a central role in JVJP submission.

Having lived through one ‘crime against humanity’ – namely the system of apartheid – the members of the organisation stated that they could not turn a blind eye to the gross human rights abuses practised in the name of Jews against the Palestinian people. How could they as their rabbis have taught them that Judaism stands for moral values – such as justice, ethical behaviour, compassion and truth? Only a week ago, their submission recalled, on Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement and Fast, Jews had asked for forgiveness for the times when they did not match up to this moral code. As South African Jews of conscience, the members of JVJP, therefore, call for an end to the occupation and for a new society to be built in Israel-Palestine, with equality for all people who live there, be they Jews, Muslims, Christians or atheists.

Shapiro reiterated that although they represent an alternative voice within the Jewish community, they are growing in numbers. Tutu thanked Mr Shapiro for JVJP support in distancing itself publicly from those who in the past has branded him a Nazi for his support of the Palestinian cause. Tutu said it deeply moved him that the JVJP at one instance complained about it to the Human Rights Commission. The submission of the Jewish community, the seventeenth submission, ended the submissions by faith communities at the consultation.

In conclusion after the submissions, Tutu as chair of the consultation reminded those present of what has happened in this country, the extraordinary people that God has given it and that we sometimes take this for granted. To illustrate this, he referred to Dr Brigalia Bam, who became the first chair of the South African Electoral Commission and how South Africans have taken for granted the exemplary way in which she fulfilled her mandate as chair to the extent that she and her colleagues on the Commission had been invited to assist in running free and fair elections elsewhere in the world. Tutu referred to Piet Meiring, who faced the wrath of his community at a time when it was not easy to befriend co-commissioner Tom Manthata, a survivor of apartheid torture. He also reminded the gathering of Mpumlwana, also tortured and who, together with his wife, was banned under apartheid laws. Tutu recalled how Mpumlwana, while he was banned, disobeyed his restriction orders to visit Tutu’s offices and told him: “You know, Father, when

they tortured me, I always looked at them and said, by the way: 'These are God's children. And they need me to help them recover the humanity they are losing.'"

Lastly, Tutu referred to Dr Frank Chikane, who was about to chair a session at the consultation on the way forward. Chikane was also detained and tortured. He should not have survived because his clothing had been impregnated with different toxins as he went through security at, then, Jan Smuts Airport. He was alive today because he went to the United States as his wife was there. Tutu admitted that some might have said that this was a coincidence and that one should not believe in coincidences. However, Chikane arrived at the teaching hospital where his wife was studying, and it so happened that there was a specialist in the toxin used. Therefore, when they diagnosed him, they discovered that Chikane's clothes were soaked in this specific toxin used. Chikane was alive today because of that 'coincidence' – the 'coincidence' of having gone to the USA at that time, to that specific place to be with his wife. Tutu concluded: "Therefore, sometimes, as we listen, I hope also we are aware not just of the words, but we are aware that we are where we are in this country because of some extraordinary human beings. And that God wants to use this country. God says, 'This is how you can be ...'"

The way forward

After Dr Chikane thanked the chair for his words and responded by stating that he, too, believes what happened to him was indeed a miracle, he started the session 'on the way forward' by thanking the Beyers Naudè Centre for Public Theology and the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation for initiating and organising the consultation. Admitting he was skeptical when he initially received the invitation, he was pleased that he did attend and participate. Chikane acknowledged that the inputs at the consultation were indeed extraordinary, much more than he ever thought they would be.

Dr Chikane started his take on a possible way forward by naming some of his key observations during the consultation: Firstly, he again realised that the founding act of the TRC was in itself a compromise. Secondly, how many of the submissions referred to an economic compromise and the short-changing of the poor. Thirdly, he realised that some TRC business had been left unfinished. Fourthly, a second conversion is needed for people to change the way they thought till now, and there is a need to understand the crisis we are facing differently. Lastly, there is a dire need for 'coordinated action'. We must ask ourselves, how are we going to work together as an interfaith community?

The following is a summary of some of the suggestions from the floor that followed Chikane's invitation for contributions toward a way forward. Chikane's invitation read as follows: "As leaders and members of the communities of faith, we are conscious of unfinished business in the process of transformation in our nation. In particular we identify the following issues: ... And I leave it to you to fill in the list of issues to be completed..." They are:

- To establish a Truth and Reconciliation Continuation Group to attend to the 'Unfinished Business' after the TRC process. This group will coordinate the work of task groups focusing on issues identified during the consultation both to inform and equip the members of our communities about those issues and to engage with the government of our country (at national and regional level) on ways of addressing them.
- To request that our leaders at national and regional level engage with the Continuation Group in processes that will enable us all to work together for progress in these critical areas and so carry forward the transformation that will enable our nation to assume its rightful place in the family of nations.
- To emphasise that church leaders cannot go on with business as usual anymore. What we have been through during the TRC re-enactment consultation represents a Kairos moment. As such, we need a different kind of theology, one that can and will underpin the action. A theology that also flows from the grassroots experiences of young people, as we have heard here. A theology, deeply situated within the context of the long tradition of all liberation theologies. Whatever structure is decided upon, it needs to be constituted and re-energised by the post-TRC vision that has been discussed at this consultation.
- To acknowledge an urgency to act. We cannot afford a disjuncture between the mood of the marginalised and poor people in this country and the discussion of the last two days [i.e. during the consultation].
- To start teaching theologies that break down the walls of apartheid – in our churches, in the way we read the Bible together, also in our small groups. We recognise the need for change when we are changing, and we should challenge each other to change. If not, we cannot claim that we believe anything different. "As a white, English-speaking South African, I am tired of my community just side-stepping issues and pretending as if we had nothing to do with it then or now."
- To sit down with people in the informal settlements and with farmworkers. If we want to listen, we must listen [to] where our people are and where they suffer. Otherwise, we jeopardise our legitimacy and the integrity of this process.
- To give greater attention to the practicalities of how we transform relationships between those who give and those who receive. Are we listening to others, and how are we listening to others? From which perspective are we listening to others? We need educational programmes around restorative justice. We need major campaigns around non-racialism and the plight of our young people.
- To make a concerted effort to address the issue of the development of children even before they go to school. They need a firm foundation to build upon to ensure adequate literacy, numeracy, life skills and ethics. Perhaps we can work together to develop some

material – basic and inexpensive – so that, twenty years from now, we have a generation of young people that have grown up with solid foundations.

- To listen to African Traditional Religions, that have not been represented at the consultation.
- To support religious structures that create safe spaces where intra-religious dialogue can take place.
- To develop leaders that people of faith can look up to and who can be the role models in and across the spectrum of our various inter-faith communities.
- To invest in the revival of the South African Council of Churches.
- To be creative and think anew about the structure of the TRC, as it is passed because we should not continue with it. We also need to embrace new themes and address new issues that were not present in 1997.
- To never forget issues around Gender Justice in this country.
- To set up structures that can assist us in restoring our dignity. For someone living in the township, the issues of justice and reconciliation are critical.
- To set up a follow-up programme for those young boys who were forced by circumstances to join the liberation struggles. After they were pardoned, was there a follow-up programme for them? If not, this should get attention.
- To set up spaces where the youth can tell their stories so that they can voice their anger, frustrations, hopes and dreams. We also need youth and, especially, youth leadership development programmes. The youth must also be empowered to help themselves.
- To assist young student leaders, that have begun with inter-faith conversations. We need knowledgeable people to assist them. We also need to include the youth in future conversations around the TRC and its legacy by physically inviting them to the table. The youth need to be taught what their elders have learned and how they can take it further.
- To create a new vision for our country, and in that vision solid, moral values must play a fundamental role.
- To help our teachers with their grappling issues. While work is done at a policy level, we are also working with the teachers of our country. They [are] calling out for support.

After thanking the gathering for the constructive inputs, Dr Chikane concluded the session with the following verbatim comments:

I realised yesterday that our own brothers and sisters in the faith communities need lots of support. They are still engaged in hard struggles to change systems. We need mutual support, and whatever mechanisms we set up should be able to deal with that.

I always say that, in terms of what we need to do, there are things that faith communities can do themselves and do not need government to do so. There are things we can do and must do; and, when we do them, it gives us credibility to engage government. If one does nothing, then one's credibility becomes questionable. Then there are, of course, things that government should do – and we must help them to do this. Having been there myself – I realise that government also needs help. Government sometimes faces contradictions that make its work very difficult. Faith communities can assist it [in crossing] some of the bridges government needs to cross. The

TRC had its function and has done it; they have done it brilliantly. They have given us the material; they assisted us [in coming and reflecting] again. Nevertheless, it is our responsibility as faith communities to act – and I am [hoping] that the relevant structures will assist us in this task.

I wish to end by sharing a recent engagement I had with Pieter Bezuidenhout, a chaplain in the South African Defence Force. He told me that he is doing research on the national service people who did national service between 1966 and 1989. I always wondered whether for our white brothers—especially those who were involved in the war and even the policemen I found at Union Buildings when I went there, young policemen – there ever was anybody who sat down with them and actually discussed what happened to them. Pieter told me that in discussions he had with them, he sensed a lot of hurt and pain. For them, the TRC happened at a moment that most of them were not ready for it, so they did not actually come forward. Some would be amongst those who rejected the TRC and its work. He even took me with him to some of the young men who felt that they wanted to make their own confessions, which they never had time to do. In addition, some of them remembered the June 16th kids and asked me [whether] I could create an opportunity for them to engage with the June 16th kids. I said I would talk to the leadership in Soweto and to the leadership of the NGK as this should be a faith-based rather than political engagement. Therefore, our job is not finished. South Africa has a long way to go to deal with the pain of the past. Moreover, it is not only a black thing; it is a black/white thing.

Chikane then emphasised the need to collect all the input and statements made at the consultation, to compile it and to make it available to all the faith communities. He suggested that the whole compilation also be sent to the SACC, asking them to put it on their agenda, to take the process further and in doing so to take other faith communities with them in the process.

Reflections on the process

The reflection session was a significant session during the re-enactment consultation. It offered input on the process from local and international scholars on reconciliation from diverse contexts. All but one of the reflections of these invited participants – that of Prof Jaap Durand – appear in full elsewhere in this publication. The scholars who gave reflective input were:

Prof Jaap Durand, is a well-known public thinker, theologian and emeritus professor of Systematic Theology at the University of the Western Cape. He shaped the theological thought of a generation of URCSA theologians in South Africa. As a theologian and later Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape, Prof Durand was also a [staunch] opponent of apartheid during its most turbulent years. Durand’s short reflection is quoted in full here:

Thank you very much for this opportunity. I want to say that I believe that God is a God of second chances. When I say it, I believe it with all my heart. If I did not believe it, if I did not believe it with all my being, I would have given up hope for South Africa. I would have given up hope for us. How many opportunities ... how many opportunities have we squandered to embrace each other in the name of God? How many opportunities we have squandered to thank God for the patience towards us by our acts of reconciliation. We squandered it with regard to justice, to unity, by not reaching out to each other. Is it reasonable that we do not believe what we profess to believe? Of all countries that are so manifestly religious, we would have expected the direct opposite. However, is that perhaps our problem? That we are too religious? Too self-satisfied in our own religiosity that we think we can depend on our religiosity to pull us through instead of seriously looking at God? The God of our belief; the God who is willing to give us second chances, while we, on the other hand, begrudge the other one chance of reconciliation.

In a time of crisis Karl Barth, the great Karl Barth, spoke of 'Religion ist Unglaube' – religion as unbelief. Write this on a piece of paper and keep it on your breast next to your heart [as] Blaise Pascal did. In 1990, I addressed a group of churches at my old stamping ground as minister of KwaZakele and New Brighton. On that occasion, I referred to two Latin words for the future: *futurum* and *adventus*. The second word refers to the coming of somebody. In addition, this is a message for them in 1990, in 1994 and today. The future – the *adventus* means the coming of God, even better still: God is our future. This is God's promise. Nevertheless, it must be clear to all of us that there are conditions attached to God's promises. God can even come to us in his anger if we harden our hearts against his clear message to that he expects us to travel the road of reconciliation, justice and unity in South Africa. That is precisely the road that God has prepared for us. Do we want to deny that? If we do not travel that road, I fear the *adventus* of God. My dear sisters and brothers, I still believe – and I keep on believing – that God is a God of second chances. May God forbid that we squander what God is willing to give us yet again.

Prof Durand's statement was followed by ones by:

Imam Rashied Omar is a well-known Western Cape research scholar of Islamic Studies and Peace Building at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame in the USA. He serves as co-ordinating Imam at the Claremont Main Road Mosque in Cape Town and is a board member at the Institute for the Healing of Memories.

Prof Eddy van der Borgh is a theologian from the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. He holds the Desmond Tutu Chair at that University and has played a major role in setting up funding research cooperation between South Africa and the Netherlands, specifically on topics related to transformation. Reconciliation is one of the central topics of this research.

Prof Nico Koopman serves as Vice-Rector: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel of the Stellenbosch University. During the consultation, he was the Dean of the Faculty of Theology where he was also a professor of systematic theology. Koopman has played a key role in the transformation of the Faculty of Theology. His theological work strongly focuses on issues of reconciliation, human dignity and hope.

Dr Vicentia Kgabe, Rector of the College of Transfiguration in Grahamstown. She holds a PhD in Practical Theology and also is an alumna of the University of Pretoria’s Gordon Institute of Business Science leadership programme.

Dr Deon Snyman from the Foundation for Church-led Restitution concluded this session with a short introduction on church-led restitution. He recalled how the Foundation was established in 2003 in response to the South African churches’ lack of response to the restitution recommendations of the TRC. At its inception, the organisation set itself the aim of becoming a catalyst for restitution that would lead to healing in South Africa. The organisation’s current strategy is the development and facilitation of community-led restitution programmes, piloted over the past six years in the town of Worcester. In 2012, the Foundation for Church-led Restitution initiated a virtual discussion on the role of restitution in South Africa. As part of this discussion, South African theologians and church leaders were invited to write – in less than three paragraphs! – a short piece on the theological basis for restitution within the South African context. Twenty-four theologians and church leaders accepted the challenge and their contributions were published on the organisation’s website. The Foundation for Church-led Restitution used the opportunity of the re-enacted Faith Hearings of the TRC to submit the different contributions to the gathering in the hope that they will serve as a catalyst for the starting of a debate within the South African church on the theological rationale for restitution within the South African context. With this aim in mind, Dr Snyman presented a copy of these contributions to Tutu, as chair.

Concluding remarks by Archbishop Tutu

In his conclusion, Tutu referred to the TRC as ‘a very broken instrument’, but one that God, nevertheless, used. In Tutu’s words:

God blessed us ... God blessed us in this country. God is blessing us. We ought to be taking off our shoes because this is holy ground. During the last two days, we have spoken about many awful things, and they are true. But, you know, we haven’t mentioned some of the positive processes that developed since the TRC, such as the Foundation for Church-led Restitution

of Deon Snyman, the Transformation Charter accepted in Franschoek where farm owners have worked out an agreement on profit sharing with farmworkers and where the children of the farmworkers go to the best schools.

With above examples in mind, Tutu urged the people not to leave the country as he believes that God chose it. Therefore, South Africa is a country that is meant to show the world how to be the family of God. He stated that as delegates leave the consultation, they do so, knowing that they have all been sinners. However, Tutu reminded delegates, they should also leave knowing that they are sinners who are repenting and that God is going to be blessing them. They will get angry with each other, yes, because sometimes one cannot control all things. They come from the pit of one's stomach. "But, you know what? If we fail in South Africa, if we fail – and I am not trying to be arrogant – if we fail, there is very little chance for the rest of God's world ... Very little chance."

Afterword: Actions following the consultation

During the TRC re-enactment, some decisions were taken on the way forward after the consultation. It was decided to collect all the input and statements made during the consultation to present it to churches and faith communities. It was also decided to send a report on the proceedings and the submissions to the SACC. The SACC was requested to take responsibility for all that has come from this consultation. They were also asked to put it on their agenda and to make sure they take the other faith communities with them in the process. The faith communities were also requested to report to the SACC in three months' time and, lastly, the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology and the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation that organised the event, indicated that they would play a role, if needed, to monitor the process. Bishop Mpumlwana accepted the responsibility on behalf of the SACC. He indicated that they would want to occasion a public report and, therefore, it is essential to receive feedback from all the faith communities.

In 2015 a follow-up workshop was presented, under the auspices of the Beyers Naudé Centre to reflect on the recommendations made by the re-enactment consultation of the TRC Faith Communities' Hearings. The participants in the workshop were people that represented the diversity of the country as well as several young people. During the initial symposium that led to the re-enactment and as a direct consequence of the consultation, the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public theology also hosted a workshop on conscription into the South African

Defence Force on the 18 to 19 January 2016. Christo Thesnaar, Theresa Edlmann and Wilhelm Verwoerd convened the workshop. This meeting aimed to create a dynamic, supportive and participative space in which Master's and PhD students recently and currently engaged in research relating to conscription into the SADF could share their work and receive feedback and peer support from other researchers. Participants from a wide variety of disciplines attended the workshop. The input and discussions during this workshop were profound, honest, frank and meaningful. It again emphasised the impact conscription still have on lives currently, years after the end of apartheid and the vulnerability of this particular group in our society. It also emphasised the necessity for continued engagement with this group.

General concluding remarks

There are many reasons to criticise the way the TRC was established, the functioning thereof, or the work done by it. However, the TRC Report did provide all South Africans, including government, non-governmental organisations and faith communities with clear recommendations to take forward, address and implement. Unfortunately, somehow, over the years following the TRC hearings, it seems we have all dropped the baton passed on to us by the Commission. What we have witnessed from the faith communities during the consultation was that they were no exception and, therefore, this space was created to remind them of the commitments they made to reconciliation and healing during the TRC Faith Hearing in 1997. However, it also provided an opportunity to recommit to reconciliation and healing within our current context and in the future. With this in mind, the consultation brought the faith communities together again to give them another chance to pick up the baton. Everyone present bears witness to what happened during the consultation and, therefore, are responsible and accountable to their faith communities and to broader society to work actively towards reconciliation and healing.

The SACC's offer to take the process further is greatly appreciated. However, we need to remember that we are part of the SACC and, therefore, co-responsible in this regard. We are co-responsible to make sure that what was talked about, discussed, decided and proposed should materialise. We will held accountable if we do not listen to the theologies where people are living, functioning and socialising. We further need to learn the language of reconciliation to understand it if we want to contribute to reconciliation and healing in our country.

As time passed since the consultation and it became increasingly clear that very little of the recommendations of the TRC have materialised into structures and action. It was also clear that new energy needs to be generated to ensure that the 'second chance' referred to by Jaap Durand materialises. It, furthermore, became apparent from the outcome of the consultation and voices from the next generation that the concept reconciliation has become more and more contested and should always include the challenge of justice (with regard to land, economic, social and gender justice). As the Beyers Naudé Centre for public theology (BNC) was part of organising the consultation, and therefore co-responsible for the outcomes of the consultation we realized that there was a real need to develop a more formal structure to assist in the process of continues engagement with the outcomes of the consultation and to create a space that can contribute towards reconciliation and justice within our country. With this in mind a workshop was organised to gather partners from faith communities and especially members of the younger generation into a process of consultation and consensus seeking in terms of what a constructive way forward could entail. One outcome of the consultation was the establishment a Unit for Reconciliation and Justice Unit (URJ), within the BNC. The Unit was also inspired by Dr Beyers Naudé's example of responsible citizenship; his involvement in society on the basis of his Christian theological convictions; his courageous quest for justice and a life of dignity for all members of society; his humble and gentle efforts to promote a culture of dialogue and deliberation; and his commitment to the cause of the poor, the destitute, the wronged and the marginalised. Currently, the URJ are organising workshops, seminars, and developing publications in the field of reconciliation and justice.

In conclusion, let us recall the remark made by Tutu when he said he totally underestimated the need for the faith communities to have a space to talk and to share. As organisers of the event, we were all extremely grateful, if not amazed, that (especially) the churches, but also other faith communities took their participation in the consultation so seriously and shared in such honest and profound ways. We were also humbled by the number of messages from churches and faith communities expressing their appreciation for the consultation and committing themselves to the process of reconciliation in South Africa.

Witness statement at the re-enactment of TRC Faith Communities' Hearings

*Eddy van der Borgh*¹

Introduction

I had the privilege, as a non-South African, to be invited to be part of this revisit of the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] Faith Communities' Hearings and to present some reflections on the contribution of faith communities to reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa. I accepted the invitation realising that 'external eyes' may bring a new perspective, but also in the humble awareness that it may be premature to speak out on a situation that one does not fully understand. My reflection centres on seven points.

Prophetic words

I have heard many prophetic words during the consultation from the mouths of religious leaders and commissioners. To mention a few of those: the realisation that twenty years into the new democratic South Africa was not a time for

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complacency. The momentum has to be maintained, especially regarding the need for justice (social, economic and redistributive justice), land redistribution, the fight against corruption and accountability, violence against women, and addressing the continued vulnerability of women in general; also the need to speak to power and to address the business community on their social responsibility and potential for contributing to justice. I can only endorse these wise words.

Religious potential

In one submission, Rev Cassie Aucamp of the Reformed Churches in South Africa (Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika, GKSA) referred to recent research confirming that faith communities are among the most trusted institutions in civil society in South Africa. Coming from secularised Europe, it makes me aware that religions in South Africa and Africa, in general, have enormous potential to contribute to the common good. The flip side of this insight is that if things are not going well in society, well, who is to blame then? Government? Civil society? Or, especially, faith communities? I also heard the comment that people do not listen to religious communities to the same degree as in the past. I cannot judge that opinion, but the fact remains that the potential of religions to influence in the sense that I refer to it here, namely, to contribute to the well-being of civil society, brings with it tremendous responsibilities.

i) Reconciliation as an ongoing process

The TRC was a reconciliatory event. Prof Nelus Niemandt witnessed again to the meaning of the event for the NGK. Most of the submissions also recounted the ways churches have made progress internally on the way to reconciliation. Rev Angelo Scheepers updated us extensively on the progress made over a decade within the Baptist Union, with at their last assembly allowing for a full day of discussion on the issue of race. I was also deeply moved by the witness of Rev Fourie, on the painful journey of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (Hervormde Kerk) towards coming to terms with its theological support for apartheid. It reflects the reminder by Pastor Daniel Andrews of the Apostolic Faith Mission of the words of Allan Boesak that reconciliation is a painful process.

ii) Reconciliation as a religious gift to the nation-state

My secular colleagues and many of the European intellectuals expressed their admiration of what happened in at the TRC, especially for the leadership shown by the archbishop. Although they struggled with his religious message of forgiveness, they fully and easily embraced his explanation of the concept of *ubuntu* over against the Western individualised ways of dealing with crime and punishment. For me, this indicates the direction that reconciliation as a religious gift to South Africa has, since the TRC, captured the attention of a global audience. I observe two aspects of that innovative gesture. First, the offer of the religious concept. The concept of reconciliation in South Africa has been developed from a religious concept used by Christian churches and theologians into a key notion in the political discourse in the transition towards a democratic state structure. It finally became a complex, multi-layered symbol of the new South Africa, a country that tried to come to terms with a violent separated past and aimed to unite toward a common future. Second, the symbolism was not sufficient. The TRC was also a performance, offering the space to perform reconciliation. It was a highly mediatised secular liturgy in which a religious leader – Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu – played an essential role to help the nation come to terms with the past and unite people. Modestly, the TRC effectuated the potential transitional power of reconciliation.

iii) Reconciliation as a request from the nation-state to the faith communities

In turn, the South African nation-state requested religious communities to become reconciled communities themselves via the TRC Faith Communities' Hearings. The best analysis that captures what was wrong with the faith communities under the apartheid era is found in the Report on the TRC Faith Hearings.²

In most cases, faith communities claimed to cut across divisions of race, gender, class and ethnicity. As such, their very existence would seem to have been in opposition to the policies of the apartheid state and, in pursuing their norms and values, to have constituted a direct challenge to apartheid policies. That this was not the case lies behind many of the faith communities' apologies to the South African people at the TRC hearings. Indeed, contrary to their deepest traditions, many faith communities mirrored apartheid society. Contrary to their deepest principles, many faith communities reflected apartheid society, putting question marks behind

² RSA (Republic of South Africa). 1998. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report, 4, paragraph 29. Cape Town: TRC.

their profession of loyalty that transcends social divisions. They thus not only failed South African society, but they failed their faith traditions.

The language of the TRC Report in terms of 'norms, values and principles' suggests ethical failures of faith communities concerning the apartheid past. However, the original and substantially more comprehensive report, *Faith Communities and Apartheid: A Report prepared for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by the Research Institute on Christianity in South Africa*, on which the Commission's Final Report was based, described the failings of the faith communities in even more far-reaching terms. So, what the state was asking of faith communities was to clean their houses, not just for the sake of the common good, but to be true to their callings.

Embodying reconciliation

World religions are a treasure trove and archive of wisdom that people have recognise as a gift to societies and humanity over many centuries. The insight, for example, that we are all together for humanity, is one of these gifts. Recently, a representative of the Baha'i Faith opened the Peace Lecture in Cape Town with a prayer, after reminding the audience of the fact that we are one humanity because all humans have their origin in one Creator. All Abrahamic religions share this insight. But other inclusive concepts can be added. Islam has, for example, the concept of the *Ummah*, the one community of the faithful. Christianity has the concept of one Saviour for all people, and of one, catholic church, that is one community that encompasses members from all the peoples, from all the nations on earth. So are religious communities living up to their identity, are they embodying this identity? It struck me during this consultation how often unity was referred to. Prof Jerry Pillay explained how uniting into the Uniting Presbyterian Church was an instrument of reconciliation, in itself. I heard the same message from the Anglicans, the Methodists and the Lutherans. The NGK indicated that the uniting process with the other member of the NGK family is still not entirely on track. Rev Peter Grove placed the finger on the wound: How to unify a racially-segregated church? The Baptist Union was aware that its congregational structure presented challenges in terms of unity. Traditionally, unity is discussed in the context of confessional disagreements. The South African faith communities made the global community aware that the main challenge is not confessional disagreement, but how to cross racial, ethnic or national lines of separation. In this context, it is striking that the ecumenical text always tends to reduce the unity question to confessional disagreement, clearly expressing a Western agenda. Only

once the eyes are opened to the challenge of crossing socio-cultural borders, does one become aware of how often it is the main issue or challenge.

In recent weeks, the Baptist Church in Ukraine and the Baptist Church in Russia have cut their confessional ties. They are no longer on speaking terms. The reason seems evident in the context of the developments in Ukraine during the last year. A majority of the Ukrainian citizens, especially in the western part of their country, want to re-orientate their country more towards the West, more specifically toward the European Union, while a majority in the eastern districts want to keep close links with Russia, with whom they have been linked for many decades as part of the former Soviet Union. The issue of Ukrainian identity already caused a split in the main Christian denomination, the Orthodox Church, linked to the Moscow patriarchate, in 1992, with the support of the Ukrainian state.

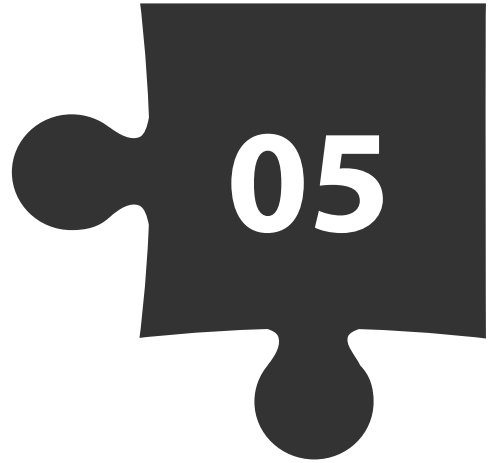
In the case of the Orthodox churches with their traditional links with the state, one could still suspect to find the manipulating hand of politicians in these churches. But for Baptists, this does not hold. As part of the free church tradition, for Baptists, the separation between church and state is part of their confessional identity. Apparently, in the context of a developing civil war in the eastern parts of the country and the Russian annexation of the Crimean peninsula, the Baptists in Ukraine and Russia both have become aware of the power of belonging to a different national identity, even if they keep their distance from the government in their respective countries. They are one by confession but divided along the lines of nationality.

Instruments of religious reconciliation

I conclude with some of what I call instruments of religious reconciliation that I observed and that were attested to in the submissions during this consultation:

- The call for the conversion of the heart.
- To have feet on the ground: grassroots existence. Bishop Kevin Dowling of the Roman Catholic Church had a strong message on this.
- Change in the language in liturgy mentioned among others by the Baptists.
- Improved structures of accountability within faith communities
- To choose leadership that has the courage, the wisdom, and the ability to lead in change.

With that, I wish to thank the organisers of this consultation for the opportunity to share some of my thoughts on the importance of the re-enactment of the TRC Faith Communities' Hearings and my realisations during this valuable and enlightening experience.



Faith communities, reconciliation and justice

Vicentia Kgabe¹

As a people, South Africans experienced much pain, untold harm and sorrow at the hands of fellow citizens for racial and political reasons. These events and trauma greatly affected the psyche of the nation pre-1994. As a result, a unique process had to be found to bridge the divide, heal the wounds and create a platform where truth could be told.

The National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995 established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The objectives of the Commission were to promote national unity and reconciliation in a spirit of understanding that transcends the conflicts and divisions of the past by the following means:

- Establishing a complete picture of the causes, nature and extent of the gross violations of human rights that were committed during the period from the 1st of March 1960, to the cut-off date, including the antecedents, circumstances, factors and contexts of such violations, as well as the perspectives of the victims and the motives and perspectives of the persons responsible for the commission of the violations, by conducting investigations and holding hearings.

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| Faith communities, reconciliation and justice |

- Facilitating the granting of amnesty to persons who make full disclosure of all the relevant facts relating to acts associated with a political objective and comply with the requirements of this Act.
- Establishing and making known the fate or whereabouts of victims and restoring the human and civil dignity of such victims by granting them an opportunity to relate their accounts of the violations of which they are the victims, and by recommending reparation measures in respect of them.
- Compiling a report providing as comprehensive an account as possible of the activities and findings of the Commissions, that contains recommendations of measure to prevent the future violations of human rights.²

Unlike truth commissions in other countries, South Africa's TRC has been a public forum. From the appointment of its commissioners to the hearing of individuals' stories in public spaces, it was committed to the principles of transparency and public participation. Extensive media coverage, most significant in the form of the South African Broadcasting Corporation's live coverage of public hearings, took the work of the TRC into homes across the country.

Public hearings were not restricted to large centres. Instead of limiting itself for the sake of logistics, the Commission as far as possible sought to make the hearings accessible to communities even in remote areas. Over 22 000 victims of human rights violation made statements to the TRC, and more than 7 000 perpetrators applied for amnesty. Approximately ten per cent of the victims gave evidence at public hearings.³

The TRC was established to seek the truth about the past to facilitate national reconciliation. At the re-enactment of the submissions by Faith Communities' Hearing held in Stellenbosch in October of 2014, I was one of the three witnesses who were asked to be a listening presence and feed my reflections back to the consultation. This process of listening afforded all of us to listen, not only to words spoken, but also to realise the depth of the emotions that accompanied them again. We also listened to what happened and what could have happened.

Being prophetic requires that one speak uncomfortable truths to those, one may love dearly, and to those, one may seek to love dearly. Prophetic words are also self-critical. Why are we here, in this world and at this consultation? We are here because God created us in God's image and likeness and gave us dominion over and responsibility for God's creation.⁴

2 RSA (Republic of South Africa). 1995. *Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995*. Pretoria: Government Printing Works. <https://bit.ly/2UxvKjq> [Accessed 5 October 2014].

3 Cf. online at: <https://bit.ly/2ULTteA>

4 Genesis 1:26-27.

Trying to do our best as stewards of God’s creation, we began to out-do each other. In the process, we sometimes inflict pain, deform God’s image and likeness in each other. We follow our ways, believe our truths and assume that life was or is ours to give and take.

We gathered at Stellenbosch to look backwards, to move forward; we looked at what God has done, what God is doing, and what God will continue to do despite us. The faith communities’ submissions to the TRC were both a reflection and admission of their role played or not played before 1994.

Looking back at the South Africa we were

In the past, we not only lived in officially racially-segregated communities, but we also ministered there. Our task and mission seemed easy then, as our focus and our coming together was to address and challenge the evil systems of separate development in the form of apartheid policies that were hurting, dividing and disfiguring our communities – including our places of worship, learning and work.

In the past, we looked at each other with suspicion and hatred; we talked about each other and with each other in harsh tones. We also formulated and promulgated laws and devised policies that created a category of the ‘other’ – especially concerning women, blacks and the poor. We made them feel unwelcome in some residential places, places of work, learning and, even and especially, in some places of worship. In other contexts, the sacred texts became a tool of division and justification of the evil perpetrated while, in different contexts, it became a form of comfort and an inspiration that one day ‘we will overcome’.

In the past, our priests, ministers and pastoral caregivers were trained and spiritually formed in seminaries and institutions of higher learning according to their race and not according to their academic ability or what the church has prayerfully discerned in them.

The South Africa we are in today

Today we as the church are called to prepare our priests, ministers and pastoral caregivers for ministry in a rapidly changing and evolving context. Ministry in a South Africa that requires new methods and tools to continue to heal and reconcile this democratic, multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-national society. The church finds herself challenged as the solutions of yesterday in some cases also became the problems of today. Racial divisions, sexual and gender-based violence, unequal

standards of education, high levels of poverty and disproportionate access to and delivery of essential services still face us.

Our faith leaders are called to lead and minister to communities trapped in debt because they live lifestyles beyond their means. Our places of worship are required to be more than just once-or-twice-a-week meeting places for worship or administrative meetings. We are called to be a community resource centres where the dignity of our community members is restored, and their strength is renewed. Yet, many of our places of worship are little more than fundraising 'clubs' or 'white elephants', and thus fail their communities.

The South Africa we wish for

Our differences used to divide us; our differences should unite us now. A house divided against itself cannot stand.⁵ Our divisions have turned us into voiceless spectators on our turf. Our sacred text was used then – and is still used today – to further personal agendas and not God's agenda. Jesus prayed:

I ask not only on behalf of these but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.⁶

Failing to adhere to God's agenda, we run the risk of failing to be agents of reconciliation and justice, but also to render ourselves and our faith communities irrelevant to the challenges they face today. Perhaps one sees so much so-called church hopping, where people constantly move from one place of worship to the next or get on a plane to fly to another country to seek spiritual, physical healing or deliverance from self-made prophets. Unfortunately, in the process, many are taken advantage of and made to perform dangerous acts and or consume hazardous materials in the name of God.

At the consultation, we acknowledged that we need to continue with a ministry of reconciliation because our relationship with God our creator and each other remains a broken one. We gathered 17 years after the TRC meeting, yet still wondered: what should come first, healing or reconciliation? To my mind, the answer will depend on where we are spiritually and emotionally and how deep the scars are.

5 Mark 3:25.

6 John 17:20ff.

As we seek to continue to heal, reconcile and to strive toward restorative justice for the people of God – across race, gender and economic standing – we should do so as a collective and not as a divided nation.

Not everyone is sitting around the table

In 1997, a question was put as to why so few women were in positions of leadership in the church and why no women made submissions on behalf of their denomination or faith. In 2014, little has changed. Out of 24 faith and denomination representatives – two were women. We also have not made substantial progress in having greater women leadership in the church, seemingly perpetuating a stereotypical idea that is reflected in the Sesotho saying: “*Tsa etelwa pele ke e tshehadi tsa wela*,” loosely translated means “those who are led by a female are destined to fall into a ditch”.

We need to, and we are commissioned to be our brother and sister’s keepers. Despite the pain we have inflicted on each other in the past, God has not turned God’s back on us. God has not given up on us. God is still in the business of calling workers to God’s vineyard to heal, lead, restore, affirm and teach.

Prophetic word

Two prophetic confirmations were delivered during the consultation that stood out for me. The first was from Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, namely that “God is now smiling through His tears”. Prof Amie van Wyk delivered the second one: “We are the *specimists* – people of hope.”

Towards the end of one day’s sessions, I heard a hymn with such a powerful sense of renewal, written by Nicolas Brady and Nahum Tate, in my heart and mind:

Through all the changing scenes of life,
in trouble and in joy,
the praises of my God shall still
my heart and tongue employ.

O magnify the Lord with me,
with me exalt his Name;
when in distress to him I called,
he to my rescue came.

The hosts of God encamp around
the dwellings of the just;
deliverance he affords to all
who on his succor trust.

O make but trial of his love;
experience will decide
how blest are they, and only they
who in his truth confide.

Fear him, ye saints, and you will then
have nothing else to fear;
make you his service your delight;
your wants shall be his care.

For God preserves the souls of those
who on his truth depend;
to them and their posterity
his blessing shall descend.

These words are my prayer for our country, South Africa.

Reconciliation and forgiveness

When posing the question of what reconciliation is, Groves and Jones write the following:

... reconciliation is impossible to define, but it can be described by the stories of people who live it. For them reconciliation is more than ending conflict, it is breaking down the barriers that separate us from God and from one another, and living in community once those barriers are removed.⁷

The *Oxford Dictionary* defines reconciliation as ‘the restoration of friendly relations’. However, to me, this explanation is too mild for the subject matter under discussion. South African theologian John de Gruchy writes that reconciliation remains:

... a much misunderstood and elusive notion, one that is abused in rhetoric and difficult to achieve in reality ... yet in a world torn apart by conflict in so many places, reconciliation is a theme that demands constant consideration in ways that relate to the context in which we live. For Christians it is a subject at the center of our faith.

Theologically speaking, the doctrine of reconciliation is located within the framework of God’s covenant with creation, a covenant made new in Jesus Christ.

Being a Christian, I will use the lens of my religion to address the issue of reconciliation and forgiveness. Across the centuries and around the world, Christians confess their faith in the words of the ancient creeds, including “I believe in the forgiveness of sins”. But what do Christians mean when they repeat this formula? How has it happened that ‘forgiveness’ has become so devalued, even meaningless? Tutu wrote:

7 Phil Groves and Parry Jones (eds.). 2014. *Living Reconciliation*. London: SPCK, 7.

There is nothing easy or light-weight about reconciliation. It is a long and often painful journey. It is by telling our stories and hearing the stories of those we do not understand that we learn to walk together in hope. Forgiveness and reconciliation are a choice, but it is a choice rooted in the recognition that we are all flawed human beings, all children of God.⁸

To reconstruct the meaning of forgiveness for people today, we need to understand how it lapsed into irrelevance. We need to explore what the Bible has to say about forgiveness by clarifying two terms, often used interchangeably, namely reconciliation and forgiveness. In general, the term reconciliation is more widely used these days than forgiveness. It has the connotation of processes for correcting unjust or distorted situations.⁹ According to the New Testament scholarship, the term reconciliation, with one exception, Matthew 5:24, is confined to the letters of Paul. He uses the verb *katallasso* (to reconcile) and the noun *katallage* (reconciliation) eleven times and these occur in some central passages of his theology, where he attempts to express what God has done in Christ and the meaning of the gospel. Thus forgiveness and reconciliation are both strictly-speaking theological concepts, a summary term to describe God's redeeming work.

De Gruchy reminds us that the Christian doctrine of reconciliation presupposes a particular understanding of what it means to be a human person, in turn, fundamental to what is meant by the church as the community of reconciliation. The sociality of humanity means that we only exist in relation to others. This understanding is also expressed in the word *ubuntu*, often used in South Africa (even in the founding documents of the TRC) to describe the process of reconciliation. *Ubuntu* means we come into being as persons through encountering and embracing the 'other', whether a neighbour or enemy.¹⁰

The TRC hearings were a vehicle to bring the perpetrator, victim and collaborator to a forum where they could tell their side of the story. Reconciliation refers to the restoration of a good relationship between enemies. The Latin root *concilium* suggests a deliberative process in which the conflicting partners meet each other 'in council' to work out their differing views and to arrive at some common agreement – what the 'R' was all about in TRC.

Two ministries of which I would like to share something about their work of reconciliation and healing are the Community of the Cross of Nails and Institute of Healing of Memories. The Cross of Nails is central to the reconciliation ministry

8 Groves & Jones, 1.

9 Geiko Müller-Fahrenheit. 1997. *The art of forgiveness*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2.

10 John W. de Gruchy. 2002. *Reconciliation Restoring Justice*. London: SCM, 1.

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associated with Coventry Cathedral in England. Replicas of the nails are placed in pieces of actual stone from the bombed cathedral and sent to churches and chapels around the world as a focal point for communities committed to living reconciliation. Those who display the cross share a collective commitment to work and pray for peace, justice and reconciliation by way of:

- Healing the wounds of history.
- Learning to live with difference and celebrate diversity.
- Building a culture of peace.

These Coventry commitments are not a definition of reconciliation; they are a mandate for action. Those who live reconciliation never stop learning more about it. Living reconciliation is painful, risky and difficult work that makes all who participate vulnerable.

Healing and justice

Before and after the TRC hearings, many South Africans who made submissions and those who did not appear before the commission continue to need healing. As many still carry memories that cause pain, physical, emotional and spiritual scars. They find themselves unable to do certain things, unable to relate to specific groups of people or unable to go to certain places because of associations with painful experiences in their past. They find their emotions and reactions today misshapen by the harm done to them in the past, by things they did wrong or the wrong done to them in the past.¹¹ To be completed, reconciliation needs to be accompanied by healing, and in this instance, it will be the healing of memories. The healing of memories affords a chance to go back and reclaim the past, not changing it, but changing its influence on one's life. It affords a chance to be released from the shame, guilt and pain that have hurt one for years and continue to affect one today.

This is why the work of the Institute for Healing Memories continues to be vital in South Africa. The Institute contributes to seek healing and to accompany individuals and communities on a journey towards healing. Its work is based on the belief that "we are all in need of healing, because of what we have done, what we have failed to do, and what has been done to us".¹²

11 Mark Pearson. 1995. *Christian Healing: A practical and comprehensive guide*. Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen, 107.

12 Institute of Healing of Memories. 2011. *Healing of Memories*. www.healing-memories.org [Accessed 11 March 2016].

Sagovsky, in his book *Christian Tradition and the Practice of Justice*,¹³ draws our attention to the matter of justice and says that central to Augustine's theological vision was a concern with justice. Not because Augustine was concerned with virtue or the good society in themselves, but because he was concerned with the goodness of God. Having once discovered God as the fount and origin of all goodness and all being, he never wavered in attributing to God perfect justice. The issue was how to reconcile God's justice with his experience of the world. For Augustine, the question of justice was the question theodicy. Augustine saw his task as a theologian as that of recognising and commenting on the justice of God in, or despite of, the events that take place in the world.

Conclusion

I conclude with the words of Desmond Tutu, one of the most well-known figures associated with the work of reconciliation and forgiveness. In his *An African Prayer Book*,¹⁴ he writes the following on the subject of reconciliation:

Throughout the land we stand on the threshold of a new experience of national unity. We are a people composed of many races, many languages, many religious traditions, many political parties, many cultures. We are poor and rich, women and men, young and old. We have emerged from a history of strife and death to seek a future to of life and health. We acknowledge the presence of Christ amongst us who reconciles the world.

We struggle against one another: now we are reconciled to struggle for another. We believe it was right to withstand one another: now we are reconciled to understand one another. We endured the power of violence: now we are reconciled to the power of tolerance.

We built irreconcilable barriers between us: now we seek to build a society of reconciliation. We suffered a separateness that did not work: now we are reconciled to make togetherness work. We believed that we alone held the truth: now we are reconciled to in the knowledge that truth holds us.

We tried to frighten one another into submission: now we are reconciled to lift one another into fulfilment. We revered or rejected the apartheid system: now we are reconciled to pray for those set in authority over us. We fought to call the land our own: now we know reconciliation is in knowing that earth belong[s] to God and we are stewards of it. We let greed control us: now we know reconciliation is measured by the development of the poor.

13 Nicholas Sagovsky. 2008. *Christian Tradition and the Practice of Justice*. London: SPCK.

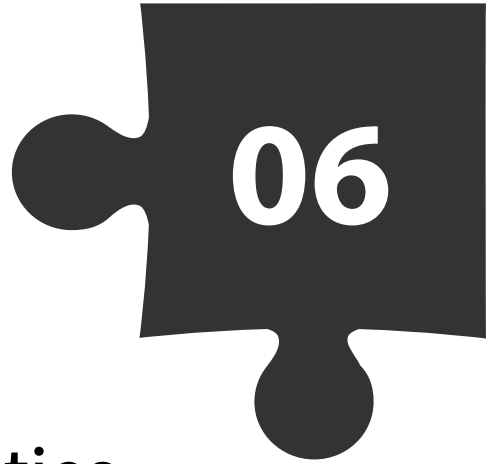
14 Desmond Tutu. 1995. *An African Prayer Book*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 40-42.

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In Church and State, we often hurt each other: now we know we are reconciled to healing one another. We set Church at odds with herself: now we are reconciled to sharing the mission of Christ. We rejected other people of faith as godless: now we are reconciled to seek God's way for us all.

We puffed ourselves up to demand others bow to us: now we are reconciled to embrace one another in humility before God. We do not pretend we have already won or are already perfect: now we are reconciled to press on together to the fullness which lies ahead. So we bring together our races, language, traditions, politics and culture.

We are reconciled to the patience and persistence that make peace; to the transparency and fairness that make justice; to the forgiveness and restitution that build harmony; to the love and reconstruction which banish poverty and discrimination; to the experience of knowing one another that makes it possible to enjoy one another; to the spiritual strength of the one God, who made us of one flesh and blood and loves us.



Churches, universities and the post-TRC process

Impulses from a consultation

*Nico Koopman*¹

Introduction

One of the prominent aims of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa was to serve as a symbol, model and paradigm for the establishment of spaces where unity, reconciliation and justice can be advanced. The consultation on the impact of the TRC held in Stellenbosch in 2014 confirmed this imperative and also stimulated reflection on the state and further advancement of unity, reconciliation and justice. The latter three elements are, in fact, the topic of three articles of the Confession of Belhar (1986), wherein it is related in terms of content and structure to the threefold office of Christ. Besides churches, universities are well-placed to be one of the spaces in society where unity, reconciliation and justice may be advanced.

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This contribution, drawing on inputs of mentioned consultation, reflects on the implications for churches and universities of the mandate for a post-TRC process. It is argued that this mandate constitutes a threefold challenge, namely the challenge of royal-servant unity and social cohesion, the challenge of priestly reconciliation and social healing and, finally, the challenge of prophetic justice and social solidarity.² As can be inferred from this threefold description, the threefold office of Christ is appealed upon to comprehensively describe the royal-servant, priestly and prophetic roles of Christians and fellow-citizens outside the Christian tradition. As such, a brief description of the notion of the threefold office of Christ is appropriate at this point.

One of the most helpful contemporary works in Christology that focuses extensively upon the threefold office of Christ is the work of Methodist theologian, Geoffrey Wainwright.³ Wainwright describes the threefold office as both a Reformed and ecumenical notion.

He discusses the use of the threefold office in the early church and mentions that one of the first firm and explicit uses of the threefold office was by Eusebius of Caesarea in the fourth century. Eusebius wished to illustrate that Jesus Christ was the fulfilment of the Old Testament and, in fact, of all religions.⁴

Wainwright also cites perspectives of other theologians of the early church – like John Chrysostom (4th century), who argued that Abraham embodied the dignities of prophet and priest and David those of king and prophet. Jesus has all three dignities – King, Prophet and Priest.⁵ Wainwright also discusses the perspectives of Peter Chrysologus, 5th century bishop of Ravenna, who calls Christ the King of kings, Priest of priests and Prophet of prophets.⁶

Wainwright cites Erasmus's work on the threefold office as another example of a scattered fore-runner anticipating the eventual systematic development of the doctrine of the threefold office by Calvin.⁷ Erasmus described Christ as the prophet of prophets, the priest who gave Himself as the victim to purge all the sins of those who believe in Him and the ruler to whom all power was given. Before this ruler

2 This chapter draws extensively upon, extends and contextualises earlier work of this author on the themes under discussion.

3 Geoffrey Wainwright. 1997. *For our salvation. Two approaches to the work of Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 97-186.

4 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 110.

5 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 110-11.

6 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 111.

7 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 103.

returns as the judge, He kindly offers peace and, through His teaching, He dispels all darkness.

Wainwright refers to Martin Bucer as the most direct inspiration for Calvin's use of the doctrine of the threefold office.⁸ For Bucer, Christ is the king (*rex*) who will govern us, provide all good things for us and who protects us against ill and oppression. As prophet or teacher (*doctor*), Christ teaches us the whole truth; and as a priest (*sacerdos*), Christ reconciles us with the Father eternally.

Wainwright, furthermore, affirms that Calvin laid the foundation for the extensive and systematic use of the threefold office in the Reformed tradition.⁹ He states that the royal, priestly and prophetic functions among the people of God have, for the sake of their salvation, been united under their single head, Jesus Christ. Based on Calvin's work, Reformed confessions and catechetics (amongst others, the Heidelberg Catechism and Westminster Confession) and Reformed dogmatists (such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Heinrich Hepppe, Charles Hodge, Emil Brunner and Karl Barth) gave a prominent place to the threefold office.

According to Schleiermacher, the threefold office is a necessary and adequate description of the achievements of Christ in the corporate life, i.e. the church, founded by Him. As priest of active obedience who fulfils God's law, as priest of passive obedience, who dies an atoning death and a priest who intercedes for us with the Father, Christ assumes believers into the power of his God-consciousness for the sake of our redemption; finally, as priest, Christ assumes believers into the fellowship of his unclouded blessedness for our reconciliation. Christ's prophetic work consists of teaching, prophesying and working miracles. His kingly office entails that everything that we need for our salvation and well-being continually proceeds from Him.¹⁰

Wainwright explains that, after Calvin, the notion of the threefold office was, amidst much suspicion, also used by some theologians in the Lutheran tradition (including Helmut Thielicke and Edmund Schlink),¹¹ in the Roman Catholic tradition¹² (Vatican II and, for example, Walter Kasper), to some extent in the Methodist tradition,¹³ in

8 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 104.

9 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 99-103. For a helpful contemporary discussion of Calvin's systematic use of the threefold office of Christ, see Stephen Edmondson, *Calvin's Christology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

10 See Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 101. Later this essay will refer to critique of these views of Schleiermacher as an example of some opposition to the notion of the threefold office.

11 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 105.

12 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 106-107, 118.

13 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 107-108.

the Orthodox tradition (amongst others, by Alexander Schmemmann)¹⁴ and in the Anglican tradition (especially by John Henry Newman, when still an Anglican).

Wainwright argues in favour of a Trinitarian understanding of the threefold office of Christ.¹⁵ This office is Christo-centric, but not Christo-monistic. Wainwright refers to Calvin's view that it is the Father who anoints Christ with the Holy Spirit to be king, priest and prophet,¹⁶ which he (Wainwright) formulates as "... the Holy Spirit is the Father's gift by which Christ Himself, Christians, and the church and its ministers are all anointed".¹⁷

Wainwright's identification of five uses of the threefold office in the theological tradition of almost two millennia affirms this Trinitarian framework of the threefold office.¹⁸ The Christological and baptismal functions were predominant in the patristic period. The soteriological use received renewed emphasis during the Reformation. Since the nineteenth century, the ministerial and ecclesiological functions have enjoyed predominance.

The Trinitarian framework of the threefold office describes Christ's person and work in terms of their relatedness to the persons and work of the Father and the Spirit and, in terms of their relatedness to the sacraments, salvation, ministry and the church. The broad range in terms of how the Bible tells the story of God's redemptive dealings with human beings and the whole world, in and through his church, comes into the picture when one deals with the threefold office of Christ.

The Trinitarian framework also helps one to understand that all three offices are involved in both the state of humiliation and state of exaltation of Christ and in both his divine and human nature. Wainwright opts for the so-called exchange of properties (*communicatio idiomatum*) between Christ's divine and human natures in both states of humiliation and exaltation.¹⁹ In light of this close unity in Christ, one need not be too pedantic about the order in which to reflect upon the three offices.

Wolfhart Pannenberg raises some points of objection against the use of the categories of the threefold office.²⁰ Objections include that it describes the work of Christ inadequately and that it does not leave room for other offices besides

14 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 113.

15 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 118-120.

16 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 99, 106.

17 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 118.

18 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 109-117.

19 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 118-119.

20 Wolfhart Pannenberg. 1977. *Jesus. God and man*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 212-25.

prophet, priest and king that were also found in the Old Testament. Pannenberg also doubts whether the name 'Christ' can be linked to all three offices and questions the idea that the Spirit anointed Jesus to these offices. He believes that none of these three offices, except to some extent the priestly office, existed consistently in Israel's history. He also does not agree with the idea described earlier, that the three offices function in both the states of humiliation and exaltation of Christ and feels the notion over-emphasises the earthly work of Christ.

The criticism of the notion of the threefold office from the perspective of feminist and postcolonial thinking is important, especially when one tries to discern the significance of this office for contemporary, complex public life.

North American theologian Joerg Rieger, for example, offers some strong opposition to the continued use of the three offices of Christ in contemporary contexts. Rieger argues that there is room for the continued use of the threefold office of Christ only on condition that Christian faith is liberated from the misuse of these offices to legitimise and support traditional and contemporary empires. Contemporary empires in post-colonial contexts need to be acknowledged, exposed and opposed.

In the end, Rieger does not reject the notion of the threefold Christ, but he pleads for a nuanced use thereof that portrays Christ as a resisting and transforming Christ. Especially in so-called Western theological circles, one may not find Rieger's criticism of the theological employment of the threefold office completely convincing. However, his plea to interpret the threefold notion in terms of its potential of resisting dehumanisation, ecocide, injustice and oppression, as well as in terms of its potential for actualising dignity in the context of the integrity of creation, justice and freedom, should be taken seriously.²¹

With this historical background in mind, especially also the points of critique against of the notion of the threefold office, one may turn to explore the potential of the threefold office for guiding and inspiring the involvement of, in particular, South African churches, in the quest for human rights, dignity and inclusion.

21 John Caputo's little book also pleads for a fresh and liberating look at the Person and work of Christ. See John D. Caputo. 2007. *What would Jesus deconstruct? The good news of postmodernism for the church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. In an interesting reflection on Christology and ethics, Reformed theological ethicist James Gustafson offers a description of the work of Christ which might illuminate our discussions on the public and ethical import of the threefold office of Christ. He portrays Christ as the Lord who is creator and redeemer, and as the sanctifier, justifier, pattern/example and teacher. See James M. Gustafson. 1968. *Christ and the moral life*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Because we were baptised into Christ by the Spirit,²² since we are also anointed by the Spirit²³ and because of our redemption and restoration in Christ,²⁴ we participate in the prophetic, priestly and royal-servant work of Christ. Wainwright, therefore, suggests baptism into Christ, anointing by the Spirit, redemption and restoration in Christ as the pathway to our participation in the threefold office of Christ. Thereby he brings Christology, ecclesiology and ethics together.

The church in all its forms is challenged to fulfil this threefold responsibility to enhance dignity, rights, justice, freedom, equality and inclusion. And the church is challenged to do this in collaboration with various individuals and institutions of society, especially civil society, but also the media, business and political authorities. To my mind, universities, too, are crucial partners in this holy quest.

Royal-servant unity and social cohesion

The Heidelberg Catechism, Question 31, describes the kingly office of Christ as follows: "... our eternal King, who governs us by his Word and Spirit, and defends and preserves us in the redemption obtained for us."

Wainwright argues that the royal servant office teaches contemporary societies about authority, freedom, power and hope. Unity and social cohesion prevail where we are united in authority, united in freedom, power and hope. In a world that seeks autonomy and, in the process, aims at becoming deistic and eliminate any idea of divine action and rule, the plea is not to burn down the house of authority and not to bring down the Scriptures, creeds, liturgies and institutions of the admittedly imperfect historic church.²⁵

In a society hungry for cultural freedom and an absolute right of self-expression, this office calls for recognition that my neighbour is, put in the negative, the limit of my freedom and, in the positive, a personal call to service. Lastly, Wainwright mentions that this office assures us of ultimate hope in the exalted Lord and King.

In the South African context, this office might be employed to decontaminate imperialistic notions of power that seem to threaten the idea of the servant power that is characteristic of power in the democratic vision with its central words like 'minister' that means servant and the word 'president' that means the one that

22 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 114.

23 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 99.

24 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 113.

25 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 169-171.

presides, that one serves as an example amongst the servants, the servant par excellence. More than that, the *Christocracy* tells of a Lord, a King, who is Shepherd and the most humble of servants. Simultaneously, this office calls disciples to fulfil their calling as citizens to a public life of respecting authority and living responsibly, in the church and all walks of life.

The royal servant calling also entails that the life of freedom is defined as a life of freedom from bondage and freedom for a life of service. This view of freedom provides appropriate guidelines and parameters for developing a human rights culture, specifically to advance freedom and justice rights, and also to obey the call to freedom and just responsibilities.

The royal-servant office also prompts a life of hope. Hope can be described in a threefold manner. Hope is 'realistic hope' because it is founded in the most significant reality of all, namely the cross and resurrection, ascension and *parousia* of Jesus Christ, who is the fulfilment of the promises of God. Against this background, hope is 'responsive hope'. Therefore, hope pays attention, functions pro-actively and is expressed in concrete involvement in the matters of life. Hope is also 'resilient hope'. Despite the most challenging circumstances, 'Christian hope' perseveres with patience and fortitude.

And based on this calling, authority and hope, churches are moral communities for the formation of disciples and citizens of character and virtue. According to American theologians Bruce Birch and Larry Rasmussen, an etymological study of the word 'character' indicates that character has to do with the engraving of particular principles into a person.²⁶ The authors refer to the Greek roots of the word that means engraving tool and, by extension, refer to the marks made by an 'engraving tool'. Hence, character carries with it the notion of values that are engraved into a person, over time, so that it becomes assimilated, incarnated and embodied in the person. Character, like the virtues, therefore, develops over time in communion with God and other human beings.

The North American ethicist J. Philip Wogaman, offers a valuable description of virtue.²⁷ He describes virtue as "a disposition of the will towards a good end, as a tendency to think or behave in accordance with goodness, as a habit of the will to overcome a threat to our ultimate good". A virtue is a predisposition, a tendency, an intuition to be and to act in a specific way without prior reflection.

26 Bruce Birch and Larry Rasmussen. 1989. *Bible and ethics in the Christian life*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 124.

27 J. Philip Wogaman. 1989. *Christian moral judgment*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 29.

One acts according to it almost instinctively. It, to some extent, has an element of unavoidability to it. The Greek word for virtue, *arête*, refers to the divine power that we have to be and to act in accordance with goodness. Virtue also has the dimension of *habitus*, implying that virtue is acquired in the process of consistent and collective habitual behaviour. For David Cunningham,²⁸ virtues are dispositions that God has by nature, and in which we participate by grace. Virtues are characteristics of the Triune God that are bestowed upon us freely.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle identified four so-called cardinal virtues. Cardinal is derived from the Latin word *cardo* that refers to the hinge of a door. The four cardinal virtues are, therefore, the hinge on which all virtues turn. These virtues are justice, moderation/self-control, discernment/wisdom and courage/fortitude. Centuries later, Thomas Aquinas added three so-called theological virtues to these four, namely faith, hope and love.

Social thinkers in various parts of the world argue that democracies with human rights cultures that serve the common good cannot become a reality without leaders and citizens of civic virtue and character. Societies hunger for people of public and civic virtue: ‘public wisdom’ in contexts of complexity, ambiguity, tragedy and *aporia* (dead-end streets); ‘public justice’ in the context of inequalities and injustices on local and global levels; ‘public temperance’ in contexts of greed and consumerism amidst poverty and alienation; ‘public fortitude’ amidst situations of powerlessness and inertia; ‘public faith’ amidst feelings of disorientation and rootless-ness in contemporary societies; ‘public hope’ amidst situations of despair and melancholy; ‘public love’ in societies where public solidarity and compassion are absent.

Priestly reconciliation and social healing

The Heidelberg Catechism, Question 31, also describes the priestly office of Christ and does so as follows: “... our only High Priest, who by the one sacrifice of his body has redeemed us, and ever lives to make intercession for us with the Father ...”

In his contemporary hermeneutic for the priestly office, Wainwright argues that Christ the Priest replaces our pain and suffering, expressed in alienations, with reconciliation and He replaces our sin and guilt, expressed in estrangement, with atonement.²⁹ Christ restores us to divine communion and communion with each

28 David S. Cunningham. 1998. *These Three Are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology the Practice of Trinitarian Theology*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 123.

29 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 150-153.

other. Wainwright also spells out the concrete and public forms that cry out for this reconciliation, atonement and restored communion:

... oppression is political alienation, for the disenfranchised are deprived of the privileges and responsibilities that go with the human vocation to live in society; poverty is economic alienation, for the impoverished are cut off from their share in the fruit of the earth that humankind is charged by God to cultivate; sickness is physical alienation, and a troubled mind is psychological alienation, and both remove the sufferers from the flourishing existence which God envisioned for his human creatures; slavery is alienation of identity, the profoundest infraction of the dignity of every child of God; bereavement displays death as the alienation of humankind from the life of communion for which it was made.³⁰

Jesus Christ, the Public Priest, entered into this human condition of alienation and estrangement. This estranged humanity is the humanity that Christ consumed, and in the words of Hans Urs von Balthasar, “what had not been assumed would not have been healed.”³¹

For South African churches that seek to develop priestly public theologies, the recommendations offered by Wainwright may be constructive in our context of so many manifestations of alienation and estrangement. Public theology challenges invite and inspire churches to overcome political alienation. The young South Africa democracy has a good democratic vision and policy documents in place. We, however, need to work for social solidarity, social cohesion and the joint building of social capital. We have sound macro-economic policies and practices in place, but the benefits did not reach the poor, and we still have the biggest gap between rich and poor in the world. In spite of our noble human rights principles of access to necessities, millions still are excluded from physical and mental health care. We still hurt each other based on racial, national, tribal, gender and socio-economic identities, as we do, based on identity or sexual orientation, age and disability. We even hurt nature!

The priestly office calls us to work toward overcoming these alienations, hurts and violations of dignity. It calls us to work, therefore, toward the actualisation of dignity, health, healing and restitutive reconciliation and reconciling justice.

30 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 150.

31 Quoted in Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 151.

Prophetic justice and social solidarity

Finally, the Heidelberg Catechism, Question 31, describes Christ in his prophetic office as: "... our Prophet and Teacher who fully reveals to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption ..."

In what he calls a "contemporary hermeneutics, interpretation and understanding of the prophetic office", Wainwright argues that the ongoing discernment of the will of God, of God's justice, might illuminate the quest in contemporary societies that which are experiencing an information explosion, to develop *sapientia* (wisdom) amidst so much *scientia* and information. And, in a context of meaninglessness and purposelessness, the ongoing discernment of God's will provides *telos*, i.e. purpose and meaning.³²

In the prophetic discourse of public theology in South Africa, we may view our prophetic practices as witness to and participation in the life of Christ, the Prophet, who reveals the truth, the will of God, as a truth of our justification by Christ and as a truth that entails our calling to seek justice in the world. The prophetic quest is, therefore, a quest for the truth of our justification and salvation in Christ that is, in turn, expressed by justice in the world, served by *sapientia* and discernment.

Based on this understanding of prophetic Christology, ecclesiology and ethics, one might venture to suggest five modes of prophetic speaking that might serve the prophetic calling of the church well in its efforts to advance justice, especially for the most vulnerable.

Building upon, adjusting and appropriating the work of James Gustafson on the public speaking of churches, I have constructed five interdependent and complementary modes of prophetic speaking. These are prophetic speaking as envisioning, criticism, storytelling, technical analysis and participation in policymaking.³³

Envisioning entails the spelling out of the ideal picture of a new society. The vision informs about a new and better reality. The vision also inspires a new lifestyle, new practices and new habits and virtues. The vision of a new life transforms persons and systems, individuals and societies to reflect the values and the goods of a new

32 Wainwright, *For our salvation*, 133-135.

33 James M. Gustafson. *Varieties of moral discourse: Prophetic, narrative, ethical, and policy*. Stob lectures of Calvin College and Seminary, Grand Rapids, 1988. For an extensive discussion of these five modes of prophetic speaking see Nico Koopman. 2011. Modes of prophecy in a democracy? In: H. Bedford-Strohm and E. de Villiers (eds.), *Prophetic witness. An appropriate contemporary mode of public discourse?* Theology in the public square/Theologie in der Offenlichkeit Band 1. Berlin: Lit Verlag, 181-92.

society. South Africans from a variety of religious and secular backgrounds agree upon the vision of a society of dignity expressed through justice and freedom, as written down in the Bill of Rights of the 1996 South African Constitution.

Prophetic *criticism* refers first of all to self-criticism. Where churches fail to embody the vision of a new and transformed society, we offer self-criticism. Churches also give courageous public criticism where individuals, leaders and institutions betray this vision. Where the visionary task entails annunciation, the task of criticism entails denunciation. Where visionaries announce the liberating new, critics denounce the persistence of the oppressive old.

Prophetic *storytelling* refers to the telling of stories of pain and oppression. Storytellers give voice, especially to the pain and cries of the marginalised, outcasts and silenced people and creatures of society. Storytelling also tables hopeful and inspiring stories of victory and liberation.

Technical analysis refers to thorough analyses, with the help of appropriate experts, of complex public problems and challenges. This technical discourse facilitates more credible and adequate responses by churches to complex and sophisticated public challenges.

Policy discourse refers to the participation of churches in the quest to make, implement and monitor policies that will enhance the plight of the most vulnerable in society. This discourse, however, implies that we need to move from merely offering broad visions for public life. We also should avoid providing blueprints for policies. Churches need to provide parameters for policymaking that are less broad than visions and less specific than blueprints. The notion of middle axioms that was developed in 1937 by the Life and Work section of the later World Council of Churches might still prove helpful in this regard.³⁴

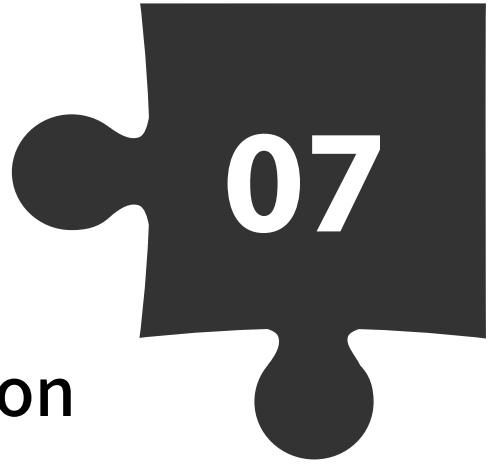
Conclusion

The TRC will be remembered as a failed initiative if initiatives toward unity and cohesion, reconciliation and healing, justice and solidarity do not succeed it. Individuals and institutions in society are challenged to respond faithfully to this mandate. Universities are well-placed to make such a contribution. They are, in the final instance, institutions that nurture public and civic virtue and character. They are places that advance scientific reflection, analysis and systematisation.

34 For a discussion of the potential of middle axioms see Nico Koopman. 2010. Churches and public policy discourses in South Africa. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 136: 41-56.

As such, universities are spaces of scientific reflection that deal appropriately with complexity. They seek simplicity on the other side of complexity, a simplicity that has wrestled with complexity in all its manifestations like plurality, ambiguity, ambivalence, duality, paradoxicality, *aporia* and tragedy. Universities are also the spaces that impact transformatively on all spheres of society, from the most intimate to the most global, planetary and cosmic.³⁵ The quest for unity and social cohesion, reconciliation and social healing, justice and social solidarity can be served significantly by universities. And, in this quest, we can drink from the wells of our religious and secular traditions. Christians drink from the wells of the Lord, Jesus Christ, who mandates and equips us to live royal-servantly, priestly and prophetically in the world.

35 For a very helpful discussion of the three roles of a theological school – from which some inferences can be made about the roles of universities – see David Kelsey. 1992. *To understand God truly. What's theological about a theological school?* Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox.



Thoughts into action

Creating a long-term movement toward a reconciled and just society

Marichen van der Westhuizen¹

Introduction: The past and the present

The world watched South Africa's transition from apartheid to a democracy with an admiration for its perceived peaceful shift. However, Kaufman concurs that this transition was not peaceful and mentions that thousands of South Africans died during the fight for freedom from 1985-1995.² These deaths and other social injustices during apartheid resulted in trauma for individuals, families and communities. The lasting damage cannot be ignored.

After the end of apartheid, South Africa was faced with the task of building an inclusive society, while also addressing the damage of the past. Transformation in terms of a transition from exclusion to inclusion in all spheres of life was required, and citizens had to find a new way of living together.³ Therefore, the

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2 Stuart J. Kaufman. 2012. *The end of Apartheid: Rethinking South Africa's 'peacefu' transition*. <https://bit.ly/2xEmszA> [Accessed 20 October 2016].

3 Cf. Johannes C. Erasmus. 2005. *Religion and social transformation: A case study from South Africa*. *Transformation*, 22(3):139-148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026537880502200303>

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original commitment by the newly-elected democratic government and civil society (including faith communities) was that the people should be viewed as a fundamental resource in terms of the future development of the country.⁴ However, the trauma of the past lingered on as individuals, groups and communities remained sensitive owing to past experiences.⁵

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was one way of assisting South African society in moving towards reconciliation. Pedro asserts that, although the TRC acted as a catalyst and a platform for discussion, victims of apartheid did not necessarily receive justice, as it did not lead to a changed society (i.e. rehabilitation of society post-apartheid).⁶ It became clear that the hurt of the past was too deep for the TRC to deal with extensively within the limited time it had at its disposal.⁷ In this regard, the TRC became an event and not the start of a transformation process as intended. To enter this process, Pedro warns, the terms 'truth' and 'reconciliation' should not be a mere academic or political theory, but it should be practised to ensure transformation.⁸

Furthermore, Leubolt⁹ and Bentley¹⁰ concur that thus far transformational change focused primarily on the political realm, while the social fabric of South Africa has not received adequate attention, resulting in a continued fragmented, distrustful society. With a specific focus on the role of faith communities (FC),¹¹ Rev Nyobole of the Methodist Church of South Africa echoes this sentiment as follows:

And that was true for the past; it is still true for today: that we find it is easy to make those confessions and statements, but find it difficult to live up to those ... In terms of reconciliation, the churches ... the faith communities were not co-ordinated in terms of taking that agenda forward.¹²

4 ANC (African National Congress). 2012. *Social transformation. Policy discussion document*. Pretoria: African National Congress, 3.

5 Marichen van der Westhuizen, Thomas Greuel and Christo Thesnaar. 2015. In search of a theoretical framework towards intercultural awareness and tolerance. *Scriptura*, 114(1):1-16. <https://doi.org/10.7833/114-0-1135>

6 LL Miguel Pedro. 2007. *The Ministry of Reconciliation. A comparative study of the role of the churches in promoting reconciliation in South Africa and Angola*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 47-62.

7 Van der Westhuizen, Greuel and Thesnaar, *In search of a theoretical framework*, 2.

8 Pedro, *The Ministry of Reconciliation*, 47-62.

9 Bernard Leubolt. 2014. *Social policies and redistribution in South Africa*. Geneva: International Labour Organization.

10 Wessel Bentley. 2014. Methodism and transformation in South Africa: 20 years of constitutional democracy. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 70(1):1-8. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v70i1.2673>

11 'Faith communities' are abbreviated as FC for the remainder of the essay.

12 Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology (BNC). 2014. *Revisiting the TRC faith community hearings*. Draft document. Discussion panel at the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University, 8-9 October 2014. Stellenbosch, 10-18.

The present situation reflects the above description of a lack of any long-term progress towards a reconciled and just South African society. Hofmeyr and Govender provide the following statistical description of the present-day realities: The majority of South Africans (59.2 per cent) believe that there was some progress towards reconciliation. Importantly, the South African people “... are convinced that the country has to continue to pursue it as a national objective (69.7 per cent)”.¹³

In contrast to the above, the majority also view reconciliation as impossible as long as the poor remain poor. Reconciliation means, among other things, that inter-racial relationships should heal. However, 61.4 per cent of South Africans described these relationships as either unchanged or that it deteriorated since 1994, resulting in a lack of trust (experienced by 67.3 per cent). A need to create safe spaces to engage in activities aimed at the reconciliation of relationships is highlighted. In this regard, FCs seem to be well-positioned to assist South African people. However, it was reported that “... most interracial interaction between South Africans occurs in public spaces, such as places of work and study and shopping centres”, while interaction in more intimate spaces where relationships can deliberately be reconciled is limited. A hopeful statistical description is that 71 per cent of South Africans have a desire to strive for the creation of a united South African nation, a desire acknowledged by the role of FCs in creating a long-term movement toward a reconciled and just society to create a united South African nation will be discussed next.

Faith communities as agents of change

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu explains that one challenge for FCs in a post-Apartheid era is that clarity is needed about what they did, what they are doing, and what they should be doing.¹⁴ Linked to this explanation, Dean Weeder from the Anglican Church of Southern Africa concurs that the past has not left us (i.e. FCs *and* the South African society) yet, that FCs did not learn a new way of thinking, behaving and speaking and, alarmingly, have come to accept temporary solutions – only dealing with things when it is an immediate crisis.¹⁵

This discussion emphasises the roles of FCs, in terms of being a part of a democratic society, to clarify the future role of FCs, addressing social concerns, promoting social justice and spiritual well-being, while the role of leadership in reconciliation processes are described.

13 Jan Hofmeyr and Rajen Govender. 2015. *National reconciliation, race relations, and social inclusion: South African Barometer Briefing Paper 1*. Hatfield: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 1.

14 BNC, *Revisiting the TRC*, 7.

15 *Ibid.*, 11-14.

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The role of FCs as a vehicle for social transformation in communities suffering from "... acute fragmentation as a result of colonialisation" has been highlighted since the beginning of the Truth and Reconciliation process.¹⁶ This role, with a specific focus on contributing to the spiritual well-being of the South African people, was accentuated by former president Nelson Mandela as follows: "... social transformation cannot be separated from spiritual transformation."¹⁷

Despite the above statement, Emedi notes that the social concern within FCs needs to be revisited, as this aspect is often underplayed in terms of the role of such communities in broader society.¹⁸ Additionally, a challenge for FCs is that their relationship with the government has changed. They had to enter into a shift from either being a 'partner' or an 'opponent' of the ruling government to a part of a democratic society. This shift requires that FCs should engage with each other and should in solidary support initiatives that promote social justice, peace, fairness, democracy and the protection of the interests of the vulnerable groups in society.¹⁹ Linking the role of FCs and the need for solidarity between these communities, Volf discusses the social meaning of reconciliation.²⁰ He writes that, although FCs can play a vital role in addressing unjust practices, they are often quiet, which in essence means that they contribute to the continuation of unjust practices. If FCs want to promote social justice, they should become willing to engage with systems that have the power to contribute to social justice and reconciliation processes and/or those that maintain or protect the unjust practices.²¹ Reconciliation must, therefore, not only be preached but must become real in these communities' actions. A discourse and process are needed where existing experiences and perceptions are explored, engagements between different role-players should be encouraged and planned activities, within this process, should be aimed at a different understanding based on truth, justice, healing and security.²²

16 Agbiji Obaji and Ignatius Swart. 2015. Religion and social transformation in Africa: A critical and appreciative perspective. *Scriptura*, 114(1):1-20. <https://doi.org/10.7833/114-0-1115>

17 ANC (African National Congress). 1998. *Ethical statement: ANC statement on the moral renewal of the nation*. Pretoria: South African Government.

18 Pablo-George Emedi. 2010. The local church as an agent of social transformation in a poor community. Unpublished MA thesis. Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 36.

19 Raymond S. Kumalo. 2007. *A prophetic church in the democratization of the South African society – a myth or reality?* Paper presented at Diakonia Council of Churches, 7 November 2007. <https://bit.ly/2xAFd0C> [Accessed 19 October 2016].

20 Miroslav Volf. 2006. *The end of memory: Remembering rightly in a violent world*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 8.

21 Rich Janzen. 2013. *Justice and faith: Mobilizing Christian Reformed Church congregations for justice*. Burlington, In: Christian Reformed Church in North America, Centre for Community Based Research, 11.

22 John Lederach and Michelle Maiese. 2009. Conflict transformation: A circular journey with a purpose. *New Routes*, 14(2):7-11.

As in the past, FCs are key role-players and agents of change in addressing social issues such as poverty and inequality. These communities, therefore, act as representatives of civil society and are in the position to specifically address morality and citizenship within society.²³ Bowers du Toit reflects on this and asserts that “... it is hoped that such recognition may provide the basis for re-engaging religious leaders and re-energising the religious sector” to reflect on future roles.²⁴ Re-imagining the role of FCs today, the author concurs that they should mobilise communities to engage with the reconciliation agenda, act as ‘voice for the voiceless’,²⁵ represent the marginalised and oppressed and engage with other sectors to work towards a just society.²⁶

As part of repositioning itself in future reconciliation processes, Fisher advises that leaders in a just reconciliation process who work from a faith perspective specifically need to “... expand their cultural competence to embrace community and organisational interventions, not just individual interventions”.²⁷ The leaders should then actively start with empowering the FCs they represent to enter the process of reconciliation. Aspects that may be addressed include, negative community profiling, stereotyping, a lack of understanding of why people do and think the way they do and verbal and non-verbal ways of engaging with ‘others’ (i.e. those viewed as different from the ‘u’ and where social injustices took place against ‘the others’ or where the specific group was harmed by ‘the others’).

Reconciliation and social justice as a long-term process and not an event

Reconciliation

The term ‘reconciliation’, in a practical sense, refers to the coming together of different parties where some unjust act took place intending to understand and accept each other, to learn to live and work together and to become able to solve differences for the greater good of a just society.²⁸ Lederach and Maiese identify

23 Skip Krige. 2008. Towards a Coherent Vision for Faith Development. *JTSA*, 132(17):16-37.

24 Nadine Bowers du Toit. 2012. The Church as an Agent of Change: reflections on the role of the Church in Carnegie I, II and now III? Paper presented at the Towards Carnegie III Conference, University of Cape Town, 3-7 September, 15.

25 Cf. Emedi, *The local church*, 53.

26 Bowers du Toit, *The Church as an Agent of Change*, 11-14.

27 Catherine Fisher. 2012. *Transforming communities: Faith social justice group work with homeless*. Paper presented at the North American Social Work (NACSW) Convention, St Louis, MO, October 2012, 1-7.

28 Pedro, *The Ministry of Reconciliation*, 5.

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truth, justice, healing and security as four elements to be included in the process of reconciliation.²⁹ Healing and security then inform a peaceful society.

A platform needs to be created through which people who were involved in an unjust situation are encouraged to tell what happened to them. Lederach and Maiese refer to storytelling as a strategy where they not only reflect on the painful past but where they are allowed to develop a vision for a better future as follows:

... individuals and a nation repeat stories to one another in an attempt to bring coherence to past events and to make sense of the present and the future.³⁰

The truth relates to the past; how people experienced it and how they remember it. Part of telling the truth is that unjust practices should change to just practices. Just practices are, however, easier to talk about and more difficult to practice. Individuals, groups and communities need support to practice acting in a fair and just manner and to integrate these actions into a new way of living. The victims must be supported to distinguish between justice and revenge for them to truly become free of the past, while the perpetrators have to understand that to 'pay the price' changes the outcome of the final part of the story and that this could make them free as well. A process where the perpetrator should forgive him/herself should supplement a victims' forgiveness, only to become a reality when one includes relationship-building into the process. These new relationships require the active practice of truth and justice. Lastly, peace (i.e. healing and security) is an element that refers to a structural change that evolves from a process of understanding. Positive peace then becomes an outcome of the reconciliation process where new understandings, behaviours and relationships direct the future structuring of society.³¹

Nordstokke describes the dimensions of FCs' involvement in reconciliation practices as political, ideological and social.³² All these dimensions relate to the discussion of the role of FCs as agents of change above, requiring that such communities become safe places where people can express their hope and vision for a better future. The FCs should lead such discussions to promote solidarity, justice, peace and care for creation, according to the worldview and values of these communities. Reconciliation from a social justice perspective includes:

29 Lederach and Maiese, *Conflict transformation*, 7-8.

30 Ibid., 8.

31 Cf. Lederach and Maiese. 2009. *Conflict transformation*, 7-8.

32 Kjell Nordstokke. 2009. *Diakonia in context: Transformation, reconciliation, empowerment*. Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 20.

- Consciousness-raising (what happened (truth));
- opportunities for individuals to work through painful emotions (e.g. hurt, anger, shame, guilt);
- solidarity between those who suffered injustice and those who inflicted injustice;
- restored individual dignity and worth;
- increased social support; and
- opportunities to engage in difficult dialogues.³³

Within the above description, reconciliation processes should lead to social justice.

Social justice

Social justice may be described as a process where one pursues equity and fairness. In the present discussion, it becomes the outcome of a reconciliation process. Green and Baldry, however, notes that this term is often just a “... distant dot on the horizon”, as we neglect to integrate our academic understanding of the term with the principles of social justice in practice.³⁴

Meckled-Garcia reflects on whether human rights standards are the same as principles of social justice under a different name or whether social justice is a subset of human rights.³⁵ He concludes that both options are valid, as the principles of social justice inform human rights standards, while the practice of social justice also includes human rights standards.

Social justice, in practice, relates to social relationships. In the case of efforts to work towards reconciliation in a post-apartheid South Africa, this means that the mentioned efforts should be based on the moral values associated with social justice, including fairness, equality, worthiness and rights and responsibilities applicable to all.³⁶ If social justice is viewed as an act of fairness in inter-personal contacts, the focus of reconciliation efforts should be on the restoration of relationships that reflects the “... human longing for wholeness and harmony in social relationships”.³⁷

33 Fisher, *Transforming communities*, 7.

34 Sue Green and Eileen Baldry. 2008. Building indigenous Australian social work. *Australian Social Work*, 61(4):389-402. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03124070802430718>

35 Saladin Meckled-Garcia. 2011. *Human rights or social justice? Rescuing human rights from the outcomes view: Working Paper 30*. London: University College, School of Public Policy, 2.

36 Meckled-Garcia, *Human rights or social justice*, 5.

37 Mary Anne Poe. 2007. Fairness is not enough: Social Justice as restoration of right relationships. *Social Work and Christianity* 34(4):449-470.

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Within these relationships, we work within a scope of the types of rights and responsibilities that are needed for reconciliation to take place. We need to understand how the people involved view rights and responsibilities, and we need a process of mediation to agree on this. The desired outcomes for the individuals involved need to be linked to the desired outcome for a movement towards a just society. Additionally, Janzen reflects on social justice in relation to restoration (with the focus on relationships) and retribution (with the focus on damage) and explains that this is a fundamental outcome of justice work.³⁸ He links restoration and retribution with renewal, bringing healing to both the victims and the perpetrators and contributes to a changed way of social functioning beyond the painful past.

The role of the FCs, when working together towards a reconciled just society, should be agreed upon and clarified.³⁹ Whatever the identified role(s) may be, long-term and sustainable change can only take place when one views activities/programmes/events that are aimed at reconciliation and social justice as part of a bigger process towards change.

Process versus event

Reconciliation is aimed at dealing with some conflict or unjust practice. Conflict resolution may be seen as an event, where the focus is on the specific factors that contribute to the conflict or unjust practice. Reconciliation takes it one step further, in that it focuses not only on the immediate situation but aims at transformation, to address the situation in the future in a different way. This focus means that one learns and develops new ways of understanding and reacting to conflict and unjust practices.⁴⁰ One current example of conflict impacting on the reconciliation process is that of the Fees Must Fall movements at local universities. Prinsloo argues that active engagement in such societal issues is needed and that "... deep understanding of these questions are necessary to prevent more of the same 'techno-bureaucratic fixes', that, until now, have left South Africa's universities largely untransformed".⁴¹

One role of FCs may be seen as facilitating a process where deeper patterns are identified within the context while also seeking creative responses to address the real issues within a specific context. Therefore, when viewing reconciliation as a

38 Janzen, *Justice and faith*, 9-11.

39 Meckled-Garcia, *Human rights or social justice*, 5-6.

40 Lederach and Maiese, *Conflict transformation*, 7-8.

41 Estelle H. Prinsloo. 2016. The role of the Humanities in decolonising the academy. *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education*, 15(1):164-168. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474022215613608>

process, it should be understood that one cannot achieve change by means of single or fragmented events. It should be acknowledged that it requires a long-term commitment.⁴² A process towards transformation, as part of a reconciliation effort, involves three steps, linked to the principles of social justice, as proposed by Lederach and Maiese:⁴³

Firstly, the situation has to be presented, requiring facilitation of communication to ensure that all the parties have opportunities to express themselves and to hear each other's stories, as was the case with the TRC. Bloomfield explains that this process applies to everyone involved – those who inflicted suffering and those suffering.⁴⁴ It also has to explore the attitudes, prejudice and stereotyping that evolved from the hurtful practices. This first step involves more than just communication; it explores the structures and patterns of past events that need to be changed to move beyond the event that caused the pain, anger and mistrust.

Secondly, a vision of what we wish to create (i.e. a horizon of the future) is created through a circular model of change, aimed at a movement from the present situation to the desired future.

Once the above vision has been established, the *third* step involves the active development and implementation of a change process. Lederach and Maiese highlight the fact that:

... because the change processes should address both the immediate problems and the broader relational and structural patterns, we need to reflect on multiple levels and types of change rather than focusing on a single operational solution. Change processes must not only promote short-term solutions, but also build platforms capable of promoting long-term social change.⁴⁵

To summarise this process of reconciliation, Bloomfield refers to reconciliation as both a process and an outcome.⁴⁶ In terms of a process, the activities should be based on a real understanding of the experiences and perceptions of all the role-players, that requires a dynamic adaptive process aimed at healing and change. To achieve this understanding communication forms an integral part of the process, while relationship-building is viewed as an outcome.

42 David Bloomfield. 2003. *On good terms: Clarifying reconciliation*. Belfast: Berghof Center for Constructive Conflict, 12

43 Lederach and Maiese, *Conflict transformation*, 7-9.

44 Bloomfield, *On good terms*, 12.

45 Lederach and Maiese, *Conflict transformation*, 8.

46 Bloomfield, *On good terms*, 12.

This process links to social justice and social development, as it contributes to a fair and just society where community members have equal rights and responsibilities to work toward positive change. FCs may be viewed as systems within communities that can act as change agents.

Systems thinking as an approach to social development

Systems thinking

The systems-thinking approach, with specific reference to reconciliation and social justice as a process to change the fragmented South African society, implies that different groups within a community affect one another's functioning. For this discussion, 'different groups' refers to those who suffered injustice and those who inflicted injustice during *and* after the end of apartheid. Van der Westhuizen et al. assert that "... those aspects that explain the reciprocal relationships between individuals, groups and/or communities should be included when attempting to develop a positive-change environment".⁴⁷ The aim of this approach is, therefore, to assist those involved to solve both immediate and broader relational and structural problems together.⁴⁸

A system (for example, a group of people affected by social injustice during apartheid) consists of various interrelated or interdependent factors, such as historical events (i.e. apartheid), activities and interactions. Ackoff describes the term 'interpretive systems' as a form of systems thinking that models 'reality', reflecting the different views of the individuals within the system, as well as those outside the system and those affected by the system.⁴⁹ Those affected by apartheid will, therefore, act according to their experiences and views, which influences their interactions with those who benefited from apartheid. The systems-thinking approach acknowledges relationships and interactions between systems as an inclusive process.⁵⁰ The engagements between different systems (i.e. those who suffered injustice and those who inflicted injustice) in a reconciliation process are then facilitated by FCs to assist them to mobilise the strengths of their relationships to address social, mental and spiritual well-being and, therefore, to work together toward a fair and just society for all.⁵¹

47 Van der Westhuizen, Greuel and Thesnaar, *In search of a theoretical framework*, 11.

48 Cf. Lederach and Maiese, *Conflict transformation*, 8.

49 Russel Ackoff. 2010. *Systems thinking for curious managers*. Devon: Triarchy, 13.

50 Van der Westhuizen, Greuel and Thesnaar, *In search of a theoretical framework*, 11.

51 Peter Stratton. 2010. *The evidence base of systemic family and couples therapy*. Warrington, UK: Association for Family Therapy, 5.

Additionally, this approach acknowledges the importance of the environment in which people function, including cultural practices and challenges, such as poverty. When working from this approach, the relevant societal issues should be examined critically to create a better understanding of societal contexts and needs.⁵²

Through the systems thinking approach, FCs can contribute to reconciliation and social justice by leading a process to assist different groups in engaging with each other to contribute to a 'better whole'. Their role as the agent of change becomes clear as they create safe spaces where these groups, individually and collectively, find ways to share their perspectives and experiences to develop a different way of thinking/perceiving that would lead to different attitudes and behaviour towards each other and contributing to long-term change. It involves changes in different systems, which then influence the changes that take place in the whole context.⁵³

In summary, systems thinking is directed at changes in the different systems, leading to long-term change in the whole context. Social development is, therefore, an outcome of the systems-thinking process, while the principles of social development direct activities/events within this process.

Social development

The United Nations adopted a broad definition of social development, namely:

... concerned with processes of change that lead to improvements in human well-being, social relations and social institutions, and that are equitable, sustainable, and compatible with principles of democratic governance and social justice.⁵⁴

This description relates directly to the discussion of the role of FCs in a reconciliation process. However, Emedi reflects on the relationship between the FCs and the community in which they are situated, and concludes that some see "... the world and culture as a threat to the church and urge a strategy of avoidance".⁵⁵ To actively take on the role as agents of change, FCs should reflect on themselves as one system within the broader context, including the communities in which they are situated and the whole social environment of the country. In this way, it becomes clear that FCs, as a system, has the power to affect other systems, should they review current actions, events and processes.

52 Cameron White and Susan McCormack. 2006. The message in the music: Popular culture and teaching in social studies. *The Social Studies*, 97(3):122-127. <https://doi.org/10.3200/TSSS.97.3.122-127>

53 Ackoff, *Systems thinking*, 12.

54 United Nations. 2011. *Social development in an uncertain world*. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 2.

55 Emedi, *The local church*, 47.

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Principles of social development that guide the process of change include partnerships between different FCs and between FCs and communities, empowerment and participation strategies to attain sustainable and collective change, inclusion and equality.⁵⁶ It is a rights-based approach to social change with the emphasis is on a participation-driven process, where a willingness to take ownership of a situation and to join hands to find solutions is cultivated. Community involvement is, therefore, needed to create sustainable change.⁵⁷

The values that FCs represent support these principles. Obaji and Swart noted the link between faith-based interventions to contribute to social development and moral values that guide these interventions.⁵⁸ Kalu supports this viewpoint and places emphasis on the essential role that FCs plays in the fostering of values that contribute to reconciliation; such as honesty (i.e. truth), integrity, openness, forthrightness and tolerance.⁵⁹

Thus, FCs have a facilitating function to mobilise actions to encourage a collaborative capacity-building and social-development process through which local groups and/or organisations identify reasons behind the lack of reconciliation and where they identify a practical way through which they can engage in the process of reconciliation and sustainable change.⁶⁰ The change should involve the empowerment of the community, including the construction of knowledge, understanding and skills to work towards reconciliation. The envisaged outcome is a bottom-up approach, where the people involved themselves develop the ability to build relationships.⁶¹ Empowerment is also aimed at ownership, where the people involved take ownership of the process when it addresses their needs and is consistent with their ideals. Empowerment and ownership require participation that supports sustainable change. The latter requires a reduction of conflict and increasing cooperation based on the needs and values of the people involved.⁶² Roberts explains that, in a post-apartheid context, the poor and vulnerable are still

56 C.S. Hart. 2012. Professionalisation of community development in South Africa: Process, issues and achievements. *Africanus*, 42(2):55-66.

57 Paul Harvey and Jeremy Lind. 2005. *Dependency and humanitarian relief*. HPG Research Report 29. London: Overseas Development Institute, 19.

58 Obaji and Swart, *Religion and social transformation*, 9.

59 Ogbu Kalu. 2010. Harsh flutes: The religious dimension of the legitimacy crisis in Nigeria, 1993-1998. In W Kalu, N Wariboko and T Falola (eds.), *Religions in Africa: Conflicts, politics and social ethics: The collected essays of Ogbu Uke Kalu*, 3. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 31-64.

60 G Caine. 2008. Literature Review on Community Mobilisation. CSIR. Unpublished.

61 Judith A.B. Lee. 2001. *The empowerment approach to social work practice*. 2nd Edition. New York: Columbia University Press, 34.

62 Huma Louw. 2007. *Participatory community development in social work and the social service professions*. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 114-115.

not in a position of empowerment where they play an active role in their fate.⁶³ In terms of victims of the apartheid system, many still feel victimised and not being heard or acknowledged.

Much has been written about reconciliation and social justice, but from a developmental approach, one has to 'hear the voices' of those affected, meaning that one needs to develop a contextualised perspective that involves the cultural practices, belief systems and perceptions of all involved. To acknowledge that cultural knowledge is important in addressing the psychological, intellectual, spiritual and emotional needs of people is the first step to just practice in a reconciliation process.⁶⁴ Indigenous knowledge should, therefore, be used to shape future practice. Crampton explains that this requires constant dialogue and a process of engagement to be able to not only build our understanding on external factors (what we see and hear) but also on internal factors (i.e. belief systems of those involved and/or affected) that are affected by the nature of people's realities that shapes the way they know and understand their contexts.⁶⁵ However, Dion Foster of the Methodist Church of South Africa notes: "... I think from a theological perspective, many of our churches have lost touch with a people's theology."⁶⁶ Bishop Dowling of the Catholic Church links the concepts 'justice' and 'social development' with the future role of FCs in terms of:

... the empowerment and transformation in their spirit [the poor, disenfranchised violated people] has to happen right down there in the affected communities ... and take our rightful role with the poor and the suffering because they are our members, they are our people. And it is there that we must put all our energy because they are the ones who are to be called and invited to be the agents of their own transformation.⁶⁷

As mentioned earlier, care should be taken to not only think about the future role of FCs in the reconciliation process but also to put these thoughts into action. Some strategies that are based on the principles of social development will be presented as examples of how FCs may approach future involvements.

63 Benjamin Roberts. 2006. The Happy Transition? Attitudes to poverty and inequality after a decade of democracy. In U Pillay, B Roberts and S Rule (eds.), *South African social attitudes: Changing times, diverse voices*. Cape Town: HSRC, 101-130.

64 D Thabede. 2008. The African worldview as the basis of practice in the helping professions. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 44(3):233-245. <https://doi.org/10.15270/44-3-237>

65 Alexandra Crampton. 2015. Decolonizing social work 'best practices' through a philosophy of impermanence. *Journal of Indigenous Social Development*, 4(1):1-11.

66 BNC, *Revisiting the TRC*, 20.

67 *Ibid.*, 30-31.

Strategies towards reconciliation

The purpose of strategies aimed at reconciliation should not be viewed as separate from the activities of the TRC, but rather to extend and deepen them and aimed at assisting individuals, groups and communities in reconciling in a just manner. A clarity of focus is needed in a time where FCs continue to be viewed as a key contributor and agent of change in society, while also being unsure of its specific role and how to engage actively in a reconciliation process.⁶⁸ They should exactly clarify what they will focus on to contribute to the ongoing process of reconciliation, with whom they need to partner with and how they will contribute.⁶⁹ Olorunnisola also accentuates this clarification and argues that a conversation is needed to explore how the formation of ethical participation of FCs in national issues, such as reconciliation can be achieved.⁷⁰

Five strategies that align with the principles of social development, as well as with the systems thinking approach, where the focus is on the healing of relationships as part of contributing to a reconciled and just South African society, will be presented below. These strategies serve as some examples for a movement from thoughts to actions.

- *Storytelling* has been acknowledged as one way to work towards reconciliation.⁷¹ The TRC serves as an example where storytelling served, among others, the following purposes: It provided perpetrators with an opportunity to admit their wrong-doings, while the victims had an opportunity to express themselves in terms of the impact of the actions against them, their families and their communities. However, storytelling in itself is not seen as necessarily helpful. The value lies in the fact that the sharing of stories should also contribute to repairing the damage, forgiveness and a new relationship that is born from the process.⁷² For this to take place, ongoing dialogue and collaboration are needed.
- *Dialogue and collaboration* are some actions that can contribute to the development of interpersonal and inter-group relationships. It can prevent violent conflict and promote

68 Nadine Bowers du Toit. 2012. Remembrance and renewal: Exploring the role of the church as an agent of welfare after 15 years of democracy. *The Eradication of Poverty*, 53(2):205-216. <https://doi.org/10.5952/53-0-207>

69 HEKS (*Hilfwerk der Evangelischen Kirche Schweiz*). 2006. *Between war and peace: The role of churches in reconciliation processes*. Documentation of the Symposium, Bern, Thursday 21 September 2006, 4.

70 Titus Olorunnisola. 2015. The Church in Conversation for Social Transformation: From Christology to Christo-Praxis. *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology*, 3(2):65-72. <https://doi.org/10.15640/ijpt.v3n2a7>

71 Cf. Lederach and Maiese, *Conflict transformation*, 8.

72 Hugo van der Merwe. 2003. The Role of the church in promoting reconciliation in post-TRC South Africa. In: A Chapman and B Spong (eds.), *Religion and reconciliation in South Africa*. Philadelphia, PA: Templeton Foundation, 275-276; Wielenga, C. 2013. *Shattered stories: Healing and reconciliation in the South African context*. *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 34(1):1-14. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v34i1.747>

peaceful solutions as part of finding solutions for problems/conflicts on the one hand.⁷³ On the other hand, it could be used as part of a healing process, where ongoing dialogue leads to collaboration and the development of newly defined relationships.

The collaboration will entail that FCs identify leaders, bring these leaders together and encourage a cooperative effort to support communities to work towards a practical reconciliation process. The shared vision to contribute to a just society is seen as the driving force.⁷⁴ Janzen also accentuates the importance of investing in leadership that promotes justice and asserts that these leaders should create places for conversations and that these conversations and engagements then leads to individuals who act and become involved in reconciliation practices.⁷⁵ Van der Merwe refers to two types of dialogues that FCs can provide a safe space for, namely cross-racial and victim-perpetrator dialogues. Cross-racial dialogue is aimed at community-building.⁷⁶ Space is created to allow different groups to share experiences, enter into discussions and to find a way to work towards a new relationship. In the same way, victimised groups should be provided with a safe space and a guided process to enter into conversations of healing with perpetrator communities.

Dialogue within the FCs may focus on:

- Formal denominational understandings of justice,
 - undoing systemic barriers,
 - on-the-ground understandings of justice,
 - FCs as members of society,
 - public dialogue, and
 - responding to people beyond charity and focusing on healing and development.⁷⁷
- *Education of the past and developing a new language* can form part of dialogues. Dean Weeder from the Anglican Church of Southern Africa postulates that one way to start a process of sustainable change would be to simplify the language so that all people of South Africa can relate to what is being said.⁷⁸

By using this new language and educational/information opportunities, we can learn from the past. However, education of the past should go hand-in-hand with healing and reconciling. To know about the past in itself is not a healing factor, as it can lead to bitterness and anger that hinder reconciliation. Also, knowledge must go hand-in-hand with restoration – making things right and developing new relationships.

- *Transformation of the social structure* requires that one should start within small groups, link groups together and create new, larger groups that are then linked together. Such actions are based on a systems-thinking process whereby a change in a small group can affect change in another small group, creating change in the social structure within which all these groups function.

Khondker and Schuerkens advise that one should focus on short-term changes that create movement, as well as long-term changes that reflect the desired outcomes of the

73 Lederach and Maiese, *Conflict transformation*, 7-8.

74 Kumalo, *A prophetic church*, 9; Fisher, *Transforming communities*, 5.

75 Janzen, *Justice and faith*, 22-23.

76 Van der Merwe, *The Role of the church*, 275-276.

77 Kumalo, *A prophetic church*, 1-2; Janzen, *Justice and faith*, 6-8.

78 BNC, *Revisiting the TRC*, 11-14.

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efforts.⁷⁹ Nordstokke refers to such transformations as “... an ongoing process of total reorientation of life with all its aspirations, ideologies, structures, and values.”⁸⁰ In this way, all those aspects that influence and/or prohibits change/reconciliation, as well as all those involved in the social structure and who are needed to participate to ensure sustainable change are included.

- *Creating a lifestyle* based on values and principles of social justice involves the organisation of activities and interactions where such a lifestyle can be explored, practised and integrated into every-day living. Janzen explains that social justice and practices of reconciliation must become a way of life for the people within FCs,⁸¹ requiring openness to engage with people inside and outside the FCs, become aware of the needs of individuals and groups and get to the root of factors that prohibit reconciliation and just practices from happening.

Conclusion

It could be argued that the post-apartheid dream of a reconciled and just South African nation did not materialise. However, statistical descriptions point to the fact that this dream is still rife among South African citizens. The process was entered into during the move towards a democratic political system and followed-up with the TRC process. FCs are having renewed reflections and discussions on the way forward and are well-positioned to work together in a social development framework to create safe spaces and ongoing events within the process of reconciliation.

Reconciliation, as a process, requires a clear vision of the outcome and the planning and implementation of specific actions/events to achieve this outcome. FCs act as moral guides, role-models and facilitators to ensure that platforms for such actions are developed, ensuring that all activities relate to the principles of social justice. Importantly, these platforms and actions/events within the process should evolve from a discourse between different FCs to ensure that solidarity informs plans and actions.

This discussion proposes a systems-thinking approach to social development as one option to become agents of change that work towards a reconciled and just South African society. Within such a framework, two primary focus areas come to the fore.

79 Habibul Khondker and Ulrike Schuerkens. 2014. Social transformation, development and globalization. *Sociopedia*, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/205684601423>

80 Nordstokke, *Diakonia in context*, 43-44.

81 Janzen, *Justice and faith*, 15-20.

Firstly, the impact of different groups on each other is acknowledged, and efforts to contribute to reconciliation is aimed at reconciling these groups through just practices. Secondly, the reconciliation of inter-group relations must involve the principles of social development, whereby the South African people are supported to become actively involved in the healing of the country. This healing requires work at the grassroots level and a bottom-up approach. FCs plans and actions are then based on the real-life context in which the South African people function.

This discussion focused on reconciliation in a post-apartheid era. It is envisaged that the focus of the process of reconciliation will not only focus on experiences during the apartheid years but also on current incidents of intolerance and social injustice.

Economic justice – the fulcrum of strong reconciliation

A Muslim critique of South Africa's TRC

Rashied Omar¹

Introduction

This chapter argues that an Islamic concept of reconciliation is a strong one, one that entails both personal processes of forgiveness and healing as well as systemic changes, aimed at achieving social justice and dignity for all. I employ this Islamic concept of strong reconciliation as a yardstick with which to evaluate/assess South Africa's state of reconciliation twenty years after the onset of its non-racial democracy. It might be expedient to begin by briefly defining 'reconciliation' from the perspective of Islam.

An Islamic concept of reconciliation

The Islamic equivalent of reconciliation is the Arabic word *sulh*. *Sulh* is an important term in both the vocabulary of the Qur'an and in Islamic jurisprudence. In the Qur'an, there are two types of *sulh*: personal *sulh* and social *sulh*. From the Islamic perspective, 'personal reconciliation' is the foundation for cultivating

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sustainable 'social reconciliation' and 'genuine social reconciliation' entails both personal processes of forgiveness and healing, as well as systemic changes aimed at achieving social justice. Moreover, social reconciliation known as *sulh ijtimai`i* is a process rather than an event. It may well be symbolised in an event or celebrated as a day, but it is an arduous process that needs to be nurtured over a long period for it to produce its fruits of justice and peace. Notwithstanding the difficulty and arduousness of the reconciliation process, it is a process that is extolled in the Qur'an and, as such, it should be encouraged and supported by every conscientious believer. For example, the Qur'an asserts:

Reconciliation is always preferable, and selfishness is ever prevalent in the human soul, but if you do good and are conscious of God, behold God is indeed aware of all that you do.²

The Qur'anic understanding of social reconciliation or *sulh ijtimai`i* is powerfully illustrated by the exhorting of the believers to make peace between and reconcile (*sulh*) two conflicting parties with justice and equity:

If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them transgressors beyond all bounds against the other, then fight you all against the transgressor until it complies with the command of God; but if it complies then make peace between them with justice and equity; for God loves those who are just and equitable.³

It is instructive to note that the Qur'anic exhortation to promote peace and reconciliation in the above verse is in the imperative form, giving the injunction to promote social reconciliation greater credence. Furthermore, the Qur'anic concept of social reconciliation does not merely aspire for a cessation of hostility, violence and warfare. Rather, it seeks to build long-term sustainable relationships and social reconciliation based on justice, known in the Qur'an as *adl* and *qist*, enunciated in the above verse from the Qur'an.

From an Islamic perspective then, social reconciliation is more than personal forgiveness. It is a strong concept of reconciliation that requires that the social inequalities and injustices at the root of conflict be transformed.

In sum, reconciliation in Islam demands both structural and institutional changes, as well as personal processes of forgiveness and healing. If social reconciliation does not result in fairness and justice for all groups in a conflict, then the reconciliation process is flawed. The Islamic concept of reconciliation is a strong one that entails both personal processes of forgiveness and healing as well as systemic changes

2 Qu'ran, *surah al-Nisa'*, Chapter 4, verse 35.

3 Qu'ran, *surah al-Hujurat*, Chapter 49, verse 9.

aimed at achieving social justice and dignity for all. Such a strong concept of reconciliation founded on social justice resonates with cutting edge theories on reconciliation that have emerged over the past two decades.

Theories of reconciliation

During the past two decades, we have witnessed the emergence of some productive and innovative theoretical insights on the concept of reconciliation. Tristan Anne Borer has distinguished between so-called ‘thin’ and ‘thick’ reconciliation.⁴ One of the foremost protagonists of Borer’s category of ‘thin reconciliation’ is Charles Villa-Vicencio. He argues that the responsibility of the state is to establish political reconciliation, essentially meaning that the state creates political stability and law and order so that it may fulfil its functions. In Villa-Vicencio’s view, it is not the responsibility of the state to reconcile individuals within the state; it is the task of civil society.⁵ Borer quotes Desmond Tutu’s *No future without forgiveness*, in which Tutu states that the affective dimension of people’s lives needs to be transformed. By this, he means that ordinary individuals within society need to forgive each other. Borer calls this ‘thick reconciliation’, i.e. it includes the affective dimension and the healing of interpersonal personal relations.⁶

Catholic historian R Scott Appleby distinguishes between so-called strong and weak concepts of reconciliation.⁷ According to this distinction, a reconciliation process in which personal and subjective dynamics such as forgiveness and healing of memories predominate at the expense of the transformation of objective realities of socio-economic justice are insufficient and consequently weak concepts of reconciliation. Appleby invokes support for his concept of strong reconciliation from the insights of several contemporary scholars of religion. Robert J Schreiter, for example, argues that “genuine reconciliation among erstwhile enemies’ demands structural change, as well as forgiveness, peaceful and just relations cannot thrive within the structures of society that provoked, promoted and sustained violence”. Similarly, Walter Wink argues that:

4 See, Tristan Anne Borer. 1999. *Challenging the State*. Notre Dame, In: Notre Dame Press.

5 Cf. Charles Villa-Vicencio. 2000. Getting on with life: a move towards reconciliation. In: C Villa-Vicencio and W Verwoerd (eds.), *Looking Back Reaching Forward. Reflections on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.

6 Cf. Tristan Anne Borer. 2004. Reconciling South Africa or South Africans? Cautionary notes from the TRC. *African Studies Quarterly*, 8(1):19-38.

7 See Scott, R. Appleby. 2000. *The Ambivalence of the Sacred Religion, Violence, & Reconciliation*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

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... genuine reconciliation is something more than forgiveness ...
Reconciliation can be sustained only in a society that is addressing the social
inequalities that inspired the insurrection or the civil war.

These definitions of strong reconciliation lend support to the view that sustainable and positive peace can only be achieved if the reconciliation process addresses the structural inequities inherent in any society. Applying the concept of strong reconciliation to the South African context in this chapter, with the benefit of two decades of hindsight, I contend that the South African reconciliation process was 'thick' but 'weak' since it did not create the conditions for the transformation of the structural violence that lay at the core of the legacy of the apartheid system. The chapter furthermore calls for a reassessment of the conclusions of a comparative study of peace processes by John Darby and Roger MacGinty, who found that relatively speaking, "economic factors appear to have the lowest influence on the success or failure of a peace process".⁸ The chapter will employ the thesis, as mentioned earlier, to critically evaluate the widely celebrated South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). It might be useful, to begin with, a clarification of the meaning of sustainable and positive peace as it is employed here.

Sustainable and positive peace

As is the case with almost all key terms, defining them is a perennial problem. Our definitions of key terms provide us with lenses through which we see the world, and are therefore inherently contested. Several contending interpretations of peace exist in the literature.⁹ The definitions of peace can be plotted on a horizontal graph, with one axis called negative peace and the other positive peace. Negative peace has also been described as a minimalist definition of peace and positive peace as a maximalist definition. Negative peace is simply the absence of war. It is a condition in which no direct, physical or instrumental violence is perpetrated either by the state or paramilitaries or resistance/rebel movements.¹⁰ The alternative to this conventional understanding is positive peace. It stresses the importance of recognising the existence of a more indirect and insidious form of violence, called 'structural violence'. This form of violence is less dramatic and often works slowly, eroding human values and eventually human lives. Its most ardent advocate is the Norwegian peace scholar and activist, Johan Galtung. According to Galtung, violence can be built into the very structure of the socio-political, economic and

8 Cf. John Darby and Roger MacGinty. 2000. *The Management of Peace Processes*. New York: Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780333993668>

9 David Barash. 1991. *Introduction to Peace Studies*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 7.

10 Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred Religion*, 1.

cultural and institutions of a society.¹¹ Structural violence has the effect of denying people essential rights such as economic opportunity, social and political equality, and human dignity. When children die of starvation or malnutrition, a kind of violence is taking place. Similarly, when human beings suffer from preventable diseases; when they are denied a decent education, housing, and opportunity to raise a family; or to participate in their governance, a kind of violence is taking place.¹²

Building on his original idea proposed in the late sixties, Galtung has since developed a more integrated theory of violence. He argues that both types of violence are usually present together in full conflict and that the connections between structural and direct violence are organic.¹³ In this maximalist definition of violence, therefore, direct physical harm registers as only one amongst many symptoms of the structures of power that limit, repress and alienate human beings from fulfilling their potential. Chidester argues that “as an endemic feature of all systems of social inequality, structural violence becomes another term for social injustice”.¹⁴

A related idea due to Galtung is the distinction between direct violence (children are murdered), structural violence (children die through poverty), and cultural violence (whatever blinds us to this or seeks to justify it).¹⁵ Under systems of structural violence, peace-loving people may indirectly contribute to the destruction of others. The structure of the society may also privilege innocent people who may end up benefiting at the expense of others, without intending to do so, by just performing their regular duties as a job defined in the structure. Hannah Arendt, in reviewing the role of ordinary people such as Adolf Eichmann who participated in the Holocaust that murdered millions of Jews during World War II, referred to the ‘banality of evil’ to emphasise the fact that routine behaviour by people who would ordinarily eschew violence can contribute to horror.¹⁶

In situations where structural violence is endemic, the attainment of sustainable or lasting peace has to go beyond a political settlement. It needs to alleviate and ultimately eliminate both the causes as well as the legacy of structural violence.

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- 11 Johan Galtung. 1969. Violence, Peace and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3):167-191. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336900600301>
 - 12 Barash, *Introduction to Peace Studies*, 8.
 - 13 Peter Lawler. 1995. A Question of Values: Johan Galtung’s Peace Research. *Structural Violence*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 67-112.
 - 14 David Chidester. 2014. *Wild Religion. Tracking the Sacred in South Africa*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 59.
 - 15 Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbothan and Tom Woodhouse. 1999. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 15.
 - 16 Hannah Arendt. 1970. *On Violence*. London: Allen Lane, 46-52.

This paper contends that positive peace, i.e. the establishment of conditions of just relationships and non-exploitative social structures, is more conducive to the attainment of sustainable peace. Applying this to the South African context the paper contends that for the South African peace process to be lasting and sustainable it needs to, fundamentally, address the structural violence that is the legacy of the apartheid system. However, to do that, one needs a precise understanding of the structural violence that was inherent in the apartheid system.

The apartheid system as structural violence

The apartheid system should be seen as a prime example of structural violence. This vicious system institutionalised the oppression and dehumanisation of people of colour. It legalised racial discrimination, socio-political oppression and economic exploitation. According to Chidester, under the apartheid system, “... violence was everywhere. It was an integral part of the discourses, practices and social formations through which human beings struggled to be human.”¹⁷ To fully appreciate the nature of the apartheid system, it would be necessary to locate it within its colonial genesis. Mamdani proposes that by uncritically embracing the Latin American peace process, the South African TRC obscured the colonial nature of the apartheid context: “... the link between conquest and dispossession, between racialised power and privilege. In a word, it obscured the link between perpetrator and beneficiary.”¹⁸ The colonial history of South Africa begins with the establishment of a Dutch East India Company refreshment station at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. From this southernmost point in the African continent, the Dutch outpost expanded through colonial conquest of the land of the indigenous Khoisan. During these early years, the outpost grew with the expanding trade links between Europe and the Far East. From 1795 and 1806, the weakened and financially bankrupt Dutch colonial administration seceded its control to the British. The new laws imposed by the British antagonised the Dutch settlers, who moved further inland, establishing two independent states. The discovery of diamonds, and later gold, in the late eighteenth century, revitalised the colonial conquest of South Africa by attracting a wave of immigrants, many of whom were English. Tensions increased, and several savage colonial wars were fought not only between the settlers and the indigenous African tribes but also among the British

17 Chidester, *Wild Religion*, 61.

18 Mahmood Mamdani. 2000. *The Truth According to the TRC*. In: I Amadiume and A An-Na'im (eds.), *The Politics of Memory-Truth, Healing & Social Justice*. New York: Zed, (178-179).

and the Dutch/Afrikaner settlers. After more than a century and a half of bitter inter-colonial rivalry and conflict, the latter group triumphed by winning control of the 1948 white elections.¹⁹

The Afrikaner National Party rushed to institutionalise the discriminatory practices they had inherited from the British. For example, they enacted the Land Resettlement Act of 1936 that set aside 13 per cent of the South African land space as reservations ('homelands') for the indigenous African tribes. The chief goal of the new Afrikaner government was to entrench white supremacy through a policy of racial segregation and apartheid, leading to the enactment of several laws aimed at dividing all South Africans based on racial origins and skin pigmentation. The entire population was divided into four racial categories: white, Asiatic (Indian), coloured (mixed ancestry) and 'Native' (later 'Bantu' or black). Subsequent legislation sought to extend this policy of racial segregation to virtually every sphere of human activity. The prohibition of 'mixed marriages' (1949) and the Immorality Act (1950) prohibited marriages and all sexual contact between population groups. This policy of segregation soon extended to residential areas.²⁰

The Group Areas Act (1950) forced people to reside in separate residential areas. As a direct result of the Group Areas Act, between 1960 and 1982, an estimated 3.5 million people of colour were forcibly evicted from their homes.²¹ A battery of repressive and discriminatory labour laws further exacerbated the latter consequence. These influx control laws sought to restrict access of particularly black Africans to urban employment, thus channelling many into low-wage jobs on the white farms and mines. Black workers were also excluded from industrial collective bargaining institutions via the Native Labour Act (1953). Under the apartheid economic system, a white person on average earned five times as much as a black person doing the same job. Two South African economists, Nattrass and Seekings have argued, "under this apartheid institutional framework, the market acted like a malevolent invisible hand, working to the advantage of white capitalists, and widening the wage differentials between white and black workers."

The inevitable consequences of this exploitative system of apartheid were vast inequalities in wealth between whites and blacks. Several economic studies have demonstrated that the income and welfare disparities in South Africa are

19 Nigel Worden. 1994. *The Making of Modern South Africa*. Oxford: Blackwell, 65.

20 Op cit, 74.

21 Mamdani, *The Truth According to the TRC*, 180.

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among the highest in the world.²² Far more overwhelming, however, were the consequences of the migrant labour system on family life. The economic and social disadvantages of the migrant labour system were depressing. Land dispossession forced the majority black population onto 17 per cent of the total land space. These rural homelands became overpopulated and underdeveloped. It is estimated that by 1982 there were close to a million and a half black men working as migrant labourers primarily on the mines.²³ This system degraded black men, deprived them of a family role, while their women were left behind in rural homelands feeling forlorn. The devastation that this system wrought on especially family life has been well documented by Wilson (1972) and expanded by Lemon (1987). They have listed the following detrimental consequences of this dysfunctional family life: illegitimacy, bigamy, prostitution, homosexuality, drunkenness, violence, the breakdown of parental authority, and sexually transmitted diseases. This last consequence has no doubt contributed to the high incidence of HIV and Aids among black South Africans. It is estimated that one in every ten South Africans is HIV positive.²⁴

The apartheid system and its battery of repressive and discriminatory laws were not aimed at individuals but rather at communities of colour, Mamdani argues that:

The violence of apartheid was aimed less at individuals than at entire communities of colour and population groups. And this violence was not just political. It was not just about defending power by denying people rights. The point of torture, terror, death, was even more far reaching: its aim was to dispossess people of means of livelihood.²⁵

The above-outlined scenario was the grim reality that the democratically elected African National Congress (ANC) led government had to contend with when it came to power in the historic non-racial elections held on 27 April 1994. If the new South Africa had any future, it depended upon coming to terms with its apartheid past. The transition from apartheid to democracy should be seen as essentially a transition from a condition of Low-Intensity War to that of negative peace. The challenge of using the favourable conditions generated by the negative peace to transform post-apartheid South Africa towards sustainable peace now confronted Mandela's government. To do this, the abolishment of the apartheid legislation was a necessary but not sufficient condition. For even after eliminating all of the

22 Francis Wilson and Mamphela Ramphele. 1989. *Uprooting poverty: The South African Challenge*. Cape Town: David Phillip, 21.

23 Anthony Lemon. 1987. *Apartheid in Transition*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

24 Aids Foundation South Africa. 2020. *Useful Information: HIV/Aids FAQs. How many people are already infected with HIV?* <https://bit.ly/2Uvsqp8> [Accessed 7 March 2016; 50: 11 March 2016; 48].

25 Mamdani, *The Truth According to the TRC*, 179.

apartheid legislation, post-apartheid South would still be left with a legacy of racism and widespread inequality between white and black. The critical challenges facing the peace process in South Africa was to find the most compassionate route for redistributing power and wealth and healing the society from centuries of racist socialisation. To address such daunting challenges, the South African peace process needed to transcend the constraints of the political compromise that brought the new South Africa into being and address the structural and institutional legacy of racism and inequality. It needed to transcend political reconciliation and embrace a process of social reconciliation. In short, sustainable peace in post-apartheid South Africa demands what Scott Appleby has called a strong concept of reconciliation.²⁶

Reconciliation according to the TRC

The South African TRC was symbolically inaugurated on 16 December 1995, the occasion of a new public holiday, the Day of Reconciliation.²⁷ Its mandate was to promote national reconciliation through a two-fold process. The first involved the granting of amnesty to perpetrators of political violence who were willing to disclose this in testimony to the commission. The second entailed the creation of a platform for the healing of memories by allowing victims to tell their story. The work of the TRC was divided into two divisions, the Amnesty Committee and the Truth Commission. They differed in the gravity according to their respective resolutions. While the Amnesty Committees decisions were binding, the Truth Commissions decisions carried the status of recommendations. One may ask: why the disparity? The answer lies in the fact that the TRC was the product of a political compromise. The negotiated settlement that brought the post-apartheid state into being had been premised on an interim constitution, that contained a clause, ‘there shall be amnesty’. The apartheid regime had insisted upon the inclusion of this clause, without which they would not have agreed to relinquish power in favour of a democratically elected non-racial government.²⁸ The TRC was therefore essentially a legal yet creative mechanism employed by the ANC led government to give effect to this burden of amnesty. The TRC officially released its findings on 29 October 1998. Its 40 pages of recommendations contained a variety of measures aimed at addressing the ‘huge and widening gap’ between rich and poor. It described this huge disparity in wealth as a “disturbing legacy of the past,

26 Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred Religion*, 194ff.

27 RSA (Republic of South Africa). 1998. *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report (forthwith TRC Report)*. Oxford: Macmillan Reference, 2.

28 Mamdani, *The Truth According to the TRC*, 176.

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that had not been reduced by the democratic process. It is morally reprehensible, politically dangerous and economically unsound to allow this to continue. Business has a particularly significant role to play in this regard". To help empower the poor, and to provide restitution to those who have suffered from the effects of apartheid discrimination, the commission recommended that the feasibility of the following measures be considered:

- The government was to accelerate the closing of the 'intolerable gap' between advantaged and disadvantaged communities.
- Those who benefited from apartheid should contribute to alleviate poverty.
- Ways should be sought of compensating those who suffered under apartheid.
- A wealth tax and once-off levy should be placed on corporate and private income.
- Companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange should make a one per cent donation of their market capitalisation.
- A retrospective surcharge should be placed on corporate profit extending back to a specific date.
- A surcharge should be placed on golden handshakes given to senior public servants since 1990.
- Suspension of tax should be implemented on all land occupied by previously disadvantaged communities.
- The business community should undertake a study of unused land, possibly making it available to landless people.

The TRC also referred to South Africa's massive foreign debt that it said was the responsibility of the previous government. It called for reconsideration of the repayment of capital and interest that was a crippling burden on the national fiscus. The report called on the Minister of Finance to investigate whether the Sasria fund contributed to by business during the apartheid years and could be used for reparation, reconstruction and development. The Sasria fund was special insurance for riots and political risk. In addition, the TRC recommended that the government convene a national Reconciliation Summit, that could lay the foundation for different communities to debate competing programmes of reconciliation.²⁹ But to what extent did the TRC indeed advance a strong concept of reconciliation?

According to Mamdani: "... the TRC's greatest achievement has been to discredit the apartheid regime in the eyes of its beneficiaries."³⁰ Its principal weakness was, firstly the fact that its findings were limited to being mere recommendations, most of which the government, financial corporations and white beneficiaries

29 TRC Report, 87-94.

30 Mamdani, *The Truth According to the TRC*, 183.

of apartheid have ignored. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, its major weakness lay in its over-eagerness to endorse the new political order. In so doing it spawned a compromised concept of reconciliation. In the words of Mamdani: "... by reinforcing a political compromise with a compromised truth, the TRC has turned a political compromise into a moral and intellectual compromise."³¹ The TRC did not directly address the structural violence and social inequalities that were inherent to the apartheid system. As a result, the TRC failed to address in any meaningful manner the unjust economic legacy of apartheid that left "communities shattered, their families dispossessed, and their livelihoods destroyed. It was so preoccupied with a highly individualised notion of truth that it failed to focus on apartheid as a form of power and to underline the victimhood of the vast majority of South Africans."³² In this sense, the TRC acted mainly as a political instrument concerned with reinforcing a minimalist concept of peace. The TRC placed the question of social reconciliation low on its agenda and chose instead to focus its attention almost exclusively on the attainment of a political reconciliation between a tiny minority of state agents (perpetrators) and political activists (victims).

As a consequence, "The TRC defined over 20,000 South Africans as 'victims' of apartheid, leaving the vast majority in the proverbial cold". In the process, it "failed to build the groundwork for a social reconciliation".³³ To achieve this goal, the TRC needed "to impart a different kind of education to beneficiaries. It would have had to educate them of the link between wealth and power, by painting apartheid as a regime of violence that dispossessed the vast majority of means of livelihood, just as surely as it laid the basis for enriching a privileged minority".³⁴ Had the TRC embarked on such a vital social education process, it would have unequivocally pointed out to beneficiaries that they benefited from the apartheid system and had a moral responsibility to redress its consequences. In the absence of that education, the tragedy is that, even after the work of the TRC, the beneficiaries can still say: "We did not know about it!"³⁵ The unintended outcome of the TRC has been to drive a wedge between the beneficiaries and the victims of apartheid. In doing so, the TRC has failed to enhance a strong concept of reconciliation and thereby deepen the peace process in post-apartheid South Africa.

31 Ibid., 178.

32 Ibid., 180.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

Post-TRC and the struggle for economic justice

In 2016, two decades after the release of the TRC report, economic data indicated that black corporations now controlled 8.6 per cent of values at the Johannesburg stock exchange.³⁶ An even more striking statistic of the post-apartheid economic reality is that of the income distribution. In February of 1999, a survey done by Wharton Economic Forecasting Associates was released to the South African media. It revealed that the transition to democracy has mostly benefited a small black elite. According to this survey, the proportion of black households in the top 10 per cent of all South Africans increased from 9 per cent to 22 per cent. The richest blacks received an average 17 per cent increase in income, while the poorest 40 per cent of households suffered a fall in household income of around 21 per cent.³⁷ The above statistics go to the heart of the crisis of the reconciliation process in post-apartheid South Africa. There is a growing widening of the income gap and, therefore, class polarisation among Africans. Some argue that black economic empowerment is the route to achieve both redistribution and transformation. But does redistribution refer to individuals or classes of people? Then already a leading ANC and government leader and today the president of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, answered this question thus: “Economic empowerment is the mammoth task of delivering the majority of historically disadvantaged to a position of economic power”.³⁸ Both former Presidents Mandela and Mbeki are on record for attacking those in government positions who “betray the calling of the public service for enriching themselves”, as well as lamenting “the growing culture of entitlement”.³⁹

Two decades after the release of the TRC report, the official unemployment rate in South Africa stood at 29.3 per cent.⁴⁰ Natrass and Seekings have demonstrated that the rising burden of unemployment has almost entirely fallen on poor black South Africans.⁴¹ Du Toit estimates that among black Africans, the rate could be as high as 36.9 per cent.⁴² Additionally, the burden of unemployment exhibits a definite gender bias. By any definition, black women have higher rates of

36 Ben Turok. 1999. *Beyond the miracle. Development and Economy in South Africa: A Reader*. Cape Town: Fairshare, 122.

37 Howard Barrell, 2000. Democracy: Black elite benefit most. *Mail & Guardian*, 28 January. <https://bit.ly/39vp6hX> [Accessed February 2016].

38 Turok, *Beyond the miracle*, 119.

39 *Ibid.*, 118.

40 Pierre Du Toit. 2000. *South Africa: In Search of Post-Settlement Peace*. In: Darby and MacGinty, *The Management of Peace Processes*, 16-60. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780333993668_2

41 Natrass and Seekings, *Changing Patterns*, 45-49.

42 Du Toit, *South Africa: In Search of Post-Settlement Peace*, 42.

unemployment than men.⁴³ The social consequences of the unemployment crisis in post-apartheid South Africa have created an explosive context. Unemployment has exacerbated the already precarious inequality existing between whites and blacks. The resulting poverty has led to a proliferation of crime and violence in both urban as well as rural areas.⁴⁴ The urgency of the economic crisis and its devastating social consequences forced the Mandela government to organise a presidential jobs summit, ironically during the same month that the TRC released its report. In October 1998, government, business and trade unions met to identify impediments to job creation. Two decades later, the unemployment rate has continued to rise.

It is not a coincidence that the South African economy is facing its worst unemployment crisis, at the same time that the post-apartheid government is pursuing a strategy of rapid integration into the global economy. With the termination of trade sanctions and the liberalisation of its trade markets, global forces began to exert pressures, that widen the wage distribution.⁴⁵ Government policies that seek to accommodate these trends result in even higher levels of unemployment. Additionally, the new government has tried to carefully follow the structural adjustment programmes prescribed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).⁴⁶ The overarching priority of the structural adjustment programme of the IMF is to seek a reduction in inflation levels. Under this policy prescription, there is a drive to streamline government and capitalist businesses, improve productivity, moderate wages, and introduce a high degree of market competition. In pursuit of lower inflation rates, the South African Reserve Bank has followed a strict monetary policy, that has resulted in high interest rates. All of this compromises and severely limit the state's capacity for job creation. Instead of transforming the structural inequalities it inherited from its apartheid past, the democratically elected ANC government has been preoccupied with establishing internal political stability and its international financial credentials. In 2016, South Africa's credit rating was graded just below junk status by big rating agencies, such as Moody's Investor Service. The expected surge in foreign investment that would improve the long-isolated economy did not arrive – a sobering lesson in the limitations of the macroeconomic policies championed by the post-apartheid government.

43 Cf. Guy Standing, John Sender and John Weeks. 1996. *Restructuring the labour market: The South African challenge. An ILO Country Review*. Geneva: International Labour Office.

44 Du Toit, *South Africa: In Search of Post-Settlement Peace*, 34, 37.

45 Natrass and Seekings, *Changing Patterns*, 46.

46 Cf. IMF (International Monetary Fund). 1998. *South African Economy: Selected Issues*. Country Report No. 98/96, 5 October 1998. <https://bit.ly/2yh4xZF> [Accessed 11 March 2016]. <https://doi.org/10.5089/9781451840940.002>

The lesson of the TRC

Mamdani has convincingly demonstrated that the major failure of the TRC process was its unwillingness to build the ground for social reconciliation. In so doing it missed a unique opportunity to authorise a model for redistributive justice in which compassion rather than violent expropriation of the property of apartheid beneficiaries predominated.⁴⁷ Even after eliminating all of the apartheid legislation, the new democratic South African government was left with a legacy of racism and widespread inequality between white and black. The critical challenge facing the peace process in South Africa is to find the most compassionate route for redistributing power and wealth and healing the society from centuries of racist socialisation. The TRC neglected to make this an essential part of its reconciliation agenda. The negative consequences of this failure are evident in the day-to-day life of contemporary South Africa. Mamdani prophetically reflects the experience of the TRC as one of pondering a harsher truth that it may be easier to live with apartheid beneficiaries whose gains remain intact.

The lesson of the TRC may hold, especially for peace processes where there exist vast inequalities in wealth and power between the two contending parties. In this respect, the conclusions of this paper call into question the findings of a comparative study of peace processes by Darby and MacGinty (2000). They have found that relatively speaking “economic factors appear to have the lowest influence on the success or failure of a peace process”. Such a position may hold only if one’s definition of the peace process is technocratic and extends from the period of the commencement of negotiations to the conclusion of a formal settlement. It will, however, be untenable if the definition of a peace process includes post-settlement peacebuilding. Ironically, Darby and MacGinty support the position taken in this chapter by proposing that one of the weaknesses of contemporary peace processes “is that the ending of violence often carries a peace deficit rather than a peace dividend”.⁴⁸ They also acknowledge that the inability of the post-settlement governments, and in this case the democratic South African government to either deliver economic regeneration or greater social equality, is contributing to a sense of disillusionment with the reconciliation process itself.⁴⁹

47 Mamdani, *The Truth According to the TRC*, 181.

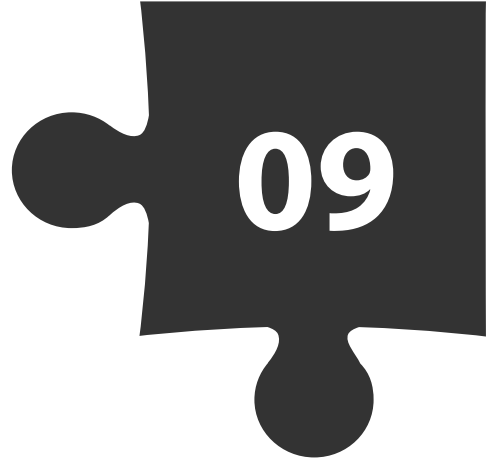
48 Darby and MacGinty, *The Management of Peace Processes*, 13.

49 *Ibid.*, 13.

Conclusion

The political scientist, Peter Walshe, epitomises the challenge for strong reconciliation in South Africa in the following observation he made even before the formal constitution of the TRC: "... reconciliation is measured by the development of the poor".⁵⁰ This chapter has demonstrated employing an Islamic concept of strong reconciliation and using the South African reconciliation process as a case in point that especially in situations where structural violence is endemic, the attainment of strong reconciliation depends on the peace process going beyond a political settlement. It needs to alleviate and ultimately eliminate both the causes as well as the legacy of structural violence and address the structural and institutional legacy of racism and inequality. In short, post-settlement peacebuilding demands a strong concept of reconciliation in which subjective processes such as forgiveness and the healing of memories are combined with a comparable commitment to socio-economic justice. Ultimately, South Africa's reconciliation should be judged by how it deals with its weaker and poorer members of society.

50 Cf. Peter Walshe. 1995. *Prophetic Christianity and the Liberation Movement in South Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 188-190.



Creating space for truth

Reconciliation Studies and the 2014 TRC re-enactment

*Martin Leiner*¹

Introduction

Before engaging in scientific analysis and critical reflections, I would like to start with a personal statement: The days in October 2014 in Stellenbosch, as well as the preparatory meeting in February, have been part of the most impressive and inspiring times in my entire life. The preparatory meeting in February gathered many experts on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) from South Africa,² some international guests like Ralf Wüstenberg³ and me from Germany, as well as the co-organiser of the re-enactment, Mpho Tutu on behalf of the Desmond and Leah Tutu

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 - 2 See Chapter 3, by Christo Thesnaar and Len Hansen in this volume.
 - 3 Prof Dr Ralf K Wüstenberg is Chair of Systematic and Historical Theology at the European University Flensburg. His habilitation was a comparison between the South African TRC and the Enquête-Commission of the German Parliament after the GDR. This work is published in German: Ralf K Wüstenberg. 2004. *Die politische Dimension der Versöhnung. Eine systematisch-theologische Studie zum Umgang mit Schuld nach den Systemumbrüchen in Südafrika und Deutschland. Öffentliche Theologie, 18*. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus; a shorter English version is published as Ralf K Wüstenberg. 2009. *The Political Dimension of Reconciliation in South Africa and Germany*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Legacy Foundation. The preparatory meeting familiarised the international guests with the actual challenges of reconciliation in faith communities and discussed issues such as how to successfully bring all important actors to attend the meeting. I admired the inclusive and welcoming approach and the deep theological reflections during the meeting when they discussed questions, such as: What is the glory of God? Would a gathering of Christian churches alone not be against the spirit of the TRC? During the preparatory meeting as during the re-enactment, I could participate in the South African way of approaching reconciliation, to reflect on it, integrate it into communication and planning and put it into action. Until today, I consider those two visits in 2014 as a deep and lasting experience that left their imprint on my life as well as on my research.

Walking through Stellenbosch one October evening, I received the clear insight and deep conviction that reconciliation is not just one topic of Christian ethics or one element in a transitional process, but it is ‘the’ thing, ‘the’ goal I have to search for and strive for in all themes within ethics, in all social relationships, in all political problems. After that moment, the question of reconciliation was again highly interesting and relevant to me, as it has been for many theologians and philosophers before me. It was the German philosopher Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel, whose entire philosophical system was built on reconciliation and whom, until October 2014, I had considered to be too far from twenty-first century scientific approaches.⁴ And, it was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who in the fragment of his *Ethics* on “The Love of God and the Decay of the World” had written:

Now anyone who reads the New Testament even superficially cannot but notice the complete absence of this world of dis-union, conflict and ethical problems. Not man’s falling apart from God, from men, from things and himself, but rather the rediscovered unity, reconciliation, is now the basis of the discussion and the “point of decision of the specifically ethical experience”. The life and activity of men are not at all problematic or tormented or dark: it is self-evident, joyful, sure and clear.⁵

In Bonhoeffer, I found, at least *in nuce*, an approach that puts reconciliation first, that makes reconciliation a ‘reality’ and not simply a goal or foundational ideal of ethics.

4 Cf. Michael O. Hardimon. 1994. *Hegel’s Social Philosophy. The Project of Reconciliation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Erzsébet Rózsa. 2005. *Versöhnung und System. Zu Grundmotiven von Hegels praktischer Philosophie*. München: Wilhelm Fink.

5 Dietrich Bonhoeffer. 1995. *Ethics*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 30. Cf. Dietrich Bonhoeffer. 2015. *Ethik. Dietrich Bonhoeffers Werke*, 6, Sonderausgabe. Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 311. See also: Marti Leiner. 2015. *Kreuzestheologie und Versöhnung*. In: Seoul Theological University (ed.), *The 2015 Seoul Theological University Spring Academic Conference*. Seoul: Seoul University, 16-24.

In 2014, when I attended the TRC consultation, I have been working for more than five years on research projects and Summer Schools on reconciliation. In 2012, in a programmatic article, I identified the principles of research on reconciliation.⁶ These principles, I believe, remain important even today, even though, I wish to add, that the universal approach to reconciliation became apparent from the TRC consultation. It is the ‘thing’ to be looked for wherever one can. Before I start my analysis of the TRC re-enactment, it may be useful to reflect, shortly, on the Jena approach, as it will be from this perspective that I will describe the re-enactment.

The Jena perspective on Reconciliation Studies

Reconciliation in the political sphere can be defined, in a broader sense, as every step taken toward the re-establishment of good or, at least, toward a normal relationship after atrocities were committed such as war, civil war, genocide and gross human rights violations that characterised, for example, slavery and apartheid. In a narrower sense, reconciliation means the re-establishment of good relationships that includes serious attempts at working through past events, apologising for misdeeds, forgiving, achieving justice, paying reparations and replacing a culture of mistrust and hatred with one of peace and understanding. This perspective includes the awareness of situations where reconciliation is possible only in a broader sense. Nevertheless, it should be reconciliation in a narrower sense that should be the goal.

The Jena perspective starts from the observation that, in Peace Studies, following a phase of resolutely innovative and multidisciplinary-skilled founding fathers and mothers (such as Johan Galtung, Dieter Senghaas or Alva Myrdal), a phase of disciplinary specialisation, the third phase of transdisciplinary integration has begun. Therefore, ‘transdisciplinarity’ is the first characteristic of the Jena Approach. What exactly does this mean?

Transdisciplinarity combines three insights: firstly, to understand a complex topic such as reconciliation, contributions by many disciplines are needed. Indeed, many disciplines bear a high potential for Reconciliation Studies. Among these disciplines are Arts, Communication, Cultural Anthropology, Diplomacy, Economics, Education, Ethics, History, Law, Linguistics, Media Science, Medicine, Neurosciences, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Theatre, Theology, Regional Studies, Religious

6 Cf. Susan Flämig and Martin Leiner. 2012. Reconciliation in the Middle of Dispute. Introduction to the Series. In: S Flämig and M Leiner (eds.), *Latin America between Conflict and Reconciliation*, 1. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 7-19.

Studies, Rhetoric, Security Technology and Urbanism. There are other disciplines as well that may prove to be relevant for reconciliation studies.⁷

Secondly, it is not enough to exchange questions and results at the crossroads of diverse disciplines. Rather, one needs to delve into another discipline's presuppositions, its inner structure, its methods and its ways of creating knowledge, as well as into its limits. Only by doing that may one find a complete picture of complex processes such as reconciliation.

Thirdly, the cooperation of all those disciplines should be directed at a common practical goal: to find better ways toward reconciliation and to understand how reconciliation works or fails. In a context where there exists so much knowledge on how conflicts break out and how they can be won by violent means, we need more knowledge about how reconciliation can be achieved. However, Reconciliation Studies start from a disadvantaged position, since violent ways of ending conflict are rewarded through media attention and money spent on weapons and military. Reconciliation, on the other hand, has to be achieved with much less attention and fewer financial resources. Transdisciplinarity tries to strengthen the hand of reconciliation in this unfair competition.

The second characteristic of the Jena approach to Reconciliation Studies is its 'comparative approach'. We believe that every process of reconciliation is unique. What works in South Africa does not necessarily work in South America; what works in Germany does not necessarily work in Austria. Nevertheless, one may learn much from similar processes of reconciliation worldwide. Even experiences in distant places and times may inspire and offer insights into possible mistakes. Only through comparison, we may hope to find some universal principles of reconciliation.

In many studies, particularly in the sphere of political 'realism', 'hard facts' such as borders, weapons, laws and economic strength, are greatly valued. Scholars sometimes more or less underestimate cultural and psychological realities, such as ideologies, the effects of media, national traditions, myths and symbols, or group identities. The Jena Center for Reconciliation Studies (JCRS) tries to strengthen that approach with a 'media and symbol-oriented perspective'. Cultural and psychological realities often are decisive in how conflict evolves.

7 To give just one example, archaeology is not needed in all conflicts, but in the case of disputes on the Haram As-Sharif (Temple Mount) in Jerusalem it may be a necessary part of peace negotiations.

The most well-known element of the Jena approach to Reconciliation Studies is the so-called ‘Hölderlin Perspective’. The name is a reference to German poet Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843). At the end of his novel, *Hyperion* he wrote that “Versöhnung ist mitten im Streit und alles Getrennte findet sich wieder (Reconciliation is in the midst of strife and everything separate is rediscovered).”⁸ The Hölderlin approach is directed against a common view that sees reconciliation only as post-conflict reconciliation. No conflict would end if, in the middle of the conflict, some people would not start with negotiations and with reconciliation. No rule says that wars, for example, must be fought until the end. Internal and external actors, who want to end them can end them. To give two examples: In 2003 the Liberian civil war, led by a violent rebel group called Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) against the dictator Charles Taylor, was ended by internal protests of women’s groups. Also, International Track II diplomacy facilitated by the Sant’Egidio Community in Rome ended civil wars, such as between Renamo and Frelimo in Mozambique, in 1992.

The Hölderlin Perspective is deeply rooted in the New Testament. Jürgen Moltmann describes it in his *Ethik der Hoffnung* (Ethics of Hope):

According to Ephesians 2 and Colossians 1, through Christ’s giving of himself God has created ‘peace’ between Gentiles and Jews, since he ‘brings the hostility to an end’ through himself⁹ and proclaims peace to those who were near and those who were far off. In the Epistle to the Colossians, the cosmic dimension is added to this concrete peace between Jews and gentiles, since through Christ God ‘has reconciled to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross’.¹⁰ In the human dimension as well as in the cosmic one, it is important to perceive that God has already made peace; so for human beings, the one thing necessary is to perceive and accept what is objectively already existent *sub specie aeternitatis*, whether in human conflicts or the cosmos. ‘God was in Christ and reconciled the cosmos with himself’,¹¹ the ‘peace in the midst of strife’. In the depths of the paralysing and often deadly conflicts between the peoples, this *divine peace* [Moltmann’s italics] already reigns. In the divine depths of the universe, everything is already reconciled.¹² [My translation – ML]

8 Michael Knaupp (ed.) and Friedrich Hölderlin. 1992. *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, 1. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 760: “There’s reconciliation in the middle of strife, and all that’s apart comes together again.”

9 Eph. 2:16.

10 Eph. 1:20.

11 2 Cor. 5:19.

12 Cf. German original: Jürgen Moltmann. 2010. *Ethik der Hoffnung*. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlag, 265.

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For the view of Paul and the authors of Colossians and Ephesians, reconciliation is always already a reality; it must only be accepted and presupposed like a house we can inhabit. Never in a conflict is there 100 per cent war and violence – there are always elements of peace present.

On the other hand, to say that reconciliation occurs in the middle of the dispute, also means that in this world, there is never 100 per cent peace. There are always conflicts and the possibility of violence. Reconciliation is a long-term process that requires the will to overcome resistance and challenging times. It needs a willingness to be patient and to continue acting for reconciliation during an extended period. In combination with what our partner from Tel Aviv University, psychologist Arie Nadler, has developed as the needs-based model of reconciliation, the Hölderlin Perspective involves the acknowledgement that the needs of people in the process of reconciliation must be respected. According to the pyramid of needs of Abraham Maslow, this especially pertains to basic needs – food security, medical care, houses and also security in a general way. Often people favouring reconciliation maintain some critical distance to the idea that investment in security can be an essential part of a successful reconciliation process.

In many cases, this is important. Usually, one precondition is a successful reform of the police, necessary because the police are often deeply involved in the perpetration of violence and, as such, to the perpetuation of violent and discriminatory attitudes. Moreover, one must also consider that there must be dealt with the number of weapons in a context of violence, the feeling of anomia after system changes, normal criminal activity and violent spoilers of the reconciliation process.

The above implies that reconciliation is not a state, but an almost never-ending process. Understood this way, reconciliation is an unfinishable passion. Therefore, some spirituality, even atheistic spirituality or existentialist spirituality in the way Albert Camus, in his *Myths of Sisyphos*, described it, is probably needed for continuous efforts towards reconciliation. As the world is not repairable in the sense that people killed cannot come back to life and stolen time through imprisonment cannot be given back, no reconciliation process can be successful unless it addresses religion in the sense of dealing with the unresolvable. The commitment to a specific religion can help to motivate persistent engagement for reconciliation. Indeed, every religion is a great resource of inspiration for reconciliation.

‘Universal and deep reconciliation’ is the fifth specific element in the Jena approach. As described above, the re-enactment of the TRC in 2014 inspired it. First, it means that reconciliation is not a system of knowledge and methods

to be applied. It is a heuristic term: To do reconciliation research is to search for reconciliation everywhere, to dig below the surface to find the reality and possibilities of reconciliation. One must always try to get to the narrower sense of reconciliation. As already underlined in the comparative approach, no context is identical to another. If something works in one place, it is not guaranteed that it will work in another area as well.

Nevertheless, we should not shy away from bringing knowledge gained in an analogous situation in the search for deeper reconciliation everywhere. Wherever one looks, one should ask whether there exists reconciliation and not how it may change ‘if’ reconciliation would become more of a reality. The following may serve as guidelines:

- a) In a concrete conflict or reconciliation process, we ask: Is there a multiparty approach that integrates everybody and his or her needs? Is the mediator perhaps slightly biased towards one side or the other, or is he/she entirely committed to being pro-peace, pro-people and pro-reconciliation? These questions are often helpful to analyse situations where one party is only talking on behalf of other parties in the conflict or deciding on their behalf without taking into consideration their explicit points of view and their needs. At best, such a behaviour can be described as paternalistic, based on the wish to do good to others, while in reality, misunderstanding the others’ needs. At worst, non-multiparty approaches to conflict work with negative stereotypes and demonise absent others, who are often fuelled by fear, anger and hatred propagated by incorrect versions of history. An example for the paternalistic approach today is the many administrations that deal with indigenous populations, provided houses they do not want in regions they do not want to live in¹³ and/or who are used as the exhibition pieces in a living ethnological museum.¹⁴ Too seldom the long way is taken that requires listening to them individually, recognising them in an encouraging atmosphere and allowing them to find their voice to express their needs and their will.¹⁵ An actual example of demonising and propaganda based on false historical facts is how many Israelis and Palestinians see each other – especially those who had been excluded from the negotiation table.¹⁶
- b) After a violent conflict, one should ask one key question on memory policy: Does the history at exhibitions, in political speeches on memorial days and

13 One actual example of that is the State of Israel that provided houses for Bedouins, that only a minority accepted.

14 The Native American Reservations in the US and the Indian Reserves in Canada are the most studied examples for such a policy, but also in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Australia similar phenomena are numerous.

15 This is one point where reconciliation theory connects with postcolonial theorists. Cf. Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak. 1988. *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Basingstoke: Macmillan.

16 Cf. Zeina M Barakat. 2017. *From Heart of Stone to Heart of Flesh: Evolutionary Journey from extremism to moderation.* München: Herbert Utz.

history in school curricula include aspects of reconciliation or not? Many schoolbooks, political speeches and many exhibitions, many monuments and national myths contain no reference to reconciliation; they only tell stories of heroism, victimhood and superiority over the other. It will be crucial to overcome and to change those narratives to tell the entire truth.

- c) We also include questions like: Are there elements of unreconciled relationships in society and its institutions, in people's lives and their conditions and in their reality as a whole that directly impacts the reconciliation process? If people feel bad about the State and its institutions, if they suffer from poverty, unemployment and poor health conditions, or even if they think that life did not give them a fair deal, if they see their existence on the whole as something negative and lose faith in a sufficiently just and good world or in God's good creation,¹⁷ it will be difficult (yet, not impossible) to achieve reconciliation with a concrete partner. Therefore, reconciliation research should address those general questions, too. These questions seem to me, particularly timely for European and American countries as well where many people now vote for populist politicians who are expressing the generalised lack of satisfaction and inner peace. These politicians then direct these emotions towards oversimplified and damaging answers. Reconciliation in these cases will also imply a deeper understanding of the processes including the relationship between wealthy people and the rise of populism that directs possible criticism against the unjust distribution of wealth against scapegoats, such as refugees.

The TRC and its Faith Community Hearing in 1997

It is important to return to the original TRC itself, particularly to the Faith Communities' Hearings in East London, in 1997, to prepare an interpretation of the 2014 re-enactment in Stellenbosch. Comparative interpretation, as one central point of the Jena approach also includes the diachronic comparison between the original TRC Hearings and the re-enactment.

First of all, another comparative observation: since the 1980s, several commissions have had truth and reconciliation as a priority on their agenda. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, therefore, was not the first commission of its kind. In the 1980s in Latin American countries, such as El Salvador and Ecuador, instituted commissions to finding the truth of the past. In April 1990 in Chile, the

17 It is not surprising that Desmond Tutu underlined the created goodness of every human being and made that belief a part of his message of reconciliation: "You and I, too, are fundamentally good. We are tuned to the key of goodness. This is not to deny evil; it is to face evil squarely. And we can face evil because we know that evil will not have the last word ... To be hateful and mean is operating against our deepest yearnings that God placed in our hearts. Goodness is not just our impulse. It is our essence." Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tutu. 2010. *Made for Goodness. And Why This Makes All the Difference*. London: Rider, 5ff.

Comision Verdad y Reconciliacion (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the so-called Rettig Commission) started its work. Nevertheless, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission became the most famous commission and a model worldwide. Until today, for many, the South African TRC is ‘the’ TRC. Why is this the case? In my understanding, it is because the South Africa TRC had at least three unique characteristics that distinguished it:

- the public recognition that was given to victims;
- the popularity of the leading actors; and
- the extent and nature of social learning offered to South African society.

All three characteristics relate to truth. The South African TRC created the space for victims to speak the truth. Well-known and popular actors, such as Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, promoted the South African TRC and underlined the fact that truth could play a distinctive role in the reconciliation of the country. Because of the popularity of Mandela, Tutu and others, there was an openness in large parts of the South African society to listen to the truth. All these effects are also found in other TRCs that underlined the importance of truth but not on the same level as in South Africa’s case. In Chile, for example, the commission investigated human rights violations over a shorter period (nine months, from May 1990 to February 1991) than the South African TRC. The commission in Chile held 45 to 60 minutes hearings between family members of victims and two or three persons, usually a lawyer, a social worker and a law school graduate. These meetings took place without any public presence.¹⁸ Merely a summary of the meetings was ever published. Paul Rettig Guissen, the president of the commission and president of State Patricio Aylwin, had a specific, mostly national popularity, but never became world-renowned personalities like Mandela or Tutu. The entire Chilean TRC looked more like a preparatory gathering for legal action, not like a public ritual to recognise victims, to change society and to spread reconciliation. The social learning triggered by the Chilean society happened more in the legal court cases and the investigations necessitated by those legal actions than during the Rettig Commission. The investigations, done by Judge Juan Guzman, for example, received a lot of public attention, also through the documentary, *The Judge and the General* (2008). Guzman became a model of social learning, as a man who first did not believe the truth of the crime narratives and then, chosen by lot, became an investigator and changed his view on the Pinochet regime.

18 See United States Institute of Peace. 1991. *Report of the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation*. <https://bit.ly/2UwNCLm> [Accessed 1 March 2018].

The South African TRC, however, focused on the truth and discovered the truth as a changing moment in the life of individuals as well as in the history of the nation. Even the fact that legal proceedings were uncertain and, in some cases, even impossible, probably had positive effects on the discovery and the possibility of telling the truth. Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, in an interview with the German weekly, *Der Spiegel*, formulated it as follows: “Tribunals encourage people to deny their guilt. The TRC invites people to tell the truth. In court the guilty are punished, in the truth commission repentance is rewarded.”¹⁹ At tribunals, perpetrators are so threatened by the punishment that it is tough to consider them as safe spaces of freedom to tell the truth. But victims are also often put into threatening and traumatic situations by lawyers of the accused so that they usually do not feel free or safe to tell the truth. In such circumstances, to create spaces for the truth to be freely shared is not a simple challenge at all. “One of the most difficult things to do in life, for people and for nations, is to face the truth about the past.”²⁰ Christian faith underlines that being truthful and being able to speak the truth are exceptional situations. The normal state is that we are not connected with the truth and living in the truth; only by chance or – to use the more precise, but often religiously-connoted word – by grace, is the way paved for people to come into the truth and remain within it for a specific time. Again, according to Hölderlin, “Reconciliation is in the middle of strife ... truth is in the middle of a world of denying, lying, shying away and hiding from the truth.”

My main thesis, therefore, is: Even if there are many shortcomings regarding the South African TRC in terms of justice, implementation and incompleteness in addressing issues, the exceptional and probably most fundamental achievement of the South African TRC was creating a public space for truth telling and for listening to the truth, against the background of the need for reconciliation, recognition and forgiveness that would diminish fear and shame. The TRC also operated against a background of a ritual of acknowledgement and respect for the victims, who could feel secure that their testimonies were listened to respectfully.²¹

The centrality of truth was underlined in the statement: “The Truth will set You Free”, already made by the South African Council of Churches, in 1995:

19 See, Katja Thimm and Johann Grolle. 2006. Angst vor dem Geruch von Blut. *Der Spiegel*, 8 May.

20 Charity Mjiza. 1999. Hearing the Truth. In: J Cochrane, J de Gruchy and S Martin (eds.), *Facing the Truth. South African faith communities and the Truth & Reconciliation Commission*. Claremont, South Africa: David Philip, 167-169.

21 Cf. Martin Leiner. 2017. Beichte und Buße in Südafrikas Wahrheits- und Versöhnungskommission. *Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift*, 34, January:125-140.

The Commission for Truth and Reconciliation is not another Nuremberg. It turns its back on any desire for revenge. It represents an extraordinary act of generosity by a people who only insist that the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth be told. Space is thereby created where the deeper processes of forgiveness, confession, repentance, reparation and reconciliation can take place.²²

In many cases, Christian churches welcomed the focus of the TRC on truth and its openness to deeper processes of reconciliation. The churches that partook in the hearings also recognised their guilt as many of them played a role during the apartheid years. The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, NGK) was a crucial player in those years. In his *A Long Way to Freedom*, Nelson Mandela describes the relationship between it and the apartheid government as follows:

The premise of apartheid was that whites were superior to Africans, Coloured, and Indians, and the function of it was to entrench white supremacy forever. As the Nationalists put it: “Die wit man moet altyd baas wees” (The white man must always remain the master). Their platform rested on the term ‘baaskap’, literally boss-ship. A freighted word that stood for white supremacy in all its harshness. The policy was supported by the Dutch Reformed Church, which furnished apartheid with its religious underpinnings by suggesting that Afrikaner were God’s chosen people and that blacks were a subservient species. In the Afrikaner’s worldview, apartheid and the church went hand in hand.²³

Following a general principle in reconciliation research, those who contributed to a problem are required to play a role in its solution. Therefore, it is not surprising that the churches were requested to play an essential role in the TRC processes. As we have heard during this consultation, Mandela himself insisted that TRC commissioners should include representatives from the NGK community!

The Church hearings during the TRC’s work in 1997 took place in East London, Eastern Cape, from 17-19 November in a church building. Several faith communities from a variety of religious traditions made submissions²⁴ – African Traditionalists, African Churches, the Baha’i Faith, Buddhism, Catholicism, Islam, Judaism, Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity. Submissions also included those by many churches and church associations in the Protestant tradition, such as the Baptist Convention of South Africa, the Baptist Union of South Africa, the *Belydende Kring* (Confessing

22 South African Council of Churches. 1995. *The truth will set You Free*. Johannesburg: SACC, 24.

23 Nelson Mandela. 2013. *Long Walk to Freedom*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 111.

24 For a list of the submissions and the text of most of those submissions, see University of Cape Town. Department of Religious Studies. 2020. *Archive: TRC Faith Community Hearings: Submissions*. <https://bit.ly/2UF1N1d> [Accessed 9 March 2018].

Circle), the Church of England in South Africa, Church of the Province of South Africa, the NGK (DRC), Scripture Union and Seventh Day Adventist Church, also the South African Council of Churches, the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa and the United Methodist Church of South Africa. Unofficially represented, but present via individual testimonies was the Reformed Churches in South Africa (Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika, GKSA). A separate statement was presented by Ms Cathy P Makhenye, underlining the role of ‘women in religion’. The Research Institute on Christianity in South Africa (RICSA) at the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Cape Town prepared the meeting, leading to the RICSA Report²⁵ that summarised faith communities’ submissions, their experiences under apartheid; it critically analysed the discourse during the East London hearing, noticed shortcomings and developed ideas for a possible ‘road to reconciliation’²⁶ that included practical recommendations.

The RICSA Report includes interesting reflections on the understanding of reconciliation and finds three main understandings of reconciliation in the submissions, as well as in the discourse among South African churches:

- “Some of the faith communities still thought that reconciliation equalled members of different groups ‘getting together’.”²⁷
- For others, reconciliation cannot be less than this, but must necessarily include redressing justice and overcoming systemic economic inequality.
- For others, again, reconciliation is above all the confession of sins before God and humans, repentance and forgiveness.

If one wants to, one may call these three understandings of reconciliation:

1. ‘getting together’-reconciliation,
2. just-reconciliation, and
3. truth-confession-reconciliation.

The RICSA Report states that:

... a clarification of the meaning of the concept of reconciliation needs to take place within and between faith communities – but as a motivator, not as a substitute for action! The ambiguity of the term creates problems.²⁸

The RICSA Report suggests replacing the term ‘reconciliation’ with the concept of ‘healing’. That proposition seems to be the consequence of a lack of willingness

25 RICSA (Research Institute on Christianity in South Africa). 1999. *Faith communities and apartheid: the RICSA report* (forthwith The RICSA Report). In: J Cochrane, J de Gruchy and S Martin (eds.), 1999. *Facing the Truth: South African Faith Communities and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Cape Town: New Africa Books, 13-77.

26 This is the title of Chapter 4 of *The RICSA Report*.

27 *The RICSA Report*, 59.

28 *Ibid.*, 60.

to take a clear decision for an integral understanding of reconciliation as a long-term project that necessarily has truth, justice, togetherness and healing as its central topics. However, the RICSA report is not consequent in its use of the term ‘reconciliation’ when it uses the word ‘reconciliation’ as opposed to ‘truth’ and ‘justice’, for example:

The prioritising of reconciliation over truth and justice was evident in the panel’s weak response to the Dutch Reformed Church representation, where it seemed as if the DRC [NGK]’s attendance at the hearings was sufficient to confirm them on the path to reconciliation.²⁹

This way of using terminology has its roots in the 1980s when, still under apartheid, when the term of reconciliation was used and misused by the white government.³⁰

In addition to that, the report addressed the issue of non-Christian faith communities and the term ‘reconciliation’. During the preparations of the East London meeting, there were many accusations that the Commission would have a loaded Christian understanding of reconciliation. However, the RICSA-Report rightly observes that also the Christian Churches had, according to the three main understandings of reconciliation, even in details very different interpretations of the term. At least the Jewish Geshar movement, Faried Esack and the Muslim Judicial Council submitted elaborated understandings of reconciliation according to Judaism and Islam faith communities. The Islamic understanding of reconciliation, presented by Esack and the MJC in their presentations at the hearings, includes that of returning stolen property, resulting in an equalisation, the restoration of balance between victim and perpetrator. Interestingly, the understanding of the idea propounded by the ICT and some other Christian groups is closer to this than the understandings of more conservative Christian groups.

According to the RICSA Report, there were certain shortcomings of the East London Faith Community Hearing such as:

- Problems in acknowledging the role of women in the process. “It was unfortunate that a separate submission had to take place from a group representing women in religion – especially in the light of the role of women in the struggle demonstrated by the early testimonies to the Commission. [...] The speakers at the faith community hearings were mostly male. There was little mention of women as victims of oppression and abuse in the submissions of the faith communities, and as little of their agency in opposing apartheid.”³¹

29 Ibid., 67.

30 Cf. Thomas OH Kaiser. 1996. *Versöhnung in Gerechtigkeit. Das Konzept der Versöhnung und seine Kritik im Kontext Südafrika*. Neukirchen: Neukirchener.

31 Ibid., 73.

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- The lack in addressing the Christian Media, theological training institutions and also right-wing religious groups such as the Gospel Defence League and Frontline Fellowship. The Report also observed Christian domination of the TRC-process. “The result of all that. Added to the overwhelming Christian ethos of the hearings, few Muslim will be able to ‘own’ the process.”³²

Two main challenges reappear in the RICSA Report: economic justice and the implementation of reconciliation in the entire communities. Unlike at the Stellenbosch re-enactment, the concrete issue of land ownership of churches,³³ questions of a wealth tax,³⁴ “the project of a Jubilee year 2000 where debts are cancelled, the land is returned, and equalisation of resources takes place”,³⁵ and the issue of reparations between churches³⁶ played an important role, at least in the report. Nico Smith’s letter of confession underlined the problem of implementation. Smith had sent a letter to pastors (12 000) across South Africa, allowing them to sign a confession of complicity in apartheid. Only 396 responded with signatures. The RICSA Report commented on that: “We have little conclusive proof that the faith communities – and especially the Churches – are serious in their commitments to owning the past and moving ahead into the future.”³⁷ The main challenge remained reconciliation in many parishes and between members of churches. Smith’s experience shows that in South Africa, in 1997, one still had a situation where reconciliation was a small element in the middle of a frozen conflict that may have escalated into violence quickly.

The RICSA Report made seven recommendations:

1. Faith communities shall initiate their own processes of healing on the local, but also an interreligious level.
2. That process should integrate the entire life.
3. Institutional and denominational splits shall be overcome.
4. Reparations.
5. Create a safe space of trust for the articulation of pain and lament.
6. A biannual meeting, such as the *Kirchentag* in Germany, should be introduced.
7. Religious leaders shall take the lead in the construction of new values for society as a whole, according to Mandela’s and Mbeki’s call.

The Jena approach complements the second recommendation: “... to integrate the entire life into reconciliation”. The RICSA Report intended that the whole of

32 Ibid., 67.

33 Ibid., 62.

34 Ibid., 65.

35 Ibid., 74.

36 Ibid., 74ff.

37 Ibid., 72.

society be healed. One of the central questions posed at the 2014 re-enactment at Stellenbosch was: “Has South African faith communities come closer to this goal?”

The 2014 re-enactment of TRC

On 8 and 9 October 2014, the following faith communities made submissions: the Anglican Church of South Africa, the Methodist Church of South Africa, the Catholic Church, the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, the NGK, the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, the GKSA, the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa (TEASA), the South African Council of Churches (SACC), the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa, the Muslim Traditional Council, the South African Tamil Federation, the Maha Sabha and the South African Jewish Voices for a Just Peace. The NHK presented an unofficial report. The meeting ended with witnesses’ comments, the singing of the South African National Anthem and a benediction in Afrikaans.

The most remarkable achievement during the 2014 re-enactment was the space for the truth that the faith communities used. Some used it more, others less, but there had been astonishing statements of self-criticism. There were moments where people opened their hearts and expressed their deepest feelings. During many presentations, one did not hear the usual institution-protecting discourse, many church leaders often adopt. It was a shared, dialogical journey towards deepening of the desire for change that was, at least, present in some of the interventions. In Europe, we have rarely experienced similar discourses in meetings of faith communities. When the Human Rights Commission of the TRC created an innovative ritual of recognition of victims,³⁸ the Faith Communities' Hearings created a new type of meeting of faith communities, united by a long-term process of reconciliation, reporting on what had been done and reflecting on shortcomings and tasks to fulfil. Discourse analysis will show, that the 2014 TRC re-enactment was not dominated by discourses that defended interests or tried to push agendas. Both types of discourses were present, but a self-critical, reflective and open attitude dominated the presentations. Unflattering details were addressed directly. Those dialogical and public hearings created a space for the truth and, by doing so, created pathways for transformation. It is my plea that such meetings were also introduced in faith community meetings themselves and, if possible, in faculty meetings, too – in Germany and across the world.

38 See Martin Leiner. 2017. Beichte und Buße in Südafrikas Wahrheits- und Versöhnungskommission. *Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift*, 34(1):124-140.

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I wish to focus on two examples among the submissions: those by the Methodist Church of Southern Africa and the NHK. For the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Bishop Ziphosile Siwa apologised, since he could not attend. However, Reverend Vuyani Nyobole and Dr Dion Forster, Lecturer in Systematic Theology at Stellenbosch, represented the church. Nyobole started by reminding delegates of the East London TRC hearings of 1997 and spoke about the “unfinished business of the TRC”. This fortunate term could become the main trigger for self-critical reflection and activity for all faith communities in South Africa. To set the unfinished business of the TRC on the agenda also has the advantage of reminding South Africans of promises made in 1997 and it will also reply to unfair criticism of the TRC, claiming it had been a failure. It underlines a point of view I also would adopt instead of focusing on the shortcomings of TRC. The main failure was, namely, not the TRC hearing itself, but the lack of implementation! A lot was said about reparation and justice in the TRC’s recommendations, but very few of these translated into action. Nyobole underlined that the Methodist Church of Southern Africa had been adamant on the issue of the confession of guilt, even before the TRC process. However, “We as a church made many reflections which are reflected in our minutes of Conference and other documents within the church, but we’ve not actually lived up to those,” he said. Rev. Nyobole also expressly pleaded for attending to the unfinished business of the TRC, namely:

- Reparation and restitution for victims.
- Reconciliation as recognition and healing of victims was not practised enough. The founding act of the TRC “emphasised more on truth than on reconciliation”, but reconciliation and therapeutic effects happened during the hearings. Reconciliation, therapy of victims, and listening to them would be a task that faith communities should grasp as their task.
- The churches could not do enough guarding against the moral decay of the society (e.g. corruption in the government).

After Rev Nyobole, Dr Foster added further examples of the unfinished business of the TRC:

- “Very many of our churches have lost touch with a people’s theology.”
- After the TRC, there had been an unfortunate breakdown of relationships between Christian Churches and non-Christian faith communities.

In Foster’s view, South Africa is “not living in a post-apartheid era”, because only laws, ‘nothing’ in society has changed.

After the above submissions, Archbishop Tutu jokingly remarked that it was because of that that he was glad about the moment of his retirement!

In her response to the submissions on behalf of the Methodist Church, commissioners Wildschut and Mkhize underlined the importance of the points made. Mkhize added issues of truth and human rights that are still not resolved. With their answers, the commissioners also underlined the positive efforts the Methodist Church has made to advance the TRC process but also highlighted concrete problems of communication between church members, who were victims of violence and official representatives and who joined initiatives to advocate releases from prison for perpetrators. At the end of the session, Rev Nyobole referred again to the second unfinished point of business of the TRC by saying: “We always have a vision as the church of making every local church a centre of healing and transformation within the local context. Because if it doesn’t happen within the local context, it can’t be imposed.” He also asked for a deeper engagement of the Methodist Church concerning issues of education in creating leaders with high moral standards.

For discourse analysis, it is remarkable that the two representatives of the Methodist church were almost more critical of their Church than the commissioners were. Wildschut, Mkhize and Meiring reminded the audience of the Methodist Church’s role in interfaith activities, in education and efforts toward healing and reparation. Only after being questioned did the church representatives talk about their activities and the vision of the church.

Comparing the agenda set by the representatives of the Methodist Church with the RICSA Report, one may mostly find that the same criticism – justice issues, such as reparations, moral decay, interfaith cooperation and healing on the local level, had been highlighted in 1997 already. However, there was much less attention to gender issues, also absent from the submissions on behalf of the Methodist Church and mostly absent in the other submissions and statements. Was this because things have changed for the better? It seems not, since the representatives of the faith communities at the re-enactment were predominantly male. To my knowledge, the only exception were the representatives of the Hindu community, the SACC, URCSA and TEASA. The speakers from the audience, who spoke in the afternoon of the last day and who had been asked by the organisers to add their points of views and observations, had more women’s voices. Among the commissioners themselves, present at Stellenbosch, were more women than men. Therefore, it seemed obvious that the organisers of the 2014 re-enactment wished for more gender-equality in the discussions, but South African faith communities continued to rarely choose female representatives or church leaders, let alone bishops.

Most of those representing the faith communities at the re-enactment were predominantly older men, representing the exclusive gender profile of the leaders of the faith communities. This meant that the voices and narratives of the present generation, especially women, were primarily absent or silent.³⁹

Probably the most emotional moment during the 2014 re-enactment was the submission by Rev E.G. Fourie from the Dutch Reformed Church of Africa (Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika, NHK), a small church group with about 100 000 members. In 1982, together with the much bigger NGK, the membership of the NHK in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) was suspended because of their support of apartheid. Rev Fourie referred to a pastoral letter of his church from 1973, where “apartheid has been described as the only honest and Christian policy that would prevent the domination of one group by another”.

Even in 2014, the NHK was not ready to send Rev Fourie or another person in an official capacity to represent it. Fourie made it clear that he does not officially speak on behalf of the NHK. He highlighted this from the beginning:

I am very sad that I am here in my personal capacity. I am very sad that my church chose not to send ... make a delegation official. I am very sad that my church chose not to make a written submission, even being asked.

Rev Fourie described the long journey his church had to go on to reject apartheid in the sphere of church and politics. That rejection was one of the requirements from the WARC in 2004 for the NHK to re-join. In 2010, a resolution was adopted that declared, “The church rejects the approval of apartheid because it is contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ; it is based on [the] idea [of] mutual irreconcilability; defends injustice; harms the image of God in human beings.” The General Assembly accepted the resolution with a 57 per cent majority, but 100 people protested and formed the group, *Die Steeds Hervormdes* (The Still-Reformed), becoming the base for about 30 congregations with about 5 000 members to break away from the NHK. Rev Fourie concluded by saying:

My Church, when it comes to reconciliation, is in the slow class. Today we refer to it as ‘special needs classes’. My Church has special needs:

- For our past, for our pronouncements in the past, we have a special need for forgiveness.
- For the delicate times we find ourselves in, we have a special need for understanding.

39 Christo Thesnaar. 2018. Alternative and Innovative Approaches to Reconciliation: A South African Perspective. In: M Leiner and C Schließer (eds.). *Alternative Approaches in Conflict Resolution*. London: Palgrave, 125-136. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-58359-4_12

- For the difficult times that lie ahead, we have a special need for support.
- For the challenges ... the opportunities that lie ahead of our Church – and we are a church of Africa as well. It says in our name we are the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk of Afrika – we are also going nowhere. For the challenges that lie ahead, we have a special need for embracement.

Please embrace my church on the way forward. We are late bloomers. We need your support. I thank you.

After that submission, the public answered with a standing ovation. Several people came to stand next to Fourie. Archbishop Tutu walked over to embrace him as he finished his submission with tears in his eyes.

Commissioner Piet Meiring commented on that very emotional scene, by saying: “We are so grateful that you shared your heart – the experience of the Church – with you, with us. Thank you, thank you for coming to us.”

The rhetorical beauty of the last passage in Rev Fourie’s submission might seem somehow contradictory to the authentic speaking from his heart. However, the scene was received by those present as coming from somebody who spoke the truth on an intense and challenging issue. Rev Fourie did not defend his Church. He was far from the self-presentations of churches that defended themselves against criticism. He could have told a story of a church that achieved change, condemned apartheid that accepted the breakaway of some five per cent of its members and should be acclaimed for its courage. However, Rev Fourie did not; he underlined the weakness of his Church and the special needs it has.

Fourie’s presentation, therefore, is the most impressive example that the 2014 TRC re-enactment created a space for truth. As in 1997, the East London Faith Community Hearing was a social innovation, a different form of common assessment of organisations, far more open to truth and self-criticism than what people normally experience.

Comparing 2014 with 1997, the NHK was not present at all in 1997. However, there was a nonofficial statement by proffs Amie van Wyk, Bennie van der Walt and Ponti Venter, all lecturing at the University of Potchefstroom from the GKSA that, in more than one aspect, paralleled the testimony by Rev Fourie. Their statement started by saying:

We first want to express our sincere and greatest gratitude for this opportunity, Your Grace, Mr Chairman, especially for the two Afrikaners who are very ashamed of your own past and also what we are submitting here, is in great humility ... We are also members of the Reformed Church of South Africa and therefore we are here in our individual capacities and

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not officially representing either our Church, or the institution we work for. We therefore cannot speak on behalf of either the Church or the university and I must say we are sad that our own Church is missing the opportunity of this occasion where we have learnt a lot and which have encouraged us to continue on the way ahead.⁴⁰

Like Rev Fourie, the GKSA professors referred to a declaration of guilt, in that case, a product of a small group. They acknowledge that they did not suffer, but benefitted from apartheid. They also made an interesting claim:

The question then is, what is the correct relationship? Ideas about an independent prophetic role has been mentioned here. I think it is not enough. I think and that is only one suggestion that we have to work out a comprehensive philosophy of society in which we concretise God's central love commandment so that we can see that justice is the form of love we need in political life.

That broad, philosophical perspective was more or less absent from the 2014 re-enactment. On the other hand, there was not nearly such a clear expression of the weakness of the NGK in East Landon as at the Stellenbosch meeting.

Final remarks

The fact that the re-enactment happened was a huge success, improved only by the fact that so many faith communities participated, including official representation of the Dutch Reformed Church, the GKSA and the NHK at least by one pastor each, and the three Lutheran Churches by their three bishops. There was energy, as well as trust and respect towards commissioners and towards submissions. Interfaith cooperation persisted, and the quest for theology from below continued to inspire some of the churches.

The RICSA Report concluded by saying: "Will the communities who were eloquent in their commitments to reconstruction and development follow through on these commitments? Or will they simply be a matter of record and nothing else?"⁴¹ Earlier in the report, it stated: "After all, there is one lesson from observing faith communities in South African history (as many of them admitted) it is that words are easy and accomplish little when not backed up with action."⁴²

40 Quoted from Alwyn du Plessis, Bennie van der Walt, Amie van Wyk and Ponti Venter. 1997. 'n Openbare Belydenis (Uit Potchefstroom)/An Open Confession from Potchefstroom. In: University of Cape Town. Department of Religious Studies. 2020. *Archive: TRC Faith Community Hearings: Submissions*. <https://bit.ly/3dKiakr> [Accessed 23 March 2018].

41 *The RICSA Report*, 77.

42 *Ibid.*, 72.

With respect to that implementation, the 2014 re-enactment could not report that much had been done since 1998. Inertia seemed to be very strong in faith communities in general. On issues like restitution of property, reparation, justice, as well as on unification of churches, the results of the activities since the 1990s are rather disappointing.

On the issue of gender in the leadership in faith communities, not much progress was made either. Christo Thesnaar calls it, “the apathy of the faith communities towards the process of healing and reconciliation after the TRC ended.”⁴³ Nevertheless, at least three very positive things can be recorded:

1. All new things are created through concentration. ‘Scenes of common attention’ (Michael Tomasello) are the basis of specific human innovations in thinking as well as in ethics, religion and aesthetics. The TRC consisted of such scenes of intense joint attention. Thus, the TRC faith hearings created a social innovation: Like in 1997, and even more in 2014, they provided a favourable setting and created the space for truth-telling and a self-critical evaluation of representatives of churches.
2. Innovation cannot be forgotten, and it probably will not be either, because the innovation experienced so impressed all and because there is still a lot of energy toward it that should be used in future for further meetings. Why not organise a TRC re-enactment exclusively attended by women?
3. Speaking about ‘unfinished business of the TRC’, the re-enactment answered questions regarding one of the most unfortunate developments in South African society: The increasing criticism of the TRC and of the term ‘reconciliation’ itself. We must make a distinction between a limited and very justified criticism and a negative view of reconciliation! It is right to say that the TRC had shortcomings, that is to say, it led to many exact recommendations that have not been implemented. But it is unfair and wrong if people assume that the entire reconciliation policy as inefficient. Answering those skeptical voices, I would pose the simple question of what the alternative to reconciliation could have been. For South Africa, the answer is quite clear: it would have been a very bloody civil war. Reconciliation entails a long-term process that spans several generations. It “can be defined as the overarching approach to conflicts that focusses on processes of rebuilding relationships. Its goal is to create ‘normal’, ‘trustful’, and if possible ‘good’ and ‘peaceful’ relationships.”⁴⁴

That the term ‘reconciliation’ is still helpful becomes clear from comparison with several possible replacements of that term in the South African debate: The RICSA Report considered ‘healing’ as a replacement. ‘Emotional repair’ would be another, more individualistic expression. Sometimes people may prefer those terms. They underline that healing still is lacking in South Africa in so many respects. However, healing and repair are directed towards the sickness, the negativity that has to be overcome. It seems to me that it is important to have positive goals. Reconciliation aims for positive, trustful

43 Thesnaar, *Alternative and Innovative Approaches*, 136.

44 Martin Leiner. 2018. Conclusion: From Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation. In: Leiner and Schließer, *Alternative Approaches*, 175-185. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-58359-4_17

friendship. To speak about 'reconciliation' also has a further advantage. Not everything can be healed, and some losses are permanent. We, therefore, have been reconciled with the unrepairable.

In my view, it appears most popular today to use justice as an alternative to reconciliation. The problem is that there is no opposition between reconciliation and justice. Almost everything in reconciliation has to be about justice, or there will be no reconciliation. Why maintain the focus on reconciliation? The reason is the plurality of the understandings of justice. In all cases, we have different justice claims from different partners in conflict.⁴⁵ There is a need to search for reconciliation between those justice-claims. Therefore, justice as an approach cannot replace reconciliation. People tend to confound judgement with their idea of justice. There have been cases where people confused justice with benefits. Only in a joint reconciliation process, the danger of violent conflicts between justice claims can be overcome.

Other people prefer 'social cohesion' to reconciliation. That, however, can be misleading. Social cohesion can be produced by problematic means such as submission to a charismatic leader, to conservative traditions or by opposing a common enemy.

Everybody knows that the word reconciliation can be and has been misused. Nevertheless, I hope that it can be understood profoundly again and so become a leading perspective for South Africa.

Alternative approaches to reconciliation, creative projects, long-time engagement of faith communities for the healing of trauma and economic justice seem the most important things, often missing in current South Africa.

45 Cf. Rudolf Schuessler. 2018. Justice in Negotiations and conflict Resolution. In: Leiner and Schließer, *Alternative Approaches*, 25-36. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-58359-4_3