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ARE THE WALLS TOO HIGH?; A CHALLENGE FOR THE CHURCHES; A ROMAN CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE; JUBILEE FOR PALESTINIAN CHRISTIANS; INTERVIEW WITH FRANK CHIKANE

Theology, News and Notes

SPRING 2001

FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



Reconciling Our Diversity

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Reconciling Our Diversity

When the Pharisees asked Jesus what the greatest commandment in the Law was, he replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:37-39). Each of these commands presumes reconciliation. Reconciliation stands at the very heart of the gospel.

Fuller Seminary is a place that takes reconciliation seriously. Charles E. Fuller envisioned it as a place to train pastors, evangelists, and missionaries to proclaim the message of reconciliation through Jesus Christ effectively. Along the way, the seminary's vision has broadened and deepened. Today, it also trains psychologists, marriage and family therapists, lay leaders, and a host of others.

One of the points that set Fuller apart from its competitors was its concern not only to explore and proclaim the first and greatest commandment, but also to do the same with the second commandment. Through the years, Fuller has spoken to many issues that separate human beings from one another. This issue of *Theology, News and Notes* is another exploration of this topic.

It is not always easy to be reconciled with others, even within the Christian family. It is even more difficult when people do not speak our language, or value the things we value, or come from different cultures, or embrace a different worldview. But the ancient questions, "Am I my brother's keeper?" or "Who is my neighbor?" hold immediate implications for how we view reconciliation. It is one thing to say that we want to be reconciled; it is another thing to be reconciled. Reconciliation anticipates change.

We begin our discussion with the reminder of Jesus' words regarding those who really stand with us. Dr. Konrad Raiser addresses the subject as it relates to historic Protestantism. Cardinal Edward Cassidy shares from his personal journey regarding reconciliation within the Christian community. Bishop Munib Younan asks us to think about reconciliation from the perspective of a Palestinian Christian leader. Finally, the Reverend Frank Chikane reflects on reconciliation within the context of South Africa.

Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.

Are the Walls Too High?

BY CECIL M. ROBECK, JR.

Professor of Church History and Ecumenics, Fuller Seminary

John answered, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us." But Jesus said to him, "Do not stop him; for whoever is not against you is for you."

Luke 9:49-50

The year was 1914. Several European countries violated their geographical boundaries. Hostilities ensued. It was the beginning of World War I. That same year, the American poet Robert Frost wrote a profound poem titled "Mending Wall." It tells the story of two neighbors who make an annual ritual of walking the fence along their common property line. "Something there is that doesn't love a wall," observed Frost, "That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it, and spills the upper boulders in the sun."

We've all seen it. You pile a bunch of rocks, one on top of another, and the next time you pass that way, something has shifted. You can't figure out when it happened. No one will ever admit to moving these rocks. But there they lay, scattered "boulders in the sun."

Life is like that—well, kind of. The constant pull of gravity overcomes any inertia to climb. It has a tendency ultimately to bring mountains to their knees. It can fill valleys with their boulders. It levels things out. In Southern California we see this phenomenon each year, especially when the rains come. Those who have built their homes too close to the edge watch tearfully, as this constant, persistent force drags their dreams relentlessly down the hillsides.

Frost's neighbor had a great philosophy regarding his annual wall-mending ritual. "Good fences make good neighbors." Perhaps he saw something in that annual ritual that escapes us. Frost figured that his apple trees would never cross uninvited into his neighbor's pine forest and eat its cones. He kidded his neighbor with this preposterous picture. But his neighbor had not argued. He simply replied, "Good fences make good neighbors." So Frost went on, accompanying his neighbor along the wall. "Cows," thought Frost. You might need good fences to make sure that cows were kept apart. But there were no cows on this property.

Then Frost freely admits to his mischievous mind. He wants to suggest to his neighbor that maybe elves were the ones responsible for the holes in the walls and the boulders lying on the ground. But he can't quite bring himself to say it. His neighbor is much too serious for that. His neighbor keeps repeating the age-old adage, passed on to him by his parents, "Good fences make good neighbors." So Frost tries to be that good neighbor. He helps to restore the wall. But he doesn't do it without asking himself a very important question. "What am I walling in or walling out, and to whom am I like to give offense?"

The Apostle John was like the neighbor in "Mending Wall." He liked his walls. They provided certainty to him. Some people belonged on one side. Others belonged on the other. They needed to be kept separated from one another. His theory was like that in a Sunday school chorus I sang as a kid:

*One door and only one,
And yet its sides are two;
I'm on the inside,
On which side are you?
One door and only one,
And yet its sides are two;
I'm on the Lord's side,
On which side are you?*

John was clearly on the Lord's side. For him the answer was an easy one. He had come up against a man who was performing exorcisms. Indeed, he was even performing these exorcisms by appealing to the name or authority of Jesus. But John didn't know him. There were many exorcists in John's day. They appealed to all kinds of names, from Beelzebul to Solomon. But John had run up against a stranger who was using Jesus' name. John had spent years with Jesus. He didn't know this man. And this man was appealing to a name that meant a great deal to John. He was using Jesus' name. How could this be? He had to put a stop to it. And so he had tried. "You have no right to use the name of Jesus," he must have told this stranger.

We don't know the identity of this stranger. But I have to laugh when I see the way the words have been recorded. "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him." It looks as though John had done his usual thing. I wonder if he hadn't tried to call down

Robert Frost's neighbor in the 1914 poem "Mending Wall" had a great philosophy regarding his annual wall-mending ritual. "Good fences make good neighbors."

The reconciliation of races is represented at the site of the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles on February 2000.



In my own church, we have claimed for nearly a century that we are the ones who preach the "full gospel," which means that those of you who are not "with us" must be preaching something less.

lightning from heaven in order to put a stop to something he may have considered blasphemous. "We tried to stop him," he said. But it is the reason for making that attempt that I find most intriguing. Why did John try to stop this stranger from casting out demons in Jesus' name? He did it because the man "does not follow with us."

That is it exactly. If you don't follow with us, you are something else. If you don't follow us, you have no reason to appeal to Jesus. I'm on the inside, and clearly, you are not. You belong on the

other side of the wall. "Good fences make good neighbors." Unless I believe that you follow with us, you have no reason to be taken seriously. You have heard it all before.

Many of our denominations have said it about other Christian denominations. Our parents have passed on to us what their parents passed on to them. "You do not follow with us." "Good fences make good neighbors." In my own church, we have claimed for nearly a century that we are the ones who preach the "full gospel," which means that those of you who are not "with us" must be preaching something less. And just because your church does not say it in the same way doesn't for a minute mean that it is any less exclusive. Our denominational labels have helped to define us and what is important to us. Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians are quintessentially defined by their specific forms of church government. Adventists preach the Second Coming. Baptists and Anabaptists find the key to their identity in their doctrine of baptism. Catholics look at the universality of the church. Holiness churches talk about how to walk before God. The Orthodox view themselves as giving right or proper glory to God. Pentecostals hark back to Acts 2 and the experience of the 120 in the upper room. And so it goes. And because we hold these specific values as sacred, we often do not appreciate what the other holds at all.

At one level, Frost's neighbor is correct. And maybe John is correct as well. Good fences make good neighbors. If it is really an annual ritual for two neighbors to walk along a common wall and repair it together, to work on a common project together, then good fences can make good neighbors. But good fences don't always make good neighbors.

We watched from the West as the Soviets constructed the Berlin wall. It didn't make us good neighbors. It raised our suspicions. It nourished our fears. It separated families and loved ones from one another, and it led to the deaths of hundreds who dared to challenge its defining intentions. Just one month before the wall came down, I traveled through the maze called "Checkpoint Charlie." On the one side, the East, it was a well-painted, and well-guarded, white wall. On the other, the West, it was marked with the epithets of those who thought very little of the ideology for which it stood. It was an ugly scar in the middle of a city, covered with the graffiti of disrespect. It was a perversion upon the landscape that separated East from West. It was designed to keep people in, more than it was designed to keep people out. Good fences do not necessarily make good neighbors.

In more recent years, and much closer to home, we have watched as our own government has attempted to construct a fence along the Mexican-American border. We have used concrete, barbed wire, underground movement sensors, armed guards, and dogs. And we have done so in the name of forcing our neighbors to be good neighbors. It is designed to keep people out more than it is designed to keep people in. But we have watched as people in the United States have argued, even voted to make the fence stronger, thicker, and higher. We are now on the white side of the wall, the guarded side, the side that hopes this wall will keep us safe from their desire to walk with us. And we have watched as our neighbors have ridiculed that wall. They have scaled its heights and dug beneath it. They have slipped around it and tried to blast holes through it. It is viewed from the Mexican side with as much disdain as the West held for the Berlin wall. Good fences do not necessarily make good neighbors.

John thought that the stranger casting out demons in Jesus' name belonged on the other side of the wall. He was intent on mending any breach in the wall, and of making sure that it was a defining wall. He was on the inside. The stranger was on the outside. And he thought of himself as being in control. But Jesus did not agree.

"Do not stop him!" was the imperative that Jesus gave. "Leave him alone! You obviously don't understand the danger of building walls. You have fenced out a friend. Don't you know that whoever is not against you is for you? Don't you see that the

wall that separates the two of you is not conducive to making good neighbors? He is not against you. He stands with you."

Jesus was not arguing against walls. After all, it is he who said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven," not even those who have cast out demons in his name. The kingdom of heaven is reserved only for "the one who does the will of my Father in heaven" (Matt. 7:21-23). There is an ultimate wall, but it did not stand where John thought it did.

The message that Jesus gave to John was, "The one who is not against you is for you." You belong on the same side of the wall. But his message also carries the opposite implication for those who would hear his words. "The one who is against you must be taken with all seriousness." Your job is to discern the difference. Some walls are good walls. They separate the friend from the enemy. Some are not good walls. They separate friend from friend. Don't build walls that fence friends out!

I find this passage to be very interesting. Each time I come to this text I see something I had not noticed before. Each time I read Jesus' words, I find myself coming under the same scrutiny as John, more often than I would like. You see, I am essentially a wall builder by nature. Some of my walls are too high. They separate me from those who would be "for me." Some of my walls may be too low. They are not adequate to keep me separated from the enemy. My job is to discern the difference and to be reconciled with those who are for me.

I find this passage to be very interesting also because it comes in the middle of a larger conversation that Jesus is having with his disciples. They had been torturing themselves wondering who was the greatest. Jesus had read their thoughts and set a little child in their midst. "Whoever welcomes this child in my name," he said, "welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me; for the least among all of you is the greatest." Jesus spoke of welcoming the child. John spoke of refusing the stranger. Jesus told them how to be great. John demonstrated just how little he could be.

"Good fences make good neighbors," but only if they are properly placed. In his eagerness to preserve truth and purity, John had failed to see the truth he sought to preserve. He had become so exclusive that he had no place for including the stranger who stood with him.

As we enter a new millennium, our society is being overwhelmed by many voices. Some argue that our walls are too high. Let us break them down. We should not have any fences. All we need to do is love one another. All we want is peace. Tolerance and pluralism are the calls of the world. "I'm OK, you're OK." "Can't we all just get along?" Everyone can do what is right in his or her own eyes. In some ways it seems that we have lost all

order, and only a postmodern form of chaos reigns.

On the other hand, some of our peers argue that the walls are not high enough. "Come out from them and be separate from them," they cry. Contact is equated with compromise. Those who hold to doctrinal positions that we do not fully appreciate or fully understand, those who celebrate histories or traditions into which we have not entered, those who do not vote the way we think that they should vote, who do not hold to the same standards of political correctness that we believe they should embrace, are not to be trusted. They need to be "outed." They are extremists. They are dangerous. They are the radical left, or the religious right. In short, they are not with us.

I find Jesus' words to John very instructive at this point. As we begin this new century, we find ourselves in a cauldron of change. It is difficult to know which way to proceed. We have grown up with denominations all our lives, yet the walls between us seem to be failing. Fewer and fewer Fuller students are members of the church of their



birth. Increasingly, students who come to Fuller have been members of ever more denominations. Two or three years ago, I read the application of a potential adjunct professor. Under the designation for denomination he had written "Ukrainian Baptist Anglo-Catholic Wesleyan." I couldn't help but wonder if he was as confused about who he thought he was as I was.

Things have changed, and those we once thought were in enemy camps, that is, they spoke in tongues (Pentecostals)—they believed in "eternal security" (some Calvinists)—they talked about definite works of grace (so-called holiness Christians)—they emphasized the sovereignty of

Some walls are good walls. They separate the friend from the enemy. Some are not good walls. They separate friend from friend.

Provost Russell Spittler and Cardinal Roger Mahony pour water into a basin, representing reconciliation between traditions, at the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity services, First AME Church, Los Angeles, February 2000.

Jesus' instruction is clear, but it is a hard word. "Do not stop them," he contends, "for whoever is not against you is for you." There are many people in the world who are against those who name the name of Jesus. There are many people in the world who view the Christian faith as merely one among many, the source of judgment, and pain, and exclusion, and even the source of every war in recent history. They view Jesus not as Messiah, but as a good man, maybe even a genuine prophet. They deny the exclusive claims of Jesus Christ on human lives. They agitate to limit the church and its work around the world. They legislate anti-proselytism laws, persecute our brothers and sisters around the world, deprive people of religious freedom, and attempt to define our evangelization as a crime of intolerance and hate. These people do not stand with us. It is our duty as followers of Jesus to speak clear words of truth and hope to them. But we are also told to receive those who truly stand with us, and ultimately to celebrate our unity with them.

I have a very dear friend who lives in Switzerland. His name is Walter Hollenweger. Some of you have met him. He is a theologian, an evangelist, a pastor, an ecumenist, a playwright, and sometime poet. He has written a number of "animal" prayers, among them a prayer that I have found instructive, even as I have read this passage again. He calls it "The Prayer of the Ostrich."¹

O God, sometimes I feel like an ostrich, a bird with wings—yet he can only run, a bird with wings—yet he has only the memory of flying. And so I run over the hot sand and spread my wings, yet only a poor hop is the result. I am a Christian with the memory of the early Christians, when in one day the gospel emerged

God at the expense of human free will or vice-versa—they spoke to Mary and the saints (Roman Catholics)—they thought they had a corner on truth (Orthodox)—are no longer viewed as the enemy. We have come to discover one another as standing *with us*, even if it is only in the classroom. But there are still many people who claim the name of Jesus that we view with suspicion. I have had students say, "The Pope isn't 'born again,' is he?" "Is it possible to be an Orthodox leader who collaborated with a Communist government and a Christian?" "Is it possible to be a 'liberal' Christian, or is that very juxtaposition of words an oxymoron?" And what about the fundamentalists? If we are on the inside, on which side are they? Have we struggled adequately with Frost's questions? What am I walling in or walling out? To whom am I likely to give offense? Or to put it in a way that the gospel raises for us, With whom do I need to be reconciled?

Jesus' instruction is clear, but it is a hard word. "Do not stop them," he contends, "for whoever is not against you is for you." There are many people in the world who are against those who name the name of Jesus. There are many people in the world who view the Christian faith as merely one among many, the source of judgment, and pain, and exclusion, and even the source of every war in recent history. They view Jesus not as Messiah, but as a good man, maybe even a genuine prophet. They deny the exclusive claims of Jesus Christ on human lives. They agitate to limit the church and its work around the world. They legislate anti-proselytism laws, persecute our brothers and sisters around the world, deprive people of religious freedom, and attempt to define our evangelization as a crime of intolerance and hate. These people do not stand with us. It is our duty as followers of Jesus to speak clear words of truth and hope to them. But we are also told to receive those who truly stand with us, and ultimately to celebrate our unity with them.

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*in a foreign culture,
when in one day that which was
considered essential, faded away;
when in one day for the sake
of a foreign officer's salvation,
your servant crossed the frontiers
of what he considered to be
the limits of the gospel;
when in one day more of the gospel
was discovered than we could
hope in a hundred years.
Why must I be an ostrich,
the laughing stock of the world?
I did not make myself.
You did not ask me whether
I wanted to be an ostrich,
nor whether I wanted to be at all,
nor did my parents ask me.
So I am a bird and I cannot fly.
And yet I see other birds taking to the sky.
So I bury my head in the sand, in the Bible,
in the tradition, in scholarship.
Today I pray just for one thing, one little thing.
O God, help me at least
not to hinder the others from flying.
Help me not to think that
because we cannot fly,
other birds shouldn't either.
Help me to rejoice in the sight
of those who fly higher
than I can ever dream.*

ENDNOTES

¹ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Hendrickson, 1997).



CECIL M. ROBECK, JR., professor of church history and ecumenics at Fuller Seminary, is the seminary's "ambassador to the church worldwide." An ordained minister in the Assemblies of God, he is known not only as an evangelical, a Pentecostal apologist, and church historian, but for his commitment to reconciliation between races and

unity among the churches of Jesus Christ. As Fuller's representative to international church dialogues and forums, he cochairs the International Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue and the local Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue. In addition, he is consultant to the Commissions on Faith and Order of the National and World Councils of Churches. He has served as president of the Society for Pentecostal Studies and the North American Academy of Ecumenists. On behalf of Pope John Paul II, Cardinal Edward Cassidy invited him to participate in two of the ecumenical Jubilee Celebration events at the Vatican, the opening of the Bronze Doors in St. Paul's Outside the Walls, and the commemoration of Twentieth-Century Christian Martyrs, at the Roman Coliseum. At that second event, he led the congregation in a portion of the Creed. For nine years he was editor of *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*. He is the author of *Prophecy in Carthage (Pilgrim)* and editor of *Charismatic Experiences in History* (Hendrickson) and *Witness to Pentecost* (Garland).

Reconciliation: A Challenge for the Churches

BY KONRAD RAISER
General Secretary, World Council of Churches

Our world is full of conflict and violence: between states and communities, in cities and on the streets, in schools and homes. The images of innocent victims and the names of the places of their suffering come in such rapid succession that our capacity to comprehend and our ability to respond are being paralyzed. To speak of reconciliation in this context is both urgently necessary and seemingly utopian. Where are the forces, where is the will to stem the tide of violence and to stop the spiral of destructive conflict?

The World Council of Churches, at its Harare Assembly in December 1998, called for a Decade to Overcome Violence from 2001 to 2010. The Central Committee in 1999 clarified the focus of the decade by adding the subtitle "Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace" and placing the project of the decade into the context of the churches' calling to a ministry of reconciliation.

God in Christ has reconciled us to himself and entrusted us with this ministry of reconciliation. Reconciliation to God, our neighbors and ourselves, is an ongoing challenge and must be accompanied by a search for truth, justice and peace. The assembly proclaimed a Decade to Overcome Violence that encourages our churches to challenge the powers and principalities that perpetuate violence in our world. . . . Through the coming years until the next assembly and until the end of the Decade, the Council shall work strategically with the churches to create a "culture of non-violence linking and interacting with partners throughout the world" (Minutes of Central Committee 1999, 92).

It was the Apostle Paul who adopted the secular term for "reconciliation" to interpret the central thrust of the biblical message and of the Christian faith (cf. especially 2 Cor. 5:17-21). In the letters of the apostle, reconciliation stands in parallel to the other central concepts of our faith like justification, liberation, rebirth or new creation, to point to the dynamic of the saving encounter between God and humankind. In Christian consciousness, reconciliation has, for centuries, remained a theological and spiritual concept pointing to the vertical relationship between God and human persons.

Reconciliation as a task and challenge within and between human communities received much less attention. It was the experience of the wars and

the conflicts of the last hundred years which has led the churches to rediscover their vocation to be peacemakers and ambassadors of reconciliation. The formation of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, on the first day of the First World War, prepared the way for the churches to reflect more consciously about the task of reconciliation within our societies and between nations.

The Second European Ecumenical Assembly in Graz, Austria, in June 1997 clearly expressed this new consciousness of reconciliation as a task and challenge for the churches. The assembly acknowledged reconciliation as "God's gift" and as a "source of new life." According to the final document of the assembly, the divine gift of reconciliation opens the way, not only for reconciliation between churches which are still divided, but also for reconciliation between women and men, between the generations, between people of the land and strangers, in particular refugees and migrants, but also between peoples and cultures. Instead of preparing ourselves for a future "clash of civilizations," the churches should become pioneers of reconciliation, not least by supporting civil and nonviolent forms of conflict resolution.

Yet reconciliation is a challenge to the churches themselves, not only with regard to their witness and service in society, but also in their relationships among one another. The year 2010 will not only mark the end of the Decade to Overcome Violence; it will also be the year of the centenary of the first World Mission Conference in Edinburgh, which is generally being considered as the event inaugurating the modern ecumenical movement. Will the churches be able to celebrate this centenary as reconciled communities? What are the decisive issues which still have to be resolved in order to allow the churches to enter into full communion with one another? Some might even ask whether "reconciliation" is the right concept to interpret the ecumenical imperative. Should we not, with the Apostle Paul, acknowledge that reconciliation is, in the first place, God's gift and not so much a human achievement? And if the goal of communion between the churches is being referred to as "unity in reconciled diversity," does this not simplify the ecumenical challenge too much?

Our reflection about reconciliation indeed has to start from the acknowledgment that reconcilia-

It was the experience of the wars and the conflicts of the last hundred years which has led the churches to rediscover their vocation to be peacemakers and ambassadors of reconciliation.

The warning not to be content with "cheap reconciliation" must be taken seriously. . . . This new sense of communion remains fragile if it does not reach into the deeper layers of separation in the collective memory.

tion is offered by God. It is God who, through Christ, brings about a new community. The original meaning of the Greek word *katallage* signifies the radical change of a relationship. Through Christ, the relationship between God and humanity, which has been distorted and interrupted by sin, has been restored. "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us" (2 Cor. 5:18-19). We are called and invited to accept the reconciliation which is offered to us through Christ and to proclaim it in the world. Through Christ, a new relationship is being established between those who accept this gift: strangers become citizens and aliens are recognized as members of the household of God (Eph. 2:19).

Whenever divisions appear within the fellowship of Jesus Christ in the family of his sisters and brothers, the reconciliation which has been offered by God is being betrayed. The healing of such divisions will not so much be the result of negotiations of mediations; relationships in community can be healed and restored as all members together turn toward Jesus Christ. The first Ecumenical Conference on Life and Work in Stockholm in 1925 said in its message: "The closer we come to the cross of Christ, the closer we come to one another." The World Council of Churches, therefore, has placed the confession of Jesus Christ as God and Savior into the center of its theological basis. This is indeed the source of our reconciliation.

All Christian churches will largely agree with these affirmations. Some, therefore, ask: Do we really still need a "reconciliation" between churches? Has not the ecumenical movement during the past hundred years led to such profound changes in the relationships between the churches that a real sense of communion has been restored? Do people in the local congregations

ing it in common worship? If so much emphasis is placed on the task of reconciliation, does this not weaken the commitment to common witness in word and deed today?

There are indeed many encouraging and inspiring experiences of newly discovered communion between Christians and churches which have been separated for generations and centuries. On the other hand, we also know of many instances where the old divisions, prejudices, and antagonisms between the churches are still alive. What is more, unreconciled memories and mutually exclusive Christian identities have been used to foment and justify militant civil conflicts as in Northern Ireland and in the Balkans. We have inherited a history of division, which continues to be alive in memories, symbols, theological affirmations, and doctrinal condemnations. Particularly, minority communities hold on to these memories as the basis of their identity. Fundamentalism, which is a phenomenon in all religions, represents an attitude that considers the lines of separation as unchangeable out of fidelity to the inherited truth.

Therefore, the warning not to be content with "cheap reconciliation" must be taken seriously. This is not to say that we should not rejoice about the restoration of ecumenical fellowship, but this new sense of communion remains fragile if it does not reach into the deeper layers of separation in the collective memory. There can be no reconciliation at the expense of truth, and "reconciled diversity" without a genuine change in the quality of relationships and without consequences in the attitudes of the churches toward one another is no real reconciliation. The process of reconciliation must lead to tangible change, to a self-correction and the admission of mistakes and failures. Could it be the case that the difficulty to achieve lasting reconciliation between the churches is due to the fact that the guilt and errors of the past have not been uncovered and confessed? In any case, the task of reconciliation transcends the formulation of agreements and convergences. It must embrace the spiritual and ecclesial self-understanding of the churches, which, for centuries, have affirmed their identity over against one another.

There are several examples from recent years and decades to point to the changes as well as the limitations of the ecumenical efforts at reconciliation. Mention could be made of the declarations of Poorvoo and Meissen regarding the establishment of communion between the Church of England and the Nordic Lutheran churches or the Protestant churches in Germany. A similar declaration is in preparation between the Lutheran and Reformed churches in France and the Church of England. For 25 years already, the Lutheran and Reformed churches in Europe, together with the United churches, as well as the Methodist and pre-

Reformation churches of the Waldensians and the Czech Brethren, have lived in full fellowship with one another. A similar step has been taken recently between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and three churches of the Reformed tradition. More recently still, the member churches of the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church have solemnly accepted a Joint Declaration affirming that they are agreed on the basic truth of the message of justification by faith. Many more examples could be given, in particular, pointing to the many cases of organic union between churches of different denominational traditions.

However, there are as many examples of situations where the task of reconciliation has barely begun. There is still tension and deep mistrust between Orthodox and Catholic Christians and churches in the former Yugoslavia or in the Ukraine, to mention only these two countries. In Ethiopia, there are open conflicts between Orthodox and Protestant communities, (e.g., around the use of cemeteries). The efforts at restoring communion between the Eastern Orthodox and the Oriental churches have not been able to move beyond common theological affirmations. In Madagascar, the negotiations aiming at full unity between the Reformed and the Lutheran churches have broken down and old prejudices have been revived.

This brief survey, therefore, does not lead to clear and unequivocal results, and there is only slight hope that the next decade might bring the decisive breakthrough. The survey shows in particular that concrete steps toward the reestablishment of communion have so far been limited largely to historic churches of the Reformation tradition, including those of the Anglican communion. We can say today that the churches belonging to the tradition of historic Protestantism have reached a situation of de facto communion with one another. The different declarations and agreements to which reference has been made in many ways acknowledge officially what has been a reality in the consciousness of the churches already before. Of course, there are still several problems to be solved, (e.g., regarding the understanding and praxis of baptism between the historic churches of the Reformation and the churches of the Baptist tradition—or regarding the centrality of the Episcopal office between the Anglican churches and the mainstream of Lutheran and Calvinist churches). Both issues, however, do not justify any longer maintaining the historic division. Both problems can be solved, as experience shows. The ecumenical process has reached a new level. These

churches have begun to concentrate their ecumenical commitment on the task of common witness and service in the world.

The situation is rather different if we consider the relationship between the Reformation churches on the one hand, and the Roman Catholic or the Orthodox churches on the other, but also regarding the relationships between these



Members of the WCC-Pentecostal Joint Consultative Group stand in solidarity at Hautecombe, France, June 2000.

two large church families. In spite of 30 years of intensive doctrinal dialogues, there are only very few cases where an official agreement has been reached. The dialogues between the Roman Catholic Church on the one hand, and the Lutheran and Anglican churches on the other, have advanced very far, and the Joint Declaration on justification is a sign of encouragement and hope. But there is no solution in sight for the differences in the understanding of the church and the ministry, and both issues are intimately linked with the very identity of the respective churches and traditions. Without a readiness for change and conversion, there will be no reconciliation between the Church of Rome and the Orthodox churches. There is an ambiguous relationship of love and mistrust. They are closer to each other in doctrine and church order than to any other church. They have recognized each other as sister churches, but the memory of a divided history of domination and forced union is still too strong and prevents a genuine reconciliation.

If the ecumenical efforts at reconciliation between the churches are to move forward, we have to recognize more consciously than has been the case so far that the divisions between the churches and denominations are of a very different character. The Protestant model of church union, or of establishing full communion and church fellowship within the limits of one nation or region, cannot be transferred to other church families. In the relationship with the churches of the Orthodox tradition, recent events have made us aware of the fact that we are still at the beginning of a process

"We don't have to agree with everything that other churches teach; we don't have to like everything that other churches teach. But I think we must go out of our way to be the brother or sister that we are called to be. Unless we are able to live this unity with other Christians, we run the risk of undercutting the gospel. If we can't be reconciled with our brothers and sisters, then what reconciling power is there to the gospel?"

*Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.
Fuller Focus, Spring 2000*

and, in particular, those of the younger generation, still have an awareness of and understanding for the historic divisions? What is it that still prevents us from confessing our faith together and celebrat-

The task of reconciliation transcends the formulation of agreements and convergences. It must embrace the spiritual and ecclesial self-understanding of the churches, which, for centuries, have affirmed their identity over against one another.

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of overcoming alienation and misunderstanding. Among the Orthodox churches the defensive attitude, which considers all other Christian churches as schismatic or heretical, is still deeply rooted.

We live in very different cultures and are shaped by different worldviews. The process of reconciliation can only begin once we acknowledge these lasting differences. Ultimately, this is true also for the relationship between the Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions. They are close to one another as different expressions of Christianity in the West, and for this very reason they have difficulty acknowledging their fundamental differences. Both have the tendency to consider their own way of being church as normative and to place higher demands of agreement and consensus on the partner in ecumenical dialogue than actually exists within their own communion.

Reconciliation between the churches, therefore, is a complex challenge which cannot be met through bilateral theological dialogues alone. New approaches are necessary. The ecumenical encounters between the churches have led to the insight that the churches are bound together across the lines of separation between their different traditions through the one baptism and confession of the faith. Thus there exists already a real spiritual and ecclesial communion between them even though it is not yet complete. The ecumenical dialogues between the churches are not only a means to achieve communion, but they are even now an expression of the basic communion in Christ and thus of the gifts of reconciliation from God. The churches can and should recognize each other explicitly as partners and companions on the way toward full communion. This leads to the further consequence that the doctrinal controversies and condemnations of the past, which have been resolved through dialogues, should be considered as definitively closed and handed over to history. This would create the ecumenical space which is needed to direct attention to the challenge of common witness in the beginning of the twenty-first century and in this way to grow together into genuine communion.

It should have become clear that reconciliation is a process which goes beyond the clarification of doctrinal controversies or the overcoming of institutional barriers. Reconciliation will not come as the result of negotiations and agreements, nor can it be planned with intentional strategies. Reconciliation involves a change of heart and mind both on the personal and communal levels, a new recognition and acknowledgment of one another, and the acceptance of responsibility for one another. Symbolic acts, common experiences, and shared liturgies will, therefore, be of decisive importance for the process of reconciliation. Many common celebrations during the previous millennium year

have had this specific spiritual symbolic significance, like the meeting of Anglican primates and their Roman Catholic counterparts for a week-long retreat, the public confession and prayer of forgiveness of the Pope, the common celebrations in Bethlehem at Christmas, etc. The new reality of a reconciled community of Christian churches can and will be anticipated, envisioned, and experienced symbolically and in prayerful celebration, before it can be defined theologically and before its institutional implications will be resolved.

The Decade to Overcome Violence, to which reference has been made at the beginning of this reflection, will draw the churches closer to one another in the active witness for reconciliation and peace. But the message addressed by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches to the member churches underlines:

If churches do not combine their witness for peace and reconciliation with the search for unity among themselves, they fail in their mission to the world. Leaving behind what separates us, responding ecumenically to the challenge, proving that non-violence is an active approach to conflict resolution and offering in all humility what Jesus Christ taught his disciples to do, the churches have a unique message to bring to the conflict-ridden world.

And the message concludes: "The gospel vision of peace is a source of hope for change and a new beginning. Let us not betray what has been given to us. People around the world wait with eager longing for Christians to become who we are: children of God embodying the message of love, peace with justice and reconciliation" (Minutes, Central Committee, 1999, 188f).



KONRAD RAISER, a native of West Germany, earned his first theological degree from the University of Tübingen in 1963. Ordained the following year, he served as an assistant pastor in the Evangelical [Lutheran] Church in Württemberg, Germany, and received a master's degree in theology in 1965, then pursued studies at Harvard University. He earned a doctorate in theology in 1970 from the Protestant Theological Faculty at Tübingen. In 1969 he joined the staff of the World Council of Churches, serving as study secretary in the Commission on Faith and Order, then as deputy general secretary. In 1983 Dr. Raiser became professor of systematic theology/ecumenics at the Protestant Theological Faculty of the University of the Ruhr in Bochum, where he directed the Faculty's Ecumenical Institute—positions he held until returning full-time to the World Council of Churches. He has served as the general secretary of the WCC since 1993. Dr. Raiser is the author of *Identität und Sozialität* (1971); *Ökumene im Übergang* (1989)—English translation, *Ecumenism in Transition* (1991); *Wir stehen noch am Anfang* (1994); and *To Be the Church* (1997).

Reflections on Reconciliation from a Roman Catholic Perspective

BY EDWARD IDRIS CARDINAL CASSIDY
President, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

I was not considered to be an expert in ecumenism, nor did I consider myself as such, when I came as president to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity at the beginning of 1990. In making this appointment, Pope John Paul II reminded me, however, that I had 35 years' experience as a representative of the Holy See in various countries of Asia, America, Africa, and Europe—experience that had given me skills in seeking peaceful solutions to difficult problems and, above all, in promoting reconciliation in situations of conflict.

As I reflected on the challenges that were facing me in my new position, I recalled the words that St. Paul had addressed to the Corinthians:

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:17-20).

It became obvious to me that the search for Christian unity was a task that no Christian could neglect. As Christians, we are sent out to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the whole world. God has entrusted to us the message of reconciliation. We are ambassadors of Christ, since God is making his appeal through us! For this we have been chosen, for this we have been called and justified. This great gift that we have received through faith in Jesus Christ has been given to us so that we, in our turn, can become each one of us a gift to others. Pope John Paul II left no doubt about the commitment of the Catholic Church to ecumenism when he stated in the *Encyclical Ut unum sint* (On Commitment to Ecumenism), n. 29:

Thus it is absolutely clear that ecumenism, the movement towards promoting Christian unity, is not just some sort of "appendix" which is added to the Church's traditional activity. Rather,

ecumenism is an organic part of her life and work, and consequently must pervade all that she is and does.

But what kind of witness are we giving when, as we read in the document of the Second Vatican Council on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, n. 1), our divisions "openly contradict the will of Christ, scandalize the world and damage that most holy cause, the preaching of the gospel to every creature"? If we Christians are not reconciled, one to the other, how can we bring the message of reconciliation in Christ to a world that is so badly in need of being reconciled? What kind of ambassadors of reconciliation are we, if we ourselves are not reconciled?

In these past ten years, I have sought above all to be an agent for reconciliation, especially between my church and other Christian churches and communions. But where does one begin? No one can reconcile with others without going out to meet the other. One has to come to know and appreciate the other, to create a relationship of trust, and so eventually to see "the other" no longer as *the other*, but as brother or sister!

This calls for patience, for humility and, above all, for that love which the Lord Jesus Christ teaches us, and which should be the hallmark of every Christian: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

Pope John Paul II, in his Encyclical Letter *Ut unum sint*, (On Commitment to Ecumenism), sees this process as being at the very heart of all ecumenical endeavor. He describes "brotherhood rediscovered" as "an immense gift of God," one of the most important fruits of the ecumenical movement. Brothers and sisters are called upon to love one another, to respect one another and, when needed, to express solidarity with one another. They will not always agree on everything, of course, but they will discuss and dialogue, not in a polemical way, but so as to understand one another better, share each other's gifts, and seek where possible to find consensus on their differences.

As the twentieth century came to a close and

If we Christians are not reconciled, one to the other, how can we bring the message of reconciliation in Christ to a world that is so badly in need of being reconciled?

"It is not easy to convert one's self to forgiveness and reconciliation. To reconcile can already seem problematic when at the origin there is self-guilt. If then the other is guilty, to reconcile one's self can be seen even as an unreasonable humiliation. To take this path, it is necessary to experience interior conversion; the courage of humble obedience to the command of Jesus is necessary. His word leaves no doubt: not only the one who provokes the estranged, but also the one who suffers must find reconciliation."

Pope John Paul II
Papal Message, Vatican City, February 9, 2001

Another important area of reconciliation has been that of relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the ancient churches of the East. . . . Here we are speaking of an alienation of some 1,500 years!

Christians toward other Christians. Little thought was given to what we shared in common, our Trinitarian faith with Jesus Christ as our one and only Savior, our common baptism into the one Body of Christ. Rather, we looked back at the religious wars and oppressions of the past, exaggerated our different understandings of the gospel, created myths and stereotypes so as to dismiss the others as not being truly Christian!

Unfortunately, some of this remains and keeps us chained to the past, and so unable to move forward freely to a new future. This calls for a profound purification of memory. "Purifying the memory means eliminating from personal and collective conscience all forms of resentment or violence left by the inheritance of the past, on the basis of a new and rigorous historical-theological judgment, which becomes the foundation for a renewed moral way of acting" (Memory and Reconciliation, 18). It is a healing of wounds.

At the same time, we can truly say that we have moved away significantly from the past. We now appreciate more all that we have in common, and we are encouraged by an evident aspiration among Christians for reconciliation and greater unity. This has enabled us to overcome difficulties and give to the world a witness more in accordance with the gospel.

One area where this has happened has been Eastern Europe. The radical changes that have taken place in countries of Eastern Europe since 1988 have left the churches with situations of tension and misunderstanding. Early in the nineties, relations between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox churches were in crisis. Gradually, it has been possible through patient dialogue for us to move away from such a disastrous confrontation to work together to solve problems and to establish solid bases for fellowship. Much still has to be

done, but the process is well underway, providing hope for the future. The official theological dialogue, which was suspended for a time, was taken up again with the meeting of the Joint Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church in Baltimore from July 9 to 19, 2000.

Patient dialogue over several decades has resulted in important achievements in this field of theological discussion. One of the most notable was the signing, on October 31, 1999, in Augsburg, Germany, of a document between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation that reconciled these two Christian communities on a question that had been for 450 years at the heart of their disputes. This was the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, by which Catholics and Lutherans were able to declare that they had come to a consensus on the fundamental understanding of this doctrine and that, on this question, they were no longer divided. I had the great honor to sign this document on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church. Centuries of division on this fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith came to an end, as we declared:

In faith we together hold the conviction that justification is the work of the triune God. The Father sent his Son into the world to save sinners. The foundation and presupposition of justification is the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ. Justification thus means that Christ is our righteousness, in which we share through the Holy Spirit in accord with the will of the Father. Together we confess: "By grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works" (n. 15).

As a result of the consensus reached and explained in the Joint Declaration, it was possible to declare that the doctrinal condemnations of the sixteenth century, insofar as they relate to the doctrine of justification, appear in a new light. "The teaching of the Lutheran churches presented in this declaration does not fall under the condemnations from the Council of Trent. The condemnations of the Lutheran Confessions do not apply to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church presented in this Declaration" (n. 41).

Another important area of reconciliation has been that of relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the ancient churches of the East, which rejected the dogmatic formulations of the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. Here we are speaking of an alienation of some 1,500 years! All these churches sent official observers to the Second Vatican Council. Their patriarchs have visited Rome, and the bishop of Rome has been able "to converse with them as with brothers who, after a

long time, joyfully meet again" (*Ut unum sint*, n. 62). From these contacts and subsequent dialogues, it became possible for the bishop of Rome and the patriarchs of these churches to sign Joint Declarations on their common faith in Jesus Christ, true God and true man. Today we can affirm that we have the one faith in Jesus Christ, even though for a long time this was a source of division between these ancient churches and the rest of the Christian world.

One might be tempted to see in all this some sort of compromise on essential doctrine. This has not been, and could not be, the case. There have been two basic principles involved in all these theological discussions, namely the principle of the *Hierarchy of Truths* as outlined in the Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, paragraph 11, and the distinction between the content of faith and the expression of faith. By the latter I mean that we can differ on the words we use to express a doctrine without that necessarily meaning that we disagree on the doctrine itself. Of course, we have to discern in our discussions if this is really the case. In the various Joint Declarations referred to above, the participating churches were in fact able to go beyond their particular formulations of doctrine, which had resulted in centuries of polemics, to express a consensus in belief.

My Pontifical Council is in dialogue with the World Council of Churches and with all the mainline churches. We are also in discussions with some Pentecostals, evangelicals, and recently with the Mennonites. Informal talks with evangelicals in the United States of America and in Latin America have contributed to a new understanding between these groups and the Roman Catholic Church, as evidenced in the publication: *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission*, edited by Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus. Important contacts between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and evangelicals go back some decades and in recent years there have been important meetings between the Pontifical Council and the World Evangelical Fellowship. At the last meeting, in 1999, the Joint Communiqué stated:

Christians can collaborate together in love and mutual respect even though their fellowship is incomplete. This does not have to involve indifference or compromising one's convictions. Collaboration entails accurate information about the other's history, beliefs and practices.

At the heart of all reconciliation is a readiness to pardon and, where necessary, to ask for pardon. In all disputes it seems that this is the hardest thing for the parties to do. And yet, for Christians this should not be so difficult. After all, we pray daily: "Father, forgive us our sins as we forgive

those who have sinned against us." And we have the example of our Lord himself, who prayed at the time of his greatest suffering on the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

We all bring to our dialogues memories of historical events that were anything but respectful of the dignity and sacredness of the human person. In the Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (on the Coming Third Millennium), published by Pope John Paul II on November 10, 1994, reference is made to the need for Christians to examine their consciences as they enter into the new millennium. The Pope recalls those painful times in history when "acquiescence was given, especially in certain centuries, to intolerance and even the use of violence in the service of truth" (n. 34-35). I think that all our Christian communities have need to reflect on this statement and examine their own consciences. For his church, Pope John Paul II states:

Yet the consideration of mitigating factors does not exonerate the Church from the obligation to express profound regret for the weaknesses of so many of her sons and daughters who sullied her face, preventing her from fully mirroring the image of her crucified Lord, the supreme witness of patient love and humble meekness. From these painful moments of the past a lesson can be drawn for the future, leading all Christians to adhere fully to the sublime principle stated by the Second Vatican Council: "The truth cannot impose itself except by virtue of its own truth, as it wins over the mind with both gentleness and power."

Pope John Paul II took this statement further on March 12, 2000, when in a solemn liturgy in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, he prayed with the many thousands of pilgrims gathered there on that occasion for pardon for all those times in the course of history that members of the church had failed to

"We must learn to live with our differences and trust God to bring them all to a satisfactory end. What I will not do is unilaterally condemn my sisters and brothers in Christ based upon our differences in doctrine insofar as they do not detract from the centrality of Jesus Christ. To do anything other than that, it seems to me, is dangerous."

Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.
Today, February 2001

give the witness that should have been expected of them.

I would like to conclude these reflections with a brief reference to three other events that have taken place during the Jubilee Year 2000, that indicate the value of our attempts at reconciliation through dialogue based on mutual respect and Christian love. For me the following were extraordinarily beautiful moments that will always remain

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among my most precious memories. To have been part of these events was a precious blessing indeed. Only a few years ago, they could not have taken place!

The first such event was the opening of the Holy Door of the Basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls and the ecumenical service that followed, on January 18, 2000, the first day of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. On that day, Pope John Paul II entered the Jubilee Year through the door which represents Christ, together with representatives of 22 other churches, communions, or Christian organizations. On his right was the Archbishop of Canterbury; on his left the representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch. Each of the Christian leaders present participated actively in the service, for which the three readings were taken from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, 12:4-13; the second from the writings of Georges Florovsky, a Russian Orthodox priest; and the third from the evangelical theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

On May 7, 2000, at the Roman Coliseum, Pope John Paul II presided at an Ecumenical Commemoration of Witnesses of the Faith in the Twentieth Century. The Pope has often referred to the twentieth century as one of great Christian martyrdom. In this ceremony he wished to remember all those millions of Christians, from every denomination, who had given heroic witness to the gospel and of their love for Christ, often to the shedding of their blood, under the Nazi and Communist persecutions, as well as in other situations. This also was essentially an ecumenical event with the participation of representatives of 19 other churches, communions, or Christian organizations. Again each representative participated actively. There were a total of 16 readings, covering the various areas and times of persecution. Some were Catholics, of course, but there were writings from Patriarch Tichon of the Russian Orthodox Church; of Ol'ga Jafa, a Russian teacher and painter exiled in 1929 to the Solovki Islands; Paul Schneider, a Lutheran pastor deported to Buchenwald in 1937 by the Nazis; the Anglican Bishop Philip Strong who was interned in a concentration camp in Papua New Guinea by the Japanese during the Second World War, together with his coworkers, eight ministers, and two laypeople; W.G.R. Jotcham, a young Baptist medical missionary from Canada, who died of a meningitis epidemic in Nigeria as he sought to help the victims of that epidemic; and His Holiness Karekin I, Catholics of All Armenians who wrote of the witness given by his people at the time of a persecution that has been considered truly genocide.

Readers of *Theology, News and Notes* will be pleased to know that Professor Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.,

of Fuller Theological Seminary was present at both the above events in his capacity as cochairman of the Roman Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue. On May 7, he proclaimed the final section of Creed, professing the faith of the gathering in the Holy Spirit. The World Evangelical Fellowship was also represented at the May 7 commemoration.

My third fond memory is of March last year, when I had the privilege of accompanying Pope John Paul II on his visit to the Holy Land. There are many wonderful memories of those days, which were primarily in the nature of a pilgrimage to the Christian holy places. But as we are considering reconciliation, I want to recall particularly the visit of the Pope to Yad Vashem, the memorial place of the millions of Jews who suffered persecution and death under the Nazis, and his prayer at the Western Wall of the Temple in Jerusalem. Here again the world was witness to the power of dialogue, carried out with patience and mutual respect. These acts were the culmination of the efforts of the Catholic Church over the past 35 years to move away from the long history of Christian anti-Judaism and to see in the Jewish people our "elder brothers" and to recall that "she (the Church) draws sustenance from the root of that good olive tree onto which have been drafted the wild olive branches of the Gentiles" (Second Vatican Council, *Declaration of the Church to Non-Christian Religions—Nostra Aetate* n. 4).

Since writing this article, Cardinal Cassidy has retired as president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Cardinal Walter Kasper was named his successor on March 3, 2001.



EDWARD IDRIS CARDINAL CASSIDY, a native of Sydney, Australia, was ordained to the priesthood in 1949. He served for a time in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga, Australia, then proceeded to Rome where he earned a doctorate in Canon Law from the Lateran University. In 1955 he joined the Vatican's Diplomatic Corp, serving in India (1955-1962); Dublin, Ireland (1962-1967); El Salvador (1967-1969); and Argentina (1970). He was elevated to Episcopal status in 1970, and posted for duties in Taiwan, Bangladesh, and Burma. In 1979 he was named Apostolic Delegate to Southern Africa and Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to Lesotho, moving in 1984 to The Hague where he was appointed Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to the Netherlands. In 1989 Cardinal Cassidy was named president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, responsible for relationships between the Vatican and all other Christian churches and ecclesial communities. He was created Cardinal Deacon of Santa Maria in Via Lata in 1991. In addition to leading the Pontifical Council, he serves on a number of other congregations, councils, and commissions in the Roman Catholic Church.

Jubilee for the Palestinian Christians

BY BISHOP MUNIB A. YOUNAN
Head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem

As we enter the third millennium, I believe that this will be a time of courageous proactive ecumenism. The church can be divided no more. It is time for the North and the South as well as South and South to find together new strategies for mission and development in our new world. It is time for us to comprehend the common mission of the one church in this world. This is a two-way mission. My reflection is in two parts: first, some theological ideas on the Jubilee; and second, some reflections on the Jubilee and the Palestinian Christian.

A Theological Understanding of Jubilee

The Jubilee is an all-encompassing vision of social and ecological justice, which calls for release from bondage, redistribution of land and wealth, and renewal of the earth. In the biblical tradition, it was the "Sabbath of Sabbaths," a time that occurred every seven Sabbath years, that is, every 50 years. At Jubilee, slaves were to be set free, debts were to be equitably and generously shared among all, and the land was to be given rest from its labor.

The word "Jubilee" appears in only two places in the Bible, Leviticus 25 and 27. It set the agenda of the Jubilee, which calls for right relations between people and with God's creation. It is a call which is echoed elsewhere in the Old Testament and especially in the prophets. It is also central to Jesus' ministry "to bring good news to the poor . . . to proclaim release to the captives, and . . . to let the oppressed go free" (Luke 4:18). So the word *Jubilee* may not be a centerpiece of biblical writing, but the concept of Jubilee is an absolutely central theme for our living faith.

In 1994 Pope John Paul II described the Jubilee as an effort "meant to restore equality among the children of Israel, offering new possibilities to families which had lost their property and even their personal freedom. . . . The riches of creation were to be considered as a common good of the whole humanity. . . . The Jubilee year was meant to restore this social justice."¹

The Jubilee text was written in the sixth century BCE, when the Israelites were in exile and in need of a hopeful vision. As David Williamson explains it, this is exactly what they were given with the Jubilee passage: "God's Jubilee must not be understood as a dream. . . . Whoever invented the Jubilee knew that

not much could be offered to the people; but knew even more certainly that there was a divine obligation to offer as much as possible. . . . God's law makes people free: not only in eternity, but today."²

Rosemary Radford Reuther says that Jubilee is part of "our task of creating a just, peaceable society. It is my model for this continual work of renewal in every generation."³

Two essential remarks that need to be understood in the theology of the Jubilee include the following:

- First, the practice of release in the Jubilee expresses the relationship of the people of God with Yahweh. It involves the motifs of creation, liberation, and covenant. The divine order demands a Sabbath (i.e., the recognition of a cycle of activity and rest and renewal). A people which has been liberated from foreign oppression by Yahweh denies its very origins when it enslaves its own members: "Remember you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you; this is why I am giving you this command today" (Deut. 15:15). The covenant suggests that "the practice of debt-release is part of the covenant motif of future blessing as promised in the book of Exodus: 'Worship the Lord, your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. . . . I will grant you a full span of life.'"⁴
- Second, the Jubilee is not a rallying cry of the oppressed; rather, it is a call to repentance on the part of the oppressors. If I may use a new language: The Jubilee is the initiative of the strong, powerful, and rich to work for the welfare and peace, *salaam* and *shalom*, of the whole people and to provide important mechanics for promoting social, economic, and political stability and cohesion. Thus, from a Palestinian point of view, the Jubilee has to move in three areas.

The Restoration of Land

The Jubilee theology asserts that the land belongs to Yahweh. The Psalmist said in Psalm 24:1, "To God belongs the earth and that which fills it, the productive land and those dwelling in it." This also means that the human being is a steward on the land that belongs to God. Thus, the people of God are to care for God's land in such a way that it is used for devel-

The word Jubilee may not be a centerpiece of biblical writing, but the concept of Jubilee is an absolutely central theme for our living faith.

The scale of dispossessed people in the beginning of this millennium is staggering. Millions of people have become refugees, as a result of wars often fought in the name of religion itself.

opment and solidarity rather than for exploitation and division. The Jubilee's confession in the lordship of Yahweh is at the same time a commitment to just social solidarity. If we take this seriously, we must recognize the following realities.

The scale of dispossessed people in the beginning of this millennium is staggering. Millions of people have become refugees, as a result of wars often fought in the name of religion itself. The Jubilee involves more than the provision of temporary refuge in host countries. It requires renewed dedication to the serving of a just settlement in people's home countries. This is also true for Palestinian refugees.

Only in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict are these biblical texts used to justify political ends. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a conflict over land *per se*. As the negotiations between the Arab countries and Israel are going on, I believe that the theology of the Jubilee can guide us to an equitable solution. Sometimes one has to hold land in order to achieve peace, but sometimes one has to give up land for the cause of equitable peace. For the Palestinian and Arab cause at the moment, the restoration of the land is but a sign of just peace in the area.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not a religious conflict, but a conflict over land. The Oslo agreements with the successive agreement have really spoken of the return of land. However, there are four issues that are on the negotiating table for the final status: Jerusalem; the settlements built within 1967 borders; the right of return for Palestinian refugees; and water. The final status will not succeed, however, if it is not accompanied by economic growth.

The core problem of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the Palestinian cause. If this is not solved, no stable peace will be achieved. For this reason, the *two-states* solution—living justly, equally, equitably, and peacefully—is the only solution for real peace. The theology of the Jubilee reminds us of the seriousness of justice for the sake of peace and the God of peace.

The status of Jerusalem must also be solved in a just way. East Jerusalem, according to United Nations resolutions, is considered to be occupied territory. The only solution is a shared Jerusalem for the two nations as well as for the three religions—namely, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. There will be no peace in the Middle East without a just peace in Jerusalem and for Jerusalem.

Release from Debt

In the biblical text, this referred to both the forgiveness of debilitating debts and the release of enslaved labor. The World Council of Churches, the Vatican, the Lutheran World Federation, and other world communities have called for the liberation of poorer nations from the burden of the backlog of unpayable debt owed by their governments to other governments. The continuation of paying high interest

to the World Bank, or the International Monetary Fund and others, is creating unbearable situations. It is widening the gap between the well-developed countries and the South. We hope that the Jubilee will search for ways and means of easing the debt burden of poorer countries. In keeping with the realism of Jubilee, this is more reform from above than revolution from below. The big G8 and European countries have a large responsibility to secure the freedom of these nations and a healthy infrastructure despite the debt burden.

The Redistribution of Wealth

In biblical times, wealth and power were measured by the ownership of land. By calling for the redistribution of wealth, Jubilee called for land reform. Today, we define wealth in broader terms than land ownership. The modern world is horrifying in its wealth distribution. The nature of income disparity in the twenty-first century is that the wealthiest 20 percent of the world's population is more than 60 times wealthier than the poorest 20 percent. There are 440 billionaires in the world, and each one of them has more wealth than do 6,000,000 of the world's poorest people combined!⁵ The debt crisis, high levels of military spending, the concentration of commerce among multinational corporations, and speculative investments all contribute to the concentration of wealth—and poverty—in our world. Poverty does not simply translate into the inability to acquire material goods. It means that the people are denied the right to personal and social security, medical help, and basic education. The call for Jubilee is to implement seriously the Human Rights Declaration for every nation.

As we talk about the world situation, we also should mention the situation of the church. There are many churches in the South that are the outcome of missions during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These churches, however, were not taught by the missionaries to deal with income-generating issues. They were and are still dependent on the benevolent grants of the North. Our Lutheran Church in the Middle East is one of them. As we see that the wealth in the Lutheran world is concentrated in the rich countries or in the rich churches, as we believe that wealth and resources are the gift of God, and as we are suffering as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem from a half-million-dollar debt that was used for a good cause, we urge you and appeal to you in the Jubilee year to do your utmost to assist us to reduce it.

The Palestinian Church and the Jubilee

The celebration of the Jubilee is the celebration of the Palestinian Christian church. The Christian church celebrates the incarnation of our Lord Jesus

Christ in Bethlehem, his refuge to Egypt, his life in Nazareth and teachings in Galilee, his suffering, resurrection, and ascension in Jerusalem. We celebrate the festival of our countryman, our Savior. He still lives in his Christian Palestinian church that is part and parcel of his Body, whose head is our Lord. For this reason, the Jubilee is the celebration of the local Palestinian Christian church.

The Palestinian Christian church has carried the torch of resurrection in a variety of situations and contexts. Since the first Christian celebration of Pentecost, Palestinian Christianity has existed. If you read Acts 2:11, it is written that "Cretes and Arabs in our own languages, we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." This is a clear note that among the earliest founders of the church were Palestinian Christians. Thus, the early church was a multicultural church.

Most of us Palestinian Christians trace our roots to the early church. Palestinian Christianity is an integral part of the Arab world. We consider ourselves to be salt in the society, or leaven in the dough. As we commence the third millennium, we must see that we are called to assume a prophetic role at this time of history where God destined us to be. We have challenges but they are the ones that consolidate our determination for a clear mission. Among these challenges are the following:

The Challenge of Emigration—A primary challenge is that of emigration from the Holy Land. This exodus of indigenous Palestinian Christians can be attributed to a variety of factors. Among them are the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the instability of the political and social environment, the absence of economic and employment opportunities, and the weakening of the Arab nationalist bond.

While the Christian leadership has become increasingly indigenized in recent years, the dwindling number of Christians poses a special concern. How can we maintain the viability of our communities when the younger members opt to leave? The average age of Christians in the Holy Land is 32 years of age, which is double the average age of Palestinians in general. Our fears are that our churches will become museums. We appeal to the world community to assist us to stop the hemorrhage of Palestinian Christians. We can be helped through community-based education that promotes a deeper belonging and clearer identity, by assisting small businesses through loans and by building housing projects. In addition, I believe that we must develop a contextualized theology that ties us to the land of our biblical culture and society. This is the seriousness of the Jubilee, that we must make a just change. For this reason, I urge your support, for there is no Holy Land without "holy" people of the land.

The Challenge of Education—The Evangelical

Lutheran Church in Jerusalem has a very significant educational ministry with 3,000 children in five schools. According to the statistics from the 1998-1999 academic year, the student bodies include 6 percent Lutheran, 31 percent Muslim, and the remaining 63 percent from other Christian churches. You might ask why churches in the region even have such schools. There are at least three answers:

- First, these Christian schools protect Arab Christianity. It is our direct living witness in our society. We offer quality education. We teach tolerance and equal and just coexistence in a multi-religious society. We promote moderation and thus combat any kind of fanaticism or fundamentalism. We develop the Arab identity of our Christianity.
- Second, the Christian school forms the backbone of Palestinian education. Although about 15 percent of the students in Palestine are enrolled in Christian schools, the role of these schools is much larger than the 15 percent would seem to indicate. They are the source of a good cooperative relationship between the Palestinian church and the government.
- Third, our Christian schools play an active role in developing the Palestinian curriculum. It is the curricula that decides the fate of the future civil society. If it is monolithic, then I am afraid that it nurtures fundamentalism. If it is pluralistic in nature, then it grows a generation that is pluralistic and democratic, as well as able to be open to a multicultural society. This challenge is the responsibility of the Palestinian Christians. We need to be courageous and prophetic for the sake of a good future for our prosperity.

The Ecumenical Challenge—There are four families of the church in the Middle East. They are the Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Catholics, and evangelicals [Protestants]. The four families are dispersed into 13 recognized churches in Jerusalem. Our members are 2 percent of the total population. Our ecumenical relations are constructively developed. It seems, sometimes, that our history has taught us to live together and witness together despite the doctrinal differences we have. As all of our four families are members of the Middle East Council of Churches, there are certain issues that we need to develop, such as the joint celebration of Easter among Christians in the Middle East, and a common translation of the Lord's Prayer and the Nicene Creed. These may sound like small matters, but they are specific to the Middle East context as a sign of our unity and witness.

The 13 churches in Jerusalem are exerting a major effort on existential issues that need to be clarified. These include:

- *The role of the Christian churches to develop a pluralistic curriculum for Palestinian young people.*

Palestinian Christianity is an integral part of the Arab world. We consider ourselves to be salt in the society, or leaven in the dough.

We need to insist on a continuous relationship between Christians and Muslims that is open and frank, based on ongoing dialogue; clarity of shared vision; and objectivity on both sides.

- *The role of the churches in developing the Palestinian constitution.* We would like to see our constitution reflect the real characteristics of the Palestinian people. We want it to be pluralistic, to promote human rights, to encourage the role of women, and to build a modern civil democratic society. This challenge is an essential one at this stage in our history.
- *The status of the Christian churches in the State of Palestine and the State of Israel must be legislated.* The Christian churches are not asking for privileges, but for rights. And there is much on which we can negotiate with both states for the continuation of our living witness. The Vatican has already signed a legal person agreement with the State of Israel and is negotiating with the State of Palestine. We are told that what applies to the Catholic Church will apply to the others. However, we need to cooperate and coordinate together as we always do for the sake of the future of Christianity in our land. We want to secure the local and the international presence. As a local church, we are the local expression of the Church worldwide. Clarity helps continuity.
- *The development of a Christian instruction curriculum that is ecumenical and accepted by all the churches,* as well as teaching Christian education for Christians, not only in the Christian schools, but also in the governmental schools. A joint church and ministerial committee is working on the first- and sixth-grade textbooks. This is the first time in our history for such an ecumenical project.
- *The everyday challenge of social and political justice in our country.* The Palestinian church is the voice of the voiceless for everyone who is suffering in our region.

Christian-Muslim Relations—Christian-Muslim relations are, in general, quite healthy. In recent years, we have witnessed the politicization of Islam by different groups. This has left Arab Christians in a difficult position, questioning where they stand and how they relate to Muslims and Islam in our immediate context. Some Christians have felt fear, whether justified or not. Others have withdrawn and left, believing that Arab society is going the way of an Islamic society that is not open to others. Many of these positions are based on lack of knowledge, ignorance, and fear. Accordingly, we need to affirm that Arab Christianity will live with Islam and that we have our role as history teaches us. We need to insist on a continuous relationship between Christians and Muslims that is open and frank, based on ongoing dialogue; clarity of shared vision; and objectivity on both sides; as we pose the problems, challenges, and possibilities. Our relations must continue to be a paradigm of equal coexistence for the world.

As Palestinian Christians, we have a dual role. First, we must dialogue with our own society on existential issues. Second, we need to teach the North and the South the art of understanding Islam and what it means to coexist with Muslims. As Palestinians in the new millennium, we want to be the voice of Islam to those in the West and we want to be their voice to Islam.

Christian-Jewish Relations—In spite of the effects of politics in the Middle East, we cannot but acknowledge the historical common ground that ties us, as Christians, to Judaism. But relations and dialogue between the Arab Christian community and Jews needs much intensive work and investment. This investment is not one-sided, nor can we completely separate it from political developments. We need to dialogue with the Jews.

Nine years ago, prior to the current peace process, I initiated the local Palestinian Christian and Israeli Jewish Dialogue. We observed that our agenda was different from a Western one. It is not established on the basis of guilty feelings. As a Palestinian, I would say that the guilt of the West is that they made us the victims of the victims. We are seeking a dialogue that strengthens peacemaking and, thus, seeks the common values of justice, equality, peace, and reconciliation from all traditions. As I preached in one of the synagogues to 140 rabbis, I did not come to blame—I came to seek ways and means for a good future for their children and our children. Dialogue must be a way to educate for peace, to repent, and jointly to seek for building a just future.

The Challenge of Reconciliation and Peace Education—Peace education is high on our agenda. We believe that peace education and reconciliation must start now and not when the politicians sign the peace treaties. The church should be prophetic in the times of crises. We are aware that a conflict of more than half a century has created hatred, animosity, prejudices, and demonization. For this reason, the church, together with the synagogue and the mosque, must seek the seeds of the good values in religion that teach us: "Love your neighbor as yourself." It is our understanding that using the Bible or the Holy Writings to justify injustice is counterproductive. We have the Israeli child who lives in fear, and the Palestinian child who also lives in fear and oppression. Peace education will liberate the Israeli child from the fear of thinking that his or her security is in arms, to an understanding that Israeli security is in a liberated Palestinian neighbor. The Palestinian child must be liberated from fear and oppression to discover that Palestinian security lies in a liberated Israeli neighbor. This peace education helps both to see God in the other, to accept the *otherness* of the other, and to recognize each other's human, civil, political, and religious rights. For this reason, we are

calling for the curricula of both nations to be ones that promote peace education.

At the inauguration of the Interfaith Coordinating Community in Israel center (ICCI) in Jerusalem, I noted that when we arrive in heaven, God will not ask the Israeli and the Palestinian, the Jew, the Christian, or the Muslim, "How much did you consolidate your own community?" Rather, God will ask, "How much did you promote peace education toward the other who was or is the enemy?"

The role of the Palestinian church is to be a minister of reconciliation. Palestinian Christians have a prophetic role in reconciliation in which we teach the people forgiveness, equal coexistence, equity, and mutual recognition of the rights of the other. With all humility, our Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem is doing that work of peace education in our schools and congregations. We have exchanges between some of our schools and Jewish schools. We have also initiated dialogue among the three religions. We do that out of our conviction that the church in Jerusalem in the third millennium is called to be a catalyst of just peace, to be bridge builders of confidence between the two nations—namely, Israelis and Palestinians—and the three religions, and also to be ministers of reconciliation. Our church in Jerusalem is called to be a catalyst of peace education and ministers of reconciliation in spite of all the difficulties we face. We believe that now is the *kairos* of reconciliation. This is our challenge in the Jubilee.

The Challenge of the Jubilee Year—The calculation of the commencement of the third millennium is the anniversary of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Thus, it is the feast of the Body of Christ, which is the Church. It is the feast of all Palestinian Christians in every city, town, and village. They have remained steadfast in their faith for 2000 years. At the moment, due to emigration, we feel endangered. We believe that the Church worldwide must celebrate with the local church.

However, there are many attempts from apocalyptic and dispensationalist groups, to harm the local Palestinian church.

Groups that promote a kind of "Christian" extremism and fanaticism harm the local Palestinian church as well as strain the good relations between Christians and Muslims and between Christians and Jews that have taken centuries to build up. We ask Christians worldwide to celebrate this Jubilee with us to strengthen the local Palestinian church in its witness and ministry as well as to consolidate her prophetic role in peace education and reconciliation. We must celebrate the Jubilee in humility and repentance. We are to confess that sometimes we have projected a Christianity of triumphalism and not of the cross during the last century and millennium. This Jubilee is a call from Jerusalem to Christianity worldwide to offer the Christianity of the cross, which is

sacrificial, imbued with love, forgiveness, freedom, and reconciliation.

Epilogue

Many have asked us in this Jubilee: "How can we support you?" The Salvadoran Jesuit Jon Sobrino answered: "The third world hopes for and demands a Jubilee and . . . cries out for solidarity."⁶ The general secretary of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, wrote in the *Financial Times* in January 2000: "There are a great number of people who need not just words of sympathy from the international community, but a real and sustained commitment to help end their cycles of violence and launch them on a safe passage to prosperity."⁷ We answer the church in the U.S.A. and the world by saying, "You are our ambassadors and our partners. Be our support in every good deed of love and witness for the sake of Christ. Help us to continue our ministry of love where God has called us to be in his land of the resurrection. Pray for us and be interested in our mission. Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, you belong to us and we belong to you. Our mission is yours and yours is ours. This is the communion that Jesus blessed. *So may God bless you as our partners in this mission.*"

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Pope John Paul II, *Tertio Mellenio Adveniento*, 1994.
- ² *Sounding the Trumpet: An Ancient Call for Renewal*, 1999.
- ³ *Sounding the Trumpet: An Ancient Call for Renewal*, 1999.
- ⁴ Exodus 23:25-26.
- ⁵ UNDP, 1996.
- ⁶ Jon Sobrino, "Jubilee: An Appeal to Conversion," 1996.
- ⁷ *Financial Times*, January 2000.



BISHOP MUNIB A. YOUNAN, born in Jerusalem, was educated in Lutheran schools and is a graduate of the Al-Ahliya College in Ramallah. From 1969 to 1972 he studied deaconry in Jarvanpaa, Finland, before continuing his theological studies at the University of Helsinki. He graduated with a master's degree in theology and was ordained at

the Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem 1976. He served first as an assistant pastor in Jerusalem (1976-1979), then he held pastorates in Beit Jala (1979-1984) and Ramallah (1984-1997), before becoming the head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem. He is one of the cofounders of the Al-liqa' Center for Religious Studies in Jerusalem and continues to serve in a variety of positions within the purview of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). He is a member of the LWF Council; vice president of the Board of Trustees for the Ecumenical Institute in Strasbourg, France; and chairperson for the Asian Regional Church Leaders Conference. He has also played an active role in the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). He is currently a member of the Executive Committee of the MECC.

The church, together with the synagogue and the mosque, must seek the seeds of the good values in religion that teach us: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Rebuilding a Broken Society

AN INTERVIEW WITH FRANK CHIKANE

Director-general of South Africa, under President Mbeki

BY CECIL M. ROBECK, JR.



The Reverend Dr. Frank Chikane currently serves both as the director-general of South Africa and as an ordained minister of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa. During the 1970s he was imprisoned for actions that he viewed as consistent with his role as a pastor, but which the apartheid government viewed as treasonous. In 1985 he was

detained and tried for treason, but the charges were dismissed. His denomination suspended his ministerial credentials, requiring him to give up his pastorate and leave the parsonage.

Rather than leaving the denomination, the Reverend Chikane became a member of his father's congregation. He pursued graduate work in theology under the auspices of the University of South Africa and became the general secretary of the Institute for Contextual Theology. While he was at the institute, Reverend Chikane was instrumental in giving birth to the Kairos Document, a statement that set forth a theological rationale for the overthrow of apartheid.

He became the general secretary of the South African Council of Churches in 1987. During his term in the SACC, he pursued a master's degree in theology at the University of Natal, South Africa. In 1989 he was nearly assassinated when the security police intercepted his luggage at the airport and put poison on his clothing and in his suitcases that was absorbed into his skin. He had four nearly fatal attacks before the poison was diagnosed.

Since the downfall of the apartheid regime, Frank Chikane has played significant roles within the Apostolic Faith Mission as well as the government. He helped to transform his own denomination from four separate and segregated groups into one united nonracial church. In 1993 he was appointed as part of the Independent Electoral Commission to manage the first democratic elections in South Africa. After the elections he left for Harvard University to complete a master's degree in public administration. His willingness to take public stands during the apartheid era contributed to his rise within the African National Congress. He was invited by President Mbeki to serve first as his special adviser and later as his director-general.

Robeck: Frank, would you tell us a little about your background? Our readers would like to know something of your childhood and the conditions under which you were reared.

Chikane: I was born in 1951 and reared in Soweto, Johannesburg, with my seven brothers and sisters. One of my brothers passed away at the age of 12. Because of my mother's ill health, she lived most of the time with our extended family in rural Bushbuckridge, while my father lived in Soweto. In our earliest years, we lived with our mother. But once we started school, we had to cross over to Soweto, to beat the "pass laws."

My mother was a very spiritual and committed Christian. She had a great influence on all of us, including my father, James. Our dad worked for a floor-sanding company, but later became a pastor with the Apostolic Faith Mission, also because of my mother's influence.

I was educated in the township schools in Soweto. In 1972 I pursued a bachelor of science degree at the University of the North in Turfloop, Pietersburg, South Africa, a "bush" university for people of color. (We called the black universities "bush" universities then because they were built as far away as possible from the cities of the country, while white universities were in the city centers. This was meant to keep blacks out of the cities, which were considered white areas.)

Robeck: How would you describe your own spiritual growth and development during that time?

Chikane: As I said, my mother was an active Christian. My father became more active as time passed. My grandmother was also very spiritual. I remember her assisting me to prepare the first sermon I preached when I was eight years old (on John 14). During the 1960s, my mother finally moved to Soweto because of repeated "forced removals" from Bushbuckridge, where our family lost almost everything we owned.

Together—as a family in a four-room house in Soweto—we held regular family devotions. Soon other people began to join us and, ultimately, our home became a church. As the numbers increased

beyond the size of our dining room, we had to find alternative accommodation for the church. My father was later ordained as a deacon and elder and, ultimately, became the pastor of that congregation. Given the participatory nature of Pentecostal churches, I was encouraged to participate in the life of the church. As a son of the pastor, I served as church secretary and went out with my parents on evangelistic tours. I also preached, taking turns with my parents and my elder brother.

But during my high school years, I was confronted by the restlessness of my schoolmates who believed that the gospel was a "white men's thing," and that it was used to "tame" our people, to colonize them, and subject them to the inhuman apartheid system. In fact, a strong view was held that the white missionaries gave blacks the Bible and took away the land of their forefathers. On the other hand, our white brothers and sisters in the Lord supported the apartheid system, which not only dispossessed people of their land but also denied them their basic human rights. They developed a theological justification for the apartheid system, treated blacks like subhumans, and entrenched the system into the church. All this troubled me greatly.

My troubled soul led to a critical review of the faith, the Word, theology, and the history of missionary endeavors in South Africa and elsewhere. In the face of a threatening challenge at high school, I addressed students and teachers on the need for a critical understanding of history; the reinterpretation of the Scriptures; the rereading of the Bible, and the liberating of the gospel from human beings who were misusing it to secure their personal and collective interests.

This was the beginning of the development of a theology to liberate the gospel from the beneficiaries of the apartheid system and expose fraud. But this was also the beginning of my exposure to the security forces of the apartheid regime.

Robeck: You studied at a difficult time during your country's history. Were you well received at the university as a Christian?

Chikane: Yes and no. There were other Christians at the university, and we found one another. But our meetings took place off campus. I had become a member of the Student Christian Movement (SCM), an evangelical group, when I was in high school. At the university the student body denied us the right to meet on campus. Many in the "black consciousness" movement criticized black Christians at the time, claiming that Christianity was a "white persons" religion. As a result, they assumed that we had been brainwashed and labeled us "non-whites," which was a very derogatory term.

Together with some of my colleagues from Soweto—who had already been exposed to this critique—we challenged the campus with our new perspectives of the liberating gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We reaffirmed that, according to the Scriptures, black people were also made in the image of God, and that for this reason, no one (including whites in the country as well as in the church), could take this away from us. No one had the right to treat black people as if they were less than human.

As you can see, this was the beginning of the development of what was known as "black theology" in our minds, as part of our combat against false Christianity and an engagement with the black consciousness movement of the time. This critical view of the gospel, to liberate it from its own history, enabled us to bring the gospel to the center of the campus again. Accordingly, the SCM got reinstated on campus. By 1974 the Christian leaders on campus were elected to the leadership of the student body and the students' organization.

Robeck: When you listened to the criticisms that students in the black consciousness movement raised regarding the way Christianity was being lived out by other Christians, how did that affect you?

Chikane: Early on, I saw inconsistencies between what was preached or being said and what was actually practiced. As I reflected on these



discrepancies, I decided that the Bible had to be looked at differently from the way it was understood by many Christians. In particular, I took a long look at the role that Christians played in oppressing others, especially in our apartheid situation. That meant looking at how white Christians oppressed blacks. That was a very

Early on, I saw inconsistencies between what was preached . . . and what was actually practiced. As I reflected on these discrepancies, I decided that the Bible had to be looked at differently from the way it was understood by many Christians.

Squatters' settlements blight the outskirts of Soweto, South Africa, in November 2000.

During my high school years, I was confronted by the restlessness of my schoolmates who believed that the gospel was a "white men's thing."

The one responsible for my torture first introduced himself to me as a deacon of the white congregation of my church. . . . I was told that I was going to die, slowly but surely, unless I cooperated.

challenging period for my faith. As I said earlier, blacks had come to the conclusion that whites had given them the Bible and used it to steal the land. They had used it to stay in power and to subject the blacks to their way of life. While many students rejected the Bible, I decided to reject the white interpretations of the Bible. In a sense, my experience of apartheid South Africa, and the questions raised by many of my peers, ultimately drove me to search out a liberationist perspective that made sense in our context and took the Kingdom of God seriously.

Robeck: *How did you move from the pursuit of a physics and math degree into the ministry?*

Chikane: I went to the university in 1972, pursuing what I believed God had gifted me to do. But I also knew that I had a call to ministry. So even while I was studying at the university, I enrolled in a correspondence course of theological studies with our denominational Bible college. In late 1974 we celebrated the freedom of Mozambique from its Portuguese colonialists. This led to the detention of some of our colleagues and the closure of the university. For security reasons, I did not return to the university the following year, but taught at a high school for a few months. Having been made aware that the apartheid security police were restless about me teaching at the school, I left there also and went to work with Reinhardt Bonkke and his evangelistic organization, Christ for All Nations. I only stayed a year, but I learned a great deal about our situation in South Africa during my time there.

One of the most significant facts was that people were preaching the gospel in South Africa for very different reasons. I remember that we received many letters from white Christians asking

"How rich are the beneficial teachings which resonate in the words of the Lord: 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust' (Matt 5: 44-45)! To love the one who offends you disarms the adversary and is able to transform a battlefield into a place of supportive cooperation. This is a challenge that concerns individuals but also communities, peoples, and all humanity."

Pope John Paul II
Papal Message, Vatican City, February 9, 2001

us to come to this or that location because of the threat of terrorists or "communists" in that region. I knew that they were talking about my people who were engaged in the struggle for liberation. Anyone who opposed the apartheid system at that time was labeled a terrorist or communist in the

context of the "cold war." I didn't view them as terrorists or communists, but as people who needed to be given their proper and rightful place in South African society and in the Kingdom of God. In this regard, we seemed to be preaching at cross-purposes.

Robeck: *What did you do when you left Christ for All Nations?*

Chikane: I continued my theological training. In June 1976 I became the pastor of a congregation in Kagiso, Krugersdorp, near Soweto. Just a week after I began my work there, there was a major country-wide student uprising, which also affected Kagiso township. Virtually every government building or shop was burned to the ground! Then the people came to me and asked me to help them find their family members who had disappeared in the uprising. I realized more than ever that the kind of classic, private spirituality that is so frequently found in Pentecostal and evangelical churches was not going to work here. I had to expand my way of thinking if I was going to help my congregation. I arranged with a human rights firm of attorneys and made inquiries into the whereabouts of those who had disappeared, mainly in the hands of the security forces. This act of ministry led to my second detention in June 1977.

Robeck: *Tell us about the Apostolic Faith Mission during the years of apartheid.*

Chikane: The AFM was founded in 1908 when two men, Tom Hezmalhalch and John G. Lake, fresh from the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, came to South Africa with the Pentecostal message. The church expanded, and today it is the largest Pentecostal denomination in South Africa, with a membership of over one million, in addition to many more adherents.

Following the lead of the Reformed churches in South Africa, and like the larger culture of that day, the AFM soon formed into several divisions: Black, Coloured, Indian, and White. The white Afrikaner minority ran everything, and oversaw what they called the "mission" churches, which were actually in the majority. The Black Mission may have constituted as much as 80 percent of the total then. Everyone shared the same doctrine, and some white missionaries were made overseers of the black churches. But for all intents and purposes, the church was divided into four segregated churches.

Robeck: *Frank, in your autobiography, No Life of My Own (Orbis, 1989), you tell about being arrested, imprisoned, and tortured. Would you be willing to tell our readers something about those experiences?*

Chikane: I wrote the book so I wouldn't have to repeat this painful story over and over. But in short, I was arrested or detained on several occasions, the first time in January 1977, when I was detained and tortured for a week because the authorities thought I was guilty of something which I did not do. They used third-degree methods of torture on me. Some of my fellow detainees died during those torture sessions. In the end, they released me without charging me.

Later that year, in June, I was detained because the police thought I was aiding those who were involved in various uprisings, because I had ministered to the families of the detained and had assisted them to find lawyers to search for those who had disappeared. I was merely serving as a pastor, but in the mind of the police, that made me just as guilty as the people I had helped.

At first I was jailed in Krugersdorp, where over a six-week period, I was subjected to various forms of torture, from beatings with fists and broomsticks and being burned with cigarette stubs—to being forced to maintain a crouching position on an imaginary chair for hours while my feet were cuffed together. I was hung in midair—head down—with my hands and feet over sticks, and then beaten with broomsticks until I passed out.

You will understand that after all the propaganda of conservative Christianity and leaflets about communists hanging people head down, I was bound to conclude that the problem was the "log" in the eyes of Christians, rather than communists.

Finally, they sent me to Rustenburg Prison, where I was placed in solitary confinement until January 1978. Upon my release, they charged me with something like "public violence." Within a week, the bogus charges were dropped. But on the morning of my release I was detained again and brutally assaulted for many hours. They also rooted out my hair with their hands and assaulted me until I collected every bit of it from the floor of the police station.

Robeck: *When we first met in 1987, you told me that the man who was responsible for your torture in prison was a deacon in your own denomination. As you know, this issue of Theology, News and Notes is about "reconciliation." How did you deal with that then?*

Chikane: Yes, it's true that the one responsible for my torture first introduced himself to me as a deacon of the white congregation of my church. But he saw me as a threat to state security. He arranged for my continuous, around the clock torture, which lasted for 48 hours. He supervised the torture team that changed shifts three times a

day. I was told that I was going to die, slowly but surely, unless I cooperated.

As cooperating with them meant betraying the cause of justice and the truths of the gospel, I chose rather to die for the sake of Christ. I kept my sanity by thinking about the pain Jesus endured on the cross, about the imprisonment of the apostles, and especially about the role that Christians have in completing the sufferings of Christ as Paul understood it. I told my torturers, in the words of Paul, that "For me to die is gain but to live is Christ." In some very significant ways, my Pentecostal spirituality gave me the strength to survive.

After that man went home, went to church, and came back to find me where he left me, I knew that he could not have peace in his inner self. (If this was not so, then one would conclude that his conscience was dead.) He was so convinced that I deserved to die a painful death, because he believed I was a communist or a terrorist, that one could only sympathize with him. I recalled Jesus' words on the cross, that "they knew not what they were doing!"

Robeck: *How did the Apostolic Faith Mission react to your arrest?*

Chikane: Within weeks after I was placed in Kagiso, Krugersdorp, the church withdrew its financial support of me because of my "political" convictions. For the next three-and-a-half years, I continued to pastor my church though, by working at the University of Witwatersrand's Nuclear Physics Research Unit as an assistant laboratory technician. In 1980 I became a director of a self-help community project, which I developed as part of my ministry. My repeated detentions were clearly an embarrassment for the denominational leaders. After my fourth detention, the regional leadership called me to appear before the Council to account for the community projects I was running, which they argued were not part of my calling.

After completing my theological course work, I applied for ordination in 1980 and was ordained, on the condition that I stay away from politics. I planted two other congregations and engaged in the full spectrum of pastoral duties, leading people to the Lord, and helping them to grow. The following year, however, things got worse in South Africa, and my speaking on social issues got me into trouble. I was summoned to appear before the Council again and accused of being involved in politics, because my name had appeared in the newspapers. I was suspended indefinitely from the ministry and my credentials withdrawn. Immediately after my suspension I was detained without trial for about eight months,

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We believed that there was no possibility of genuine peace and reconciliation between whites and blacks in South Africa without justice. And there could be no justice without eradicating the institutional system of apartheid, which was inherently evil.

during which time my family was evicted from the manse. (This was devastating for my wife, Kagiso.)

Robeck: *What was your response to the church?*

Chikane: From their perspective, the issue was really a political one. I spoke about the black struggle in South Africa; but because I was black and spoke against apartheid, it was viewed as a political act. I suppose I could have left the denomination at that time. But instead, I chose to return to my father's congregation and stayed loyal to the AFM. In the meantime, I worked with those who were the real victims of the apartheid system.

Robeck: *When you were ultimately released from prison, what kind of work did you do?*

Chikane: I joined the Institute for Contextual Theology and continued with my ministry, now with my congregation the people of South Africa, especially the victims of apartheid. I began to look carefully at various kinds of liberation theology, such as black theology, African theology, and Latin American liberation theology. I met with other ministers on a regular basis, many of whom had been detained like I had, and together we talked about our experience and our theology. We decided that our experience did not fit the dominant theological system that we had been given. We needed to look for a better way to express our Christian theology, one that did not contradict the Bible or our experience. Between 1984 and 1986 I pursued a graduate theological program through the University of South Africa, while I served as the institute's general secretary.

Robeck: *Many of our readers are familiar with the now famous Kairos Document that was published in 1985. It seemed to act as a catalyst for other evangelicals and Pentecostals to write similar statements like the Evangelical Witness in South Africa and the Relevant Pentecostal Witness. Although you have said that the document was a product of a group of theologians and Christians, many around you point out your leadership role in its production.*

Chikane: We tried to develop a document that arose from the midst of the struggle in which we found ourselves. It was to be an indictment of apartheid from a Christian, theological perspective. And we did so by describing two extremes. We needed to join the forces of good and fight the forces of evil. The status quo was an evil one, and it could not stand theologically in the place of the good. We wanted reconciliation, but we refused to consider any kind of reconciliation that did not settle the problem of justice. One can get a kind of superficial reconciliation by speaking nicely to one

another, but so long as the evil stands in place between the various parties, it isn't genuine reconciliation.

We tried to put together a document that took justice seriously, one that was intent upon bringing about genuine reconciliation between all parts of South Africa. In the end, the *Kairos Document* was published and it became a focal point for the struggle in South Africa. It also galvanized overseas church support of the issue and formed the basis for a united church front against apartheid.

Robeck: *You not only played a major role in the Institute for Contextual Theology, but you became a successor to Archbishop Desmond Tutu as the general secretary of the South African Council of Churches. How did that happen, especially given the fact that the Apostolic Faith Mission is not a member of the SACC?*

Chikane: Those who appointed me general secretary of the SACC, knowing very well that my church was not only a non-member of the council but very hostile to it, can explain this matter better. My understanding is that the church in South Africa was faced by an extraordinary crisis which required radical solutions beyond the ordinary, thus my appointment. What is more surprising is that they chose a confessed Pentecostal!

Robeck: *As you are well aware, even our brothers and sisters do not always easily accept those who work on issues of reconciliation. Yet you were very public in describing the terrorism of the apartheid leadership of South Africa. You made strong appeals that economic sanctions should be imposed by South Africa's trading partners, and you threw your support toward the "people's struggle to end apartheid." How did you see your call playing into your work for the reconciliation of the people in South Africa?*

Chikane: We believed that there was no possibility of genuine peace and reconciliation between whites and blacks in South Africa without justice. And there could be no justice without eradicating the institutional system of apartheid, which was inherently evil. To end this system, we had to demolish its ideological/theological foundation which gave it its legitimacy.

First, we had to unmask the "cold war" ideological framework, which justified all forms of evil, including racism, in the name of fighting "communism." Second, we focused on the façade of the legitimacy of the regime by declaring racism as immoral and a crime against humanity. We declared apartheid as sin and the theological justification of the apartheid ideology as a heresy and, ultimately, we declared the apartheid regime as morally illegitimate. Because of the way it brutal-

ized the majority of South Africans, it was declared a tyranny. This helped many Christians to find it easier to remove it.

Once it was declared as morally illegitimate, it became easier as well to call for comprehensive sanctions against it, covering all facets of life in South Africa. We believed that only when the regime was removed that genuine reconciliation between whites and blacks could be possible. On hindsight, we were perfectly correct!

Robeck: *I remember receiving a paper in 1989 called Signposts and a newsletter from a group called United Christian Action from a white South African minister in your denomination. These papers portrayed you as an enemy of the church because you worked with the Institute for Contextual Theology, and because you refused to condemn the African National Congress. In fact, they were quite vitriolic in their claims and charges. How did you handle such charges and to what extent were they effective at hurting you personally?*

Chikane: You need to remember that this was a common ploy used by many. I have always been surprised at how easily this method came to be used and how effective it sometimes was. By labeling those who fought against the apartheid system as "communists," those standing for the status quo were able to solicit aid from those who feared communism, particularly during the cold war period. They shifted the focus from apartheid to communism. Such charges always hurt, but when you understand the reasons they are made, you can deal with them.

Robeck: *Many of us in the United States, as well as in many other parts of the world, celebrated when Nelson Mandela was released from prison. Later, I remember watching, with tears in my eyes, the celebration in the streets when he was driven to Cape Town and when he arrived in Johannesburg. Can you describe your feelings at that time?*

Chikane: As you may be aware, I was part of the reception team which went to Victor Vester Prison to fetch Mr. Mandela from prison. It was indeed an unforgettable, emotional experience—to walk into his prison house and arrange how he was going to be moved from there to Cape Town and then to Johannesburg. The enormous crowds, which gathered along the roads we expected to pass through as we drove toward Cape Town, made some of us feel as if Jesus had come. But we knew that it was not yet. We had achieved something extraordinary, but the Kingdom of the Lord was still well ahead of us. At that moment, I knew that our struggle, pain, and suffering had been worth it!

Robeck: *Many of us were also pleased to see Archbishop Desmond Tutu receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his work against apartheid in South Africa. But his emphasis upon truth and reconciliation seemed to be particularly significant.*

Chikane: Bishop Tutu was one of the icons of our struggle. He was totally committed to justice, peace, and reconciliation. He used his Nobel Peace Prize to expose apartheid for what it was to the world. And those in the apartheid system hated him.

Robeck: *The "truth and reconciliation" process that began after the downfall of the apartheid regime was profound. It captivated the imagination of both Christians and non-Christians around the world. Would you describe that process?*

Chikane: As we got closer to our freedom, the biggest challenge was how to rebuild our broken society, as well as heal the wounds caused by apartheid and the brutal war which had ensued. The questions we had to answer were: How do you deal with the fear and the feeling of guilt of whites? How do you deal with the fear of retribution? How do you deal with the anger and bitterness of blacks, including a natural demand for reparation? How do you deal with the question of reconciliation and nation building?

These questions led to a debate among us, which gave birth to the concept of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The first thing we had to agree on was that the Nuremberg type of trials, as a starting point, would not see the light of day in South Africa, especially because there was no victor and no vanquished. There was no way in which those types of trials could bring lasting peace and reconciliation. The second challenge was how to deal with the demand for justice if the Nuremberg type of trials were not an option.

After a long and painful debate, it was agreed that knowing the truth of what happened was the best way to make sure that it would not happen again. This would be done by giving the victims an opportunity to tell their stories, followed by the perpetrators who would also be given the opportunity to "tell the truth," in lieu of indemnity.

This excluded criminal acts which fell outside the accepted international conventions of war. A concept of limited, and—in the main—symbolic reparation was built into this framework. Those who chose not to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission or who failed to tell the whole truth would open themselves to possible prosecution. In this case there would be no indemnity.

This, we believed, was the only way in which we could end the war, stabilize our country (in

It was indeed an unforgettable, emotional experience—to walk into his [Nelson Mandela's] prison house and arrange how he was going to be moved from there . . .



President Nelson Mandela addresses the eighth WCC Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, December 1998.

South African President T.M. Mbeki meets with members of the Secretaries of Christian World Communions in Kempton Park, South Africa, November 2000.



Many of us know that some of our comrades paid the ultimate price—death—and there is no way in which they can be compensated, except to know that what they died for has been achieved.

security terms), and democratize the system. There was a price still to be paid. But we were prepared to pay it!

Robeck: *You are not only a minister of the gospel, you are now a leader in your government. From your perspective, first as a minister, and second as a member in the South African government, how would you assess what this process has achieved?*

Chikane: The first lesson I learned is that the reality we face is a complex one with no easy answers. To normalize our country, we had to

clutches of the apartheid ideology. But the challenge is still great. The old person in us still rears his head from time to time, and at times too frequently. Once you are brought up and socialized in a particular way, it is very difficult to challenge, especially at one's late age.

Robeck: *I saw many positive changes on my recent South African trip—changes that have taken place since my previous visit three years ago. But my wife, Patsy, and I heard some complaints on our visit, that the "truth and reconciliation" process has not fulfilled all that had been hoped. We heard some say that those who told the truth and were forgiven, in the sense of not having to face prison terms for past actions, were also supposed to contribute in some way to reparations. These reparations have not been forthcoming. To what extent is this valid criticism?*

Chikane: It depends on what one expected from the process. If you were looking at the big picture of stability, peace, and democracy, we have gone a long way. But if you are thinking of comparative returns or benefits between the victim and the victimizer, I would say the victim

paid the price for the liberation, stability, and peace in our country.

For those of us who decided to pay the price, including the possibility of death, we expected nothing more than to achieve our noble objective. Many of us know that some of our comrades paid the ultimate price—death—and there is no way in which they can be compensated, except to know that what they died for has been achieved. But one has to recognize that there are some among us who have been maimed, who cannot make ends meet because of apartheid. They have also paid a price, and need to be assisted to live. This is our challenge, for no money can pay for their suffering and pain.

Robeck: *From my perspective, the transformation of South Africa from an unequal and oppressive society into Africa's leading democracy has been one of the great moral and political achievements of the twentieth century. To what do you attribute this peaceful transition of power?*

Chikane: Many people will attribute different reasons for this feat. First, the African National Congress is the oldest liberation movement on the continent of Africa (since 1912). We fought the longest struggle ever. We fought the worst evil ever,

make certain sacrifices and compromises. While putting our eyes to the ultimate—the ideal of the Kingdom of God—we had to creatively think about what some have called "middle axioms," with all their imperfections, knowing that one day, face to face with God, we will have justice. This applies also to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of our country. To deal with the damage done over a period of 300 years is no easy task.

Robeck: *The year 1987 was an important one for the Apostolic Faith Mission in that the church began to move out of its older "apartheid" configuration into a newer "composite" configuration. I know that was painful at first, because the white group refused to accept a constitution that enabled the rest of the branches to come together as one. As of Easter 1996 that all changed, and you had a role in that change. You were even elected deputy or vice president of the church that had once defrocked you. From your perspective, what does the AFM look like today?*

Chikane: The unity of the AFM was a great achievement for me. It was a symbol of the end of our pain within the church. I was saved from a continuous act of confession about the sin of our church even before I preached the gospel. We have fought a good fight to liberate the church from the

which has been compared by some with Nazi Germany. We fought a system which was assisted by major Western powers, a system which possessed weapons of mass destruction (nuclear arsenals and chemical and biological weapons), again assisted by major Western powers, to develop such capability as part of the cold war.

As a result we learned to be strategic (in business, some would say "smart") to achieve our objectives. We knew that it was not through our own power or might, but the noble and moral case we pursued, that we would succeed. Those of us who were Christians believed that God was on our side. And if God was with us, who could be against us? We argued that he who was with us was greater than those who were against us—with all their nuclear arsenals, their chemical and biological weapons, and with all the support of major powers. Our act was an act of faith!

In our strategic planning and thinking, we calculated carefully to ensure that we did not act suicidally. We ensured that we did not inherit ruins. We also knew that our white compatriots also needed to be liberated from themselves and their own system, rather than be destroyed. We did not think that our salvation was in their destruction. We believed that South Africa belonged to all who live in it, black and white, and that any solution lay in building a common future between us.

Robeck: *You have been close to the center of the South African government for the past few years, first under the leadership of President Mandela, and now as director-general in the Office of the Presidency of T.M. Mbeki. How did you come to be in this position, and what does a director-general do?*

Chikane: In the American sense, a director-general is a chief of staff of the presidency, but includes elements of the functions of a national security advisor. The major challenge now is the executive management of government as a whole, in an integrated and coordinated form, for a better life for all.

My major task is to assist President T.M. Mbeki in this leadership and management responsibility. As you may know, I initially joined the then Deputy President Mbeki as a special adviser, to build capacity in his office to take on the delegated tasks from President Mandela as early as November 1995.

I was then appointed director-general in his office. After the 1999 elections, the offices of the president and the deputy president were integrated into one office, called the Presidency, for which I

am the director-general. A minister was also appointed in the Presidency. In a sense I am responsible for the president, the deputy presidency, and the minister in the Presidency, with all their functions.

Robeck: *Frank, do you have any final word you would like to leave with our readers on the theme of reconciliation?*

Chikane: Before going back to the theme of reconciliation, it might interest your readers that throughout this time I have kept up my work with the church. Following my reinstatement into the ministry of the AFM in 1990, I offered my services to the AFM church in Naledi, Soweto. In 1992 I was elected president of the African section of the church, and in 1993 the president of the United (composite) Black Church consisting of the African, "Coloured," and Indian sections of the church. At that time the white section of the church was not yet ready for unity.

And in 1996 I was elected the deputy president of the total united church of the AFM of South Africa, to assist with the unity processes. I am currently the international chairperson of the AFM International, which brings together all the AFM churches on the continent, in Europe, Asia, and Latin America.



I am still the senior pastor of the Naledi Assembly in Soweto. This I believe is important to keep me alive to the demands of the gospel. My engagement with the South African government is with the full blessing of my church.

On the question of reconciliation, I can only say that we have gone a long way in the process of reconciling the country with itself. There are still many challenges and pockets of the old, which do not want to die. But I am certain that we are going there!

We knew that it was not through our own power or might, but the noble and moral case we pursued, that we would succeed.

Delegates gather at the eighth WCC Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, in December 1998.

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