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Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

**THE CHURCH AS AN AGENT OF RECONCILIATION IN
THE THOUGHT OF DESMOND TUTU**

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Theology

by
Trust J. Ndlovu
October 1999

UMI Number: 9956005

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by

Trust J. Ndlovu

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ABSTRACT

**THE CHURCH AS AN AGENT OF RECONCILIATION IN
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by

Trust J. Ndlovu

Adviser: Raoul Dederen

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

**Title: THE CHURCH AS AN AGENT OF RECONCILIATION IN THE THOUGHT OF
DESMOND TUTU**

Name of researcher: Trust J. Ndlovu

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Raoul Dederen, Dr. esc-Sc. Morales

Date completed: October 1999

South Africa was both the first and last bastion of extended European colonial rule in Sub-Saharan Africa. Due to the extensive interaction between the Black and White races over time, who were distinguished by divergent philosophies of life, friction developed between these two major ethnic blocs, as well as the other peoples that came as labor for the Whites or have arisen as a result of miscegenation between the Blacks and the Whites. Archbishop Desmond Tutu holds that racial tension is neither good for South Africa nor even Christian, and insists that it should be eliminated, giving way to reconciliation.

The purpose of this research was to set forth, analyze, and evaluate Tutu's view of the church as a reconciler of alienated people. To attain this goal, Tutu's convictions were considered in the context of his doctrine of the church against the backdrop of his view of the

atonement God wrought through Jesus Christ.

After an overview of South Africa's colonial history and a discussion of Tutu's conception of God's intention for the church, the dissertation focuses on our author's recommendations of how to dismantle racism and ensure that justice reigns in a post-apartheid South Africa.

Finally, the dissertation evaluates the inner consistency, the use of the Bible as a major source of theology and the relative strengths and weaknesses of Tutu's conception of the church as God's agent of reconciliation, from the point of view of his theological system, methodology, and presuppositions.

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I treasure the privilege that was mine to work with my dissertation committee, ably headed by Dr. Raoul Dederen, for their professional competence that helped me keep focused upon the issue on hand.

Finally, I thank my family—especially my brother Justice—and friends for their unfailing moral support and sacrifice. Their selfless renunciation and concern for me deserve my heartiest thanks.

INTRODUCTION

Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu (1931-) served as the chief administrator of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa, a Province covering South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia and St Helena from April 1986 to June 1996. He is currently South Africa's most honored black minister,¹ serving as the chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In his view, "the chief work that Jesus came to perform on earth can be summed up in the word 'reconciliation.'² He, for one, has emphatically accepted

¹Bonganjalo Goba, "A Theological Tribute to Archbishop Tutu," *Hammering Swords into Ploughshares: Essays in Honor of Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu*, Buti Tlhagale and Itumeleng Mosala, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans and Nairobi, Kenya: Africa/World Press, 1987), 61. James Cone concurs adding that "No one has been a greater symbol of Christian hope than the life and thought of Archbishop Desmond Tutu ..." for the people of South Africa ("What is the Church?" *Hammering Swords into Ploughshares*, 155).

²Desmond Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, John Allen, ed. (New York: Doubleday: 1994), 64. Tutu agrees with other scholars upon the centrality of the New Testament theme that Jesus' death terminates the alienation between God and humanity. See George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 423. They assume that human beings have been separated from God by sin and believe that Jesus has brought reconciliation between God and the human race. See Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1981), 486. I. Howard Marshall concurs, adding that "of all concepts used to explain the effects of the cross, 'reconciliation is the one which (along with forgiveness) belongs most clearly to the sphere of personal relationships.'" It represents one of the most concrete ways in which God's new relationship with humanity is expressed. I. Howard Marshall, "The Meaning of 'Reconciliation,'" *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology: Essays in Honor of George Eldon Ladd*, Robert A. Guelich, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), 117. For the various nuances of the debate concerning this doctrine see Gustaf Aulen, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, trans. A. G. Herbert (New York: Macmillan, 1972); James Denney, *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation* (London: Hodder and Stoughton; New York: Doran, 1918); idem, *Studies in Theology*, 3d ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1895); idem, *The Death of Christ*, rev. ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911); Vincent Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice: A Study of Passion Sayings in the Gospels* (London: Macmillan, 1937; New York: St Martin's, 1937), idem *The Atonement in New Testament*

the role of the church as both proclaimer of the Gospel *and* reconciler of humans to God as well as to each other. The latter, i.e., the reconciliation of humans to each other, has taken particular significance for him, given the peculiar situation in South Africa. As an eminent churchman and ecclesialogist, Archbishop Tutu has been insisting on the social implication of such a reconciliation, emphasizing the need to bring wholeness, justice, righteousness, peace and harmony as well as to tear down the middle wall between peoples.¹ This he regards as the *raison d'être* of the church that Jesus established.²

More recently the apartheid era in South Africa has given way to a government of national unity. In principle, people live their lives without dehumanizing forces limiting their movements and human potential. Yet the fact remains that despite the political changes that have occurred in South Africa in April 1994, painful memories persist in the minds of many oppressed South Africans. So they turn to the church. In their eyes, the church is called by God to mediate a process of reconciliation, hopefully in a peaceful manner, and without any significant upheaval.³

Teaching (London: Epworth Press, 1940), and idem, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation* (London: Macmillan, 1941); Peter Forsyth, *The Cruciality of the Cross* (London: Independent, 1948); idem, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909).

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 262. Karl Barth himself has testified to the importance of this approach for the South African situation when he queried: "How much longer will it be possible in the United States and South Africa to ratify the social distinctions between whites and blacks and a corresponding division in the church instead of calling it in question in the social sphere by the contrary practice of the church?" Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, G. W. Bromiley, trans. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), IV/1: 703.

²Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 65.

³David Bosch, "Processes of Reconciliation and Demands of Obedience--12 Theses," *Hammering Swords into Ploughshares*, 165. Klaus Nürnberger agrees, adding that Christians deal with alienation by repentance of wrongs, forgiveness under the cross of Christ, and reconciliation in fellowship grounded in a new life. If they abdicate this way of doing things, they can no longer be congruent. Congruency for Christians means fostering peace in a world

Particularly prominent among those who hold such a view of the church is Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Statement and Justification of the Thesis

As Tutu perceives it, the church is by definition an agent of reconciliation.¹ This, in his eyes, is an imperative task:

If there is to be reconciliation, we [the church] who are ambassadors of Christ, we to whom the gospel of reconciliation has been entrusted, surely we must be Christ's instruments of peace. We must ourselves be reconciled. The victims of injustice and oppression must be ready to forgive. That is a gospel imperative.²

As a Christian theologian,³ Tutu is first and foremost a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ and salvation from sin. For that reason he is also a man of "peace--*shalom*, the active, positive exaltation of justice and social harmony." He symbolizes both in South Africa.⁴ In Bonganjalo Goba's words, "more than other black theologians, Archbishop Tutu has

of turmoil ("Can Christians Overcome Apartheid as Christians? A Response to Martin Prozesky's Evaluation of the National Initiative at Reconciliation," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 54 (1986): 57. Villa-Vicencio argues that the church is a covenant partner with God in the task of reconciling and transforming the world. "To share in such a task is the meaning of sanctification" ("Towards a Liberating Wesleyan Social Ethic for South Africa Today," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* [1989]: 102.)

¹Desmond Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 42; *Crying in the Wilderness: The Struggle for Peace in South Africa* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 31.

²Ibid., 122.

³Tutu had occasion to make this point emphatically in an interview with a Danish journalist when, in February 1990, Nelson Mandela was released from prison: "I am not a politician . . . I am a pastor, I am a pastor. . . . I am a church person who believes that religion does not just deal with a certain compartment of life. Religion has a relevance for the whole of life and we have to say whether a particular policy is consistent with the policy of Jesus Christ or not, and if you want to say that is political, then I will be a politician in those terms. But it won't be as one who is involved in party politics" (*The Rainbow People of God*, 204).

⁴Charles Villa-Vicencio, "Archbishop Desmond Tutu: From Oslo to Cape Town," *Hammering Swords into Ploughshares*, 3.

challenged the Christian community to participate in this process of liberation and reconciliation."¹ Tutu subscribes to a black theology of liberation which emphasizes the value of an incarnational as well as a spiritual ministry to all the people of the land regardless of their color and creed, a value grounded in the belief that all human beings are created in the image of God and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.²

T. S. N. Gqubule of the Wesleyan Theological College in Pietermaritzburg brings the two foci in Archbishop Tutu together clearly and forcefully when he writes: "He is a man of peace who richly deserves the Nobel Peace Prize;³ he is a reconciler, a task which he is engaged in daily; he is a preacher and a pastor as his flock in Johannesburg soon realized; he is a man of deep compassion from whose eyes tears flow readily."⁴ On June 24, 1996, he was awarded the Order of Meritorious Service, Gold Class I by President Nelson Mandela "in recognition of his 'exceptional meritorious service and outstanding contribution in public interest.'"⁵

Tutu's fame has spread beyond the borders of South Africa. In the foreword to *Versöhnung ist unteilbar*, editor Martin Krause asks facetiously: "Who does not know Desmond

¹Goba, *Hammering Swords into Ploughshares*, 69.

²Desmond Tutu, "Theology of Liberation in Africa," *African Theology en Route*, Kofi Appiah-Kubi and Sergio Torres, eds (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 163.

³Which he received in 1984. Two years after he received this nomination twenty-six fellow South African scholars published a volume "to defend and explain the dignity and ministry of a perennially misconstrued person, . . . to explain Tutu's position that peace is not a passive spiritual condition, the absence of conflict." (Itumeleng J. Mosala, "Preface," *Hammering Swords into Ploughshares*, ix).

⁴T. S. N. Gqubule, "They Hate Him Without a Cause," *Hammering Swords into Ploughshares*, 39.

⁵*CI International News*, page 11, Column b, July 24, 1996.

Tutu?" and proceeds to add that he is known world-wide, in any case all over Christendom.¹

In his review of Tutu's *The Rainbow People of God*, Maidel Cason of the University of Delaware names Archbishop Tutu as "one of the foremost Christian leaders of the struggle against apartheid."² His stature as a churchman and an ecclesiologist is attested by the contributions he has made to the programs and activities of the World Council of Churches.³ On the event of Tutu's retirement from active service to the Anglican Church, Dr George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury, made the former the first recipient ever of the Award for Outstanding service to the Anglican Communion.⁴

Tutu's concept of reconciliation appears to be most relevant. In his eyes the time has come for South Africans to think about and work towards normalized relationships since the political and legal underpinnings for separation and alienation have been removed. If the church is to make a contribution to the normalizing process, it ought to be able to clearly express its approach to the issue. Tutu's work seems particularly relevant to the field of

¹Desmond Tutu, *Versöhnung ist Unteilbar: Biblische Interpretationen zur Schwarzen Theologie mit einer Selbstdarstellung des Autors* (Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag, 1984), 7.

²Maidel Cason in *Library Journal* (December 1994): 90.

³For years Tutu has been a member of the World Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission (Marlin VanElderen, "Life and Death Issues," *One World* 109 [1985]: 14). His theological anthropology is cited favorably by Kosuke Koyama of Union Theological Seminary, NY. See "The Ecumenical Movement as the Dialogue of Cultures," in *Faith and Faithfulness: Essays on Contemporary Ecumenical Themes*, Pauline Webb, ed. (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1984), 48. Peter J. Paris J. Paris of Princeton University lauds Tutu's ability to minister to both the oppressor and the oppressed in the South African situation of the apartheid era without losing his own identity. He exudes loving care for his hearers though he clearly abhors the apartheid system. Peter J. Paris, "Reflections on Recent South African Writings," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 9 (1988): 46. Contrarily, Olubayo Obijole, in "South African Liberation Theologies of Boesak and Tutu: A Critical Evaluation," in *Africa Theological Journal* 16 (1987): 201-215, has bones to pick with both theologians. See especially pages 210, 211, and 214.

⁴*CI: International News*, p. 11, column b, July 24, 1996.

theology *per se* since he apparently has succeeded in balancing the proclamation and application of the gospel to the volatile situation from which South Africa is still recovering today. Facets of his ministry may be applied to similar situations by the church as the need arises to do so around the world.

The thesis of this dissertation is that in spite of its undeniable power and effectiveness, Tutu's theology of the church as an agent of reconciliation could have been more comprehensive and could have paid closer attention to the biblical text.

Review of the Literature

Several studies have pursued various aspects of Tutu's theology. In most of these his ecclesiology is studied in broad perspective or in comparison with the viewpoints of other theologians. C. J. Fouche's BD thesis belongs to the first category.¹ While it touches on the subject of reconciliation, it is mainly concerned with the issue of salvation. Mfanyana G. Khabela's dissertation on Tutu's ecclesiology is enlightening in its emphasis on Tutu's holistic approach to the doctrine of the church. Its scope, however, does not allow the author to deal to any major extent with the subject of the church as an agent of reconciliation.² Of a similar extensive scope is D. W. Taylor's M. A. thesis which examines Archbishop Tutu's role in

¹"Die Soteriologie van Manas Buthelezi en Desmond Tutu," University of Pretoria, South Africa, 1982.

²See Mfanyana Gideon Khabela, "A Seamless Garment: Tutu's Understanding of the Role of the Church in South Africa" (Ph.D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1991).

religion and politics.¹ So is M. Maritz's Bachelor of Divinity thesis.² In his comparison of South African and American black theologians Dwight N. Hopkins includes Archbishop Tutu and considers how he combines the quest for liberation with the pursuit of reconciliation. Since his work encompasses more than a dozen scholars, Hopkins hardly had an opportunity to inquire into Tutu's concept of reconciliation with the attention I think it deserves.³

L. G. Schoeman and Julian Edward Kunnie have treated more specific aspects of Archbishop Tutu's theology.⁴ Schoeman wrote both a BTh and MTh thesis. In the first he addresses the issue of Tutu's hermeneutics; in the second he explores the usefulness of Tutu's theology from a missiological perspective. Kunnie deals with theological method in his comparison of Cone and Tutu's theologies.

The scope covered by the studies cited above both leaves open the field for the present investigation and calls for it, especially since "reconciliation" has been the goal of Tutu's preaching in the last two decades. There indeed is need for a careful study of Tutu's understanding of the church as an agent of reconciliation including the challenge it faces in

¹See D. W. Taylor, "Religion, Politics and Symbolic Performance: An Analysis of the Work of Archbishop Desmond Tutu from July 1989 to February 1990" (M. A. thesis, University of Cape Town, South Africa, 1991).

²M. Maritz, "Desmond Mpilo Tutu" (Bachelor of Divinity Thesis, University of Pretoria, South Africa, 1989).

³Dwight N. Hopkins, *Black Theology USA and South Africa: Politics, Culture and Liberation* (Maryknoll: NY: Orbis Books, 1990), passim.

⁴Schoeman's B.Th. thesis is entitled "Die Hermeneutic van Biskop Desmond Tutu se Swart Theologie van Bevryding: 'n Kritiese Evalueer" (University of the Orange Free State, South Africa, 1983), and his M.Th. thesis, "Die Theologie van Biskop D. M. B. Tutu—'n Missiologiese Evalueer" (University of the Orange Free State, 1987). See Julian Edward Kunnie's Th.D. dissertation, "Bridges across the Atlantic: Relating Black Theologies in the United States and South Africa, Focusing on Analytical Methodology with James Cone and Desmond Tutu as Respective Symbolic Figures" (Graduate Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA, 1990).

contributing to peacemaking amidst suspicion, alienation and animosity.

Methodology

The present dissertation is a documentary study based on examination of published sources produced by Archbishop Tutu. The main part of the study will begin with the examination of the fundamentals that form the basis of the church as a community of reconciliation. This method involves, first, a sympathetic description and analysis of the data available in published primary sources. The reliability of my grasp of Archbishop Tutu's theology will be ensured by correspondence or a face to face encounter as this dissertation proceeds. Further, it will involve the evaluation of data thus described and analyzed in terms of their internal consistency. Secondary literature will be consulted where it provides perspective or illuminates the historical and theological contexts.

Since Archbishop Tutu holds that his theology must not ultimately be judged by any standard but the Bible,¹ this study will attempt to examine his theology of the church as an agent of reconciliation against his biblical view on the subject. Are his conclusions built on Scripture or drawn from other sources? How does he use the Scriptures? Do certain biblical statements receive more emphasis than others? To what extent have outside pressures, if any, influenced his views on the subject?

The study also investigates the inner consistency with which Tutu treats the subject, with special regard to the proclamatory, sacramental, social and irenic functions of the church viewed against his background as an Anglican prelate, since his adherence to the Anglican faith

¹"Theology of Liberation in Africa," 168. In keeping with this conviction Archbishop Tutu devoted the whole second chapter of one of his major works to the treatment of liberation as a biblical theme. See *Hope and Suffering*, 48-74.

has substantially contributed to his stance. The study will seek to clarify how these functions of the church relate to each other.

Scope of the Study

Some limitations will affect this research. It is recognized that the historical context in which Tutu lives has played an important part in shaping his thought. An understanding of his interface with the apartheid era in South Africa is unquestionably essential for a fair appreciation of his ecclesiology. Yet consistent with the theological objective of this study, discussion of the milieu is limited to those historical aspects that appear to have a direct bearing on Tutu's life and thought.

Further, since Archbishop Tutu has written no full-fledged systematic treatise on the church, his ecclesiological views will be drawn from his numerous published sermons and addresses available in four volumes, twenty journal articles, half a dozen articles in publications collected by other scholars, and various pamphlets.¹ As mentioned earlier I am planning to correspond with, and if possible, meet the archbishop.

Outline of the Dissertation

Chapter one outlines the historical context in South Africa that has occasioned the need for the church to seek out its appropriate role when people search for the way to peace, further pointing up the relevance of Archbishop Tutu's contribution. This historical chapter also sets forth the role and influence of the Christian Church in that part of the world.

Chapter two provides a description and analysis of Archbishop Tutu's concept of the church as church in broader theological context. This is couched within the framework of

¹There is also a most interesting open letter of Archbishop Tutu to President P. W. Botha. For a list of his publications, addresses and letters see the section on Tutu's works in the selected bibliography.

Tutu's overall theological thought in which ecclesiology holds a major role.

Chapter three addresses the irenic function of the church, namely, the application of its message of the gospel to the day by day life of the people. It examines whether the church can bring peace to South Africa and if so how it should function to facilitate reconciliation.

Finally, chapter 4 is an attempt to evaluate Tutu's ecclesiology from the perspective of inner consistency with regard to the role of the church as an agent of reconciliation, in the context of his narrative approach as well as in light of the biblical texts he draws upon for his concept of the work of the church. In its last part, the chapter summarizes the findings of the study and briefly outlines the implications of Archbishop Tutu's concept of reconciliation for the Christian church at large in terms of topics further studies may seek to examine.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

Edgar Lockwood aptly calls South Africa's history a "history written in blood."¹ Ethnic survival has been a key concept in the dealings between the country's major groupings. The Christian church has not always escaped unaffected by the forces of fraction. Recently, however, some Christian leaders, among them Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, have intensified their efforts to achieve the goals of many South Africans who, through the history of their country, believed that South Africa would achieve her destiny in history if the peoples attempted to live at peace with each other. This chapter is a brief account of the events that have transpired among the peoples and the churches of South Africa from 1652 to the present. It serves as a historical backdrop to the next two chapters which are an exposition of the theological context of Archbishop Tutu's concept of the church as God's agent of reconciliation and a description of the concept itself. Some of the occurrences recounted in this chapter are of the kind that necessitates reconciliation between the peoples of this country while others are steps towards that reconciliation.

¹Edgar Lockwood, *South Africa's Moment of Truth* (New York: Friendship Press, 1988), 16-39.

The Dutch Period (1652-1795)

For at least three centuries, the history of South Africa has been one of ethnic conflict fueled by the will to gain the means of production on one hand, and by the desire to retain them on the other. When, in 1652, Jan van Riebeeck arrived in the Cape of Good Hope at the head of an *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*—VOC— (the United East India Company) expedition, he relied on Khoi Khoi herders for a supply of fresh water, meat, and vegetables.¹ This first contact appeared cordial on both sides, although some Dutch oceanfarers were left with the impression that their supplies would be more reliable if some of their own number could tend gardens and farms in the Cape rather than depend on the Khoi Khoi herdsmen. This sentiment became a reality when nine of them were laid off by the VOC in 1656 and set free to raise cattle and grow crops.²

It was not long before the new Dutch farmers realized that the lands given them by the VOC on the fertile banks of the Liesbeeck River were a claimed possession of the Khoi Khoi herdsmen.³ A war broke out in 1659 over the land, and the Khoi Khoi resistance was overborne. This victory on the White side made it easier to plunder the Khoi Khoi—who were perceived as uncivilized, savage, heathen, and bestial—for increasingly more land.⁴

¹C. W. De Kiewiet, *A History of South Africa: Social and Economic* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 4.

²See Shula Marks, “Southern Africa and Madagascar,” in *A Cambridge History of Africa*, ed. Richard Gray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 3:439-452; idem, “Khoisan Resistance to the Dutch in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” *Journal of African History* 13 (1972): 55-80; Allister Haddon Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1990), 22-41; M. F. Katzen, “White Settlers and the Origin of a New Society, 1652-1778,” in *The Oxford History of South Africa*, ed. Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 1:187-232.

³Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa*, 12.

⁴See Jan van Riebeeck, cited in Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa*, 29-31.

The Khoi Khoi were forced to work for the White settlers on the lands that had been wrested from them. This situation was not conducive to a peaceful co-existence between the White and Black groups living side by side on the land. There was sporadic unrest between them until one and a half centuries later when White commandos systematically tried to destroy the Khoi for the dual reasons of making farmlands available and destroying any chance of *gelykstelling* (coming to the same level with the underclass) between the superior White race and the inferior Black one.¹ This constant conflict between the Khoi Khoi and the Dutch settlers may explain why only negligible missionary activity for the Khoi Khoi was undertaken by the White farmers in this early period. George Schmidt, the founder of the Moravian mission station at Genadendal, had to discontinue his work because he preached that salvation was available to all who believed, a pernicious doctrine in the eyes of the established church which taught the doctrine of predestination. According to the belief of the Dutch Reformed Church, hardly any Blacks could be saved. Schmidt's preaching threatened both the theology and the balance of social life in the Cape.² In the dominant Dutch view, the Khoi Khoi were simply a menace to be decimated in order to free up the land for White occupation. It was assumed that Whites should be allowed to deal with the Blacks as they saw fit and have all the land they wanted without compensation.³

¹See Thomas Pringle, *Narratives of a Residence in South Africa* (Cape Town: Struik, 1966), 226-230.

²John W. de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 2-3; Peter B. Hinchliff, *The Church in South Africa: Church History Outlines* (London: SPCK, 1968), 8-12.

³Katzen, 232; Monica Wilson, "The Hunters and the Herders," in *The Oxford History of South Africa*, ed. Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969-1971), 1:165.

The Period of Imperialism (1795-1902)

The British colonization of the Cape evoked in the Dutch feelings of resentment possibly akin to those aroused by Dutch settlement among the Khoi Khoi. Further, in both cases the victors tended to feel superior to the vanquished, an attitude that was evinced in a general disregard for the preferences of the defeated parties.

Britain considered the Cape an important foothold during the war she fought with Napoleon. As a result, she agreed to hold the Cape in trust for the Prince of Orange. Britain snatched it from the Dutch General Sluyskens (1795) who was unaware of the Prince's arrangement with the English. The Cape reverted to Dutch rule in 1803 only to be grabbed back in 1806, when the British General Baird defeated Dutch General Janssens. The occupation gained permanency through the Peace of Paris in 1814.¹

The first sixty years of British occupancy of the Cape exacerbated the need for land among the settlers. The arrival 600 miles to the east of Cape Town of the 1820 settlers from England increased this pressure while lessening the Cape's capacity to cater to the needs of the Dutch settlers who themselves had a perennial hunger for land. Friction developed between the White groups with the worst points of conflict being the British occupation of Natal and the Orange River Sovereignty around the middle of the nineteenth century. More unrest was introduced as White farmers expanded to the east and north with their dogged determination to subdue the Africans for land and labor. The resolve on the part of the mighty Whites to grab land and that of the populous Blacks to hold it portended more conflict for the future.

¹Peter B. Hinchliff, *The Anglican Church in South Africa: An Account of the History and Development of the Church in the Province of South Africa* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1962), 2.

Although the British were careful in both occupations to leave the Dutch Reformed Church in control of religious affairs in the Cape, they tried to dominate the colony linguistically by making English the official language in government, the schools, and the church. This made the Dutch unhappy. Another reason for friction between the new British government in the Cape and its Dutch subjects was that the Cape endorsed capitalist farming, based on free rather than slave labor. This led to a repeal of many vagrancy and apprenticeship laws which hitherto had forced the Khoi Khoi to work for the Dutch settlers.¹

The Dutch settlers found such consideration for the Black people unbearable. It seemed to imply that they were considered equal to the natives, which the Dutch considered an insult. As a result of this discontent, the Dutch settlers moved into the hinterland, a move that has come to be known as the Great Trek.²

Hitherto the Dutch had struggled to dislodge the Xhosa from the Suurveld.³ Now their Trek brought them into conflict with other Black nations they had not yet met. These groups included the Sotho, Griqua, Zulu, Ndebele, and the Tsonga, among others.⁴ Principally, the Dutch wanted the lands that these peoples occupied as well as the labor the Black people could

¹Hinchliff, *The Church in South Africa*, 26-27.

²For more information on the Great Trek, see Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 90; idem, "Cooperation and Conflict: The Highveld," 1:405-423; Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa*, 91-118; Graham Leach, *South Africa: No Easy Path to Freedom* (London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1976), 27; J. D. Omer-Cooper, "Colonial South Africa and Its Frontiers," in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, ed. John E. Flint (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 5:369.

³See Marks, "Southern Africa and Madagascar," 454-458; Omer-Cooper, "Colonial South Africa and Its Frontiers," 5:353-392.

⁴For the defeat of these nations, which ironically was effected by the English, see Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, 70-109; Shula Marks, "Southern and Central Africa, 1886-1910," in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, ed. J. Fage and Roland Oliver (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 6:422-439.

supply. As a result of this focus, the Afrikaner church—the oldest church in the Cape—was inwardly focused. There were no deliberate attempts to reach out to the non-Dutch population. This thrust was to come later as pioneers became attracted to distant lands like Mashonaland in Zimbabwe. All in all, the picture that remained was one of the considerate British who, though in many ways as hungry for land and labor as the Dutch, were keen to see to the civilization of the Black people. The Dutch were perceived as more cruel and bent on destroying the Black people largely because the Calvinistic religion, for a long time, kept them separate from the African people who were treated as inferior.¹

The English churches experienced growth at the close of the Great Trek. The Anglican Church, headed since 1847 by Bishop Gray of Cape Town, was mission-focused. In spite of teething problems, many of its mission stations attracted some Africans to the Christian faith. This caused tensions between the *amathamba* (the soft ones who converted to Christianity) and the *amaqaba* (the backward ones who rejected the new religion) which lingered long, as the new Christians took advantage of the benefits of their new-found faith. Missionaries developed compounds where the new Christians lived separate from the other population, enjoyed more decent treatment from the colonial authorities, and seemed to be deriving some benefit from the White system. The non-Christian Africans viewed this situation with suspicion if only because the believers had become *amagqobhoka* (those who became the weak spot through which the enemy broke into the land of the Blacks).²

¹See John Bird, *The Annals of Natal, 1495-1845* (Cape Town: C. Struik, 1888, 1965), 2: 146; Omer-Cooper, "Colonial South Africa," 373-375; Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa*, 40-42.

²Marks, 398-399.

Once the Dutch pioneers had penetrated the interior, the British were not content to let them go. The British sensed dangers with the Dutch move. The Germans were close at hand on both the east and the west coasts, seeking possessions. The British feared that the Dutch and the Germans might cooperate in building strong republics and thus pose a danger against the British Cape Colony. This was why the British snatched Natal from the Dutch (1843), which the latter had themselves wrested from the Zulu. The British went on to take the area between the Orange River and the Vaal (1848) for a while and the Transvaal (1877-1881).¹

The need to secure the Cape, and later Natal, was only part of the reason why the British kept troubling the Dutch possessions which grew into republics. The discovery of diamonds in Kimberly (1867) prompted the British to annex the area to the Cape Colony (1871).² When gold was discovered in the Witwatersrand in 1885, again the British tried to possess the gold-rich lands. This was not going to be as easy as taking Kimberly. It led to the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 in which Britain fought to “reestablish hegemony throughout Southern Africa, the republics to preserve their independence.”³

¹Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, 96-99; Omer-Cooper, “Colonial South Africa and Its Frontiers,” 353-392.

²Ibid., 110-123; Shula Marks, “Southern Africa, 1867-1886,” in the *Cambridge History of Africa*, ed. J. Fage and Roland Oliver (Melbourne, Australia: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 363-375.

³Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, 141. Britain won the war at the exorbitant cost of 22,000 of her men and between £200 and £500m. Many more Afrikaner soldiers died but what was most appalling was the cost in the lives of more than 28 000 Dutch women and children who were lost to enteric fever, dysentery, typhoid, whooping cough, diphtheria and measles, and over 14,000 Africans who suffered a similar fate in British concentration camps during the four years of the war (1899-1902). See Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa*, 126-127; Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, 141-143; Peter Warwick, *Black People and the South African War, 1899-1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 4-5.

Again this event demonstrated the partisan thinking that permeated South Africa, dividing people along ethnic lines. At no moment in this history did perpetrators of the war apologize formally to the surviving relatives of those who died in the conflict. Resentment was heaped upon resentment and its deleterious effects have continued to live on to this day, a century later. It is Archbishop Tutu's argument that history's tragedies do not just go away. They need to be worked out deliberately and laid to rest through forgiveness and reconciliation.¹

Transition to a Unified White South Africa

The Peace of Vereeniging was signed in 1902 to end the Anglo-Boer War. Alfred Milner, the British High Commissioner in the Cape, wanted the military victory to translate to durable British supremacy in Southern Africa. He had no room for the Blacks in his plan except that the ultimate end that he foresaw was "a self-governing White community, supported by a well-treated and justly-governed Black labor from the Cape to the Zambezi."² This was essentially an application of both English and Afrikaner native policy which had been stated crisply by Cecil John Rhodes when he said that "every Black [could] not have three acres and a cow, or four morgen and commonage rights. . . . It must be brought home to them that in future nine tenths of them [would] have to spend their lives in daily labor, in physical, manual labor,"³ because labor "removed the natives from a life of sloth and laziness, teaching them the dignity of labor, and made them contribute to the prosperity of the state and made them give

¹See the *Chicago Parade Magazine*, January 11, 1998, 4-6.

²Alfred Milner to Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, November 28, 1899, in Alfred Milner, *Milner Papers* (London: Casell Company, 1931), 2:36-37.

³F. Verschoyle Vindex, *Cecil Rhodes: His Political Life and Speeches, 1881-1900* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1900), 382.

some return for our wise and good government.”¹ Both the British and the Dutch, therefore, had policies of racial discrimination against Black people which laid the ground for apartheid, whose effects Archbishop Tutu has worked to reverse.

Milner’s plan failed dismally because, on one hand, the British Liberal Party, headed by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, won the 1906 election in Britain. It intended to please the dominant Whites in South Africa. The new British government allowed General Louis Botha’s *Het Volk* to form the government in the Transvaal and honored the sentiment of the Peace of Vereeniging to permit only White men to vote. *Het Volk* (The People) Party won the election in February 1907. Nine months later, the *Orangia Unie* (*The Orange Free State Union Party*) won even more convincingly in the Orange River Colony (the former Orange Free State). John X. Merriman, the anti-imperialist son of an Anglican priest, won the Cape vote with the help of the *Afrikaner Bond* (the Afrikaner Brotherhood) in February 1908. Only Natal espoused an imperial stance.²

On the other hand, the Afrikaner governments in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State worked for conciliation among the Afrikaners and the Britons in South Africa. They were open to including the Cape in this arrangement, though initially not Natal. The Natal Whites were particularly apprehensive about being excluded, especially after the Bhambatha rebellion of 1906 and the current stir that Dinizulu was causing in Zululand. So the Natal Whites were essentially scared into the Union.³

¹Cecil Rhodes, quoted in Eddie Webster, *Essays in Southern African Labor History*, ed. Eddie Webster (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1978), 10.

²See T. R. H. Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 17.

³Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, 147-150.

The Afrikaner generals led out in the work of drafting the constitution of the Union at the Bloemfontein Convention in 1909. The constitution created a unitary state with parliamentary sovereignty. Natal, the Cape Colony, Transvaal, and the Orange River Colony were to be provinces of South Africa. The Blacks in the Cape were better off than those in the other provinces. Of all four provinces, the Cape still had a limited franchise for Blacks although Rhodes had eroded it substantially during his rule. The Bloemfontein Convention agreed to allow only White men to sit in parliament. Both English and Dutch were made official languages in South Africa, the latter at the insistence of J. B. M. Hertzog, an Afrikaner nationalist of substance and future prime minister of the Union, and ex-president M. T. Steyn, who both sought to promote Dutch culture in South Africa. The constitution was enacted by the British parliament as the South Africa Act of 1909 in almost the exact form as the South African version, despite the vocal protest of Black representatives who traveled to England to try to foil this enactment. On May 31, 1910, Louis Botha became the first Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, which had a population of 4 million Blacks, 500,000 Coloreds, 1,275,000 Whites, and 150,000 Indians. The Africans who had fought the White man's war on the side of the British judged their exclusion from the franchise as a treacherous act of betrayal.¹

The Role of the Church in Ethnic Partitioning

During the second half of the nineteenth century the church became more diverse than it had been during the first fifty years when the period began. For the first time in 1857 the

¹A. P. Walshe and Andrew Roberts, "Southern Africa," in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, ed. A. D. Roberts (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 7:545-576; see also William Minter, *King Solomon's Mines Revisited: Western Interest and the Burdened History of Southern Africa* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 39-43.

Dutch church had sanctioned separate services for the different races in order to protect those who were weak in the faith. It soon began to split into three fragments, namely, the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk (NHK), which became the *volkskerk*--the people's church--of the South African Republic; the Gereformeerde Kerk, a neo-Calvinist denomination influenced by Abraham Kuyper; and the autonomous Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) of the Cape and the Transvaal, officially referred to as the Dutch Reformed Church. In keeping with popular mission theory of the times, by 1881 the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk had developed a daughter church, namely, the Nederduitse Sending Kerk for the Coloreds, later followed by the Dutch Reformed Church of Africa for Africans, and the Indian Reformed Church for the Indians.¹

These Dutch churches were formed over such issues as whether to use hymns in church or not, or to remain attached to the mother church in the Cape Province, which remained the loyal established church of the British Colony. Yet they shared one thing in common: they had the interests of the Afrikaners at heart. They were generally active on social, cultural, political, and religious matters, and were keen on the advancement of the Afrikaners.²

The English-speaking churches, likewise, allowed themselves to be used by the administrators for the interests of the empire, especially under Sir George Gray and Sir Theophilus Shepstone. The missionaries worked side by side with the magistrates to pacify the frontiers. This imperial support was clear in all the provinces at critical moments in the development of South Africa.³ During the 1860s, Edward Twells, an Anglican bishop and

¹De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 7-9.

²Hinchliff, *The Church in South Africa*, 61-64.

³Marks, "Southern Africa, 1867-1886," 6:399-405; Hinchliff, *The Church in South Africa*, 43-52; De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 26-27.

missionary, was involved in conflict with the Wesleyan and Paris Evangelical Mission Society workers because King Moshoeshoe preferred the Anglicans to the rest of the missionaries. At the same time Twells had difficulty with the Dutch church, since Afrikaner ministers in the Orange Free State were unhappy with anything British. In 1878, Henry Bousefield made it a precondition for working in the Transvaal that it be under British rule. He would not work outside a British colony.¹ As a result, he only went to the Transvaal during the Shepstone era. There is need to underline that relations were strained during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), as Cape and Natal clergy served the army as chaplains, causing the Afrikaners to consider the Anglican church an English and *uitlander* church—one that did not identify with the sentiments of the majority in the Transvaal but rather with the foreign element.²

As if not to be outdone by their White masters, the Africans, during this period, also wanted the church to serve their own ends. The first secession took place in Basutoland in 1872 when 150 members of the Paris Missionary Evangelical Society congregation at Mt. Hermon seceded from the mission and declared autonomy. The schism died out but served as an example of whether and how Africans could run an independent church. After this, independent African churches mushroomed at different places.³ Thus, in 1884, Nehemiah Tile established the first permanent secession—the Tembu Nation Church—after a quarrel with the White circuit superintendent. In 1892, ministers of the Methodist Church, Mangena Mokone and James Dwane, broke away from their mother church because they perceived it as a White institution which did not meet their needs. They formed the Order of Ethiopia. These

¹Hinchliff, *The Anglican Church in South Africa*, 153.

²De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 23-24.

³In 1904, there were three African sects, with 22,500 members. The number increased to 130 by 1925, 1,300 in 1946, and 2,000 sects with 1 million members in 1963.

divisions within the Christian church mirrored the basic divisions in society, which would influence the inception and the course of the apartheid era. The churches were part of the fray in society and did not seem to see their role as that of reconciling the diverging forces of social fraction.¹

The Anglican Church proved to be more receptive to all races than the Dutch churches. Dwane came to doubt the validity of the orders of his new denomination and appealed to Archbishop Jones of the Anglican Church for his Order to be part of the Anglican Church. In 1900, the Order of Ethiopia was voted a part of the Anglican Church in South Africa. But it was not until 1909 that the agreement was fully ratified to the point of functioning smoothly. By accepting the Order of Ethiopia, the Anglican Church did one major act of indigenization. It is one church that retained the appearance of a polyglot, including among its parishioners English-speaking South African Whites, Afrikaners, Blacks, and Coloreds.²

Yet the picture of the church in South Africa remained racial when Union formed. The White church dominated white interests. So does the Black. The time was still distant future when she was going to see herself as the instrument of God's reconciliation of both humanity and God and the race to itself.

The Union of South Africa (1910-1948)

The 1910-1948 period was an era of segregation. It was a time when racism ruled in various parts of the world. White South Africa was no exception. Its capitalist economy drew on cheap Black labor, involving squeezing Blacks off the land, refusing to buy produce from

¹Hinchliff, *The Church in South Africa*, 90-97.

²Hinchliff, *The Anglican Church in South Africa*, 200-202; cf. de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 62.

Black farmers, taxing Blacks systematically so that they had to seek employment on White farms or in the cities, and subjecting the Blacks to pass laws which restricted them to certain areas unless they had documents signed by White employers or magistrates.¹ In the cities, where their labor was needed, Blacks were housed in single-sex compounds. They were paid low wages since it was assumed that African women and children could fend for themselves at home in the reserves. Under the *Apprenticeship Act* of 1922, the *Industrial Conciliation Act* of 1924, and the *Native Laws Amendment Act* of 1937, civilized labor, which was, by definition, White, alone could unionize.²

The Africans who lived on White-owned lands remained there either as tenants or as wage laborers, whereas in earlier years they could be sharecroppers. They now had to pay rentals on the farms from the meager wages they were paid by the farmers.³ These farmers had almost unlimited access to the Land Bank which gave them funds to assist them in their farming, an occupation that, up to this juncture, had served to destroy large tracts of land through bad farming practices. Prime Minister J. B. M. Hertzog ensured that while by 1939 Black lands shrank to 11.7% of all available land in South Africa, under the provision of Botha's *Natives Land Act* in 1911, White lands actually expanded. At the same time, in the Cape J. B. M. Hertzog reduced the percentage of eligible Black voters from 20% to 10%.

¹Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 109-164; Martin Meredith, *In the Name of Apartheid: South Africa in the Post-War Period* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 17-18.

²Lockwood, 31-32; Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa*, 105, 109, 125, 133, 136; Minter, 24, 25; Leo Kuper, "African Nationalism in South Africa," in *The Oxford History of South Africa*, ed. Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 2:450.

³Sol Plaatjie, *Native Life in South Africa, Before, and Since the European War and the Boer Rebellion* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 78-90.

These developments were the direct result of Afrikaner nationalism which had first evidenced itself from the early years, but had taken a definitive shape when the Rev. S. J. du Toit formed the *Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners* (Society for True Afrikaners) in 1872, continued to thrive in the work of the *Broederbond* (the Brotherhood) which sought to control Afrikaner culture and life through the federation of the people's unions and attempted to run *all aspects of life*, was revived by Henning Klopper in 1938, and was accelerated by the work of such new movements as the *Afrikaanse Handelsinstitute* (the *Afrikanse Business Institute*), the *Reddingsdaadbond* (which literally meant, The-Rescue-Act-League), and the *Blankeswerkersbeskermingsbad* (White Workers Protection Organization) and the *Ossewa Brandwag* (Oxwagon Band Sentinel) among many other successful cultural organizations for the upliftment of the Afrikaner people. All these organizations had clear religious ties, for, under the influence of Abraham Kuyper's doctrine of *sowereiniteit in eier kring* ("sovereignty in one's own's sphere") Afrikaners believed that God had raised them for the salvation of Southern Africa from British domination on one hand and Black heathenism and *gelykstelling* on the other. For the Afrikaners this was a period of consolidating gains.¹

English-speaking South Africans reacted blandly to the gains of the Afrikaners. As long as English business was making headway in the country, and the Afrikaners continued to be blatant and clumsy in dealing with the Blacks, the average Englishman seemed to feel at ease. The Unionist Party of the mining magnates allowed itself to be absorbed by the South African Party as early as 1921. Still, a few academics at the University of the Witwatersrand and in the Institute for Race Relations, mostly clergymen, espoused the Black cause, pressing

¹For an account of the development of Afrikaner nationalism, see Meredith, 1-31; Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa*, 147-182; R. de Villiers, "Afrikaner Nationalism," chapter 5 in *The Oxford History of South Africa*, ed. M. Wilson and L. Thompson (London: Oxford University Press, 1977).

for improved wages, recognition of Black trade unions, and the abolition of pass laws. The government turned a deaf ear to their points of view. For the English, this was an era of accommodation.¹

Black resistance to this discriminatory rule started early. To begin with, it was restricted to mild protest. As early as the time of the Bloemfontein Convention (1909), Africans spoke up against the White Union. They formed the South African Native Convention to contest and condemn the draft South African Act, and to exhort London to revise the Act. All this was in vain.²

In 1912 the Convention was replaced by the South African Native National Congress which was to become today's dominant African National Congress. The Congress started as a middle-class body whose members were chiefs, lawyers, teachers, clergymen, journalists, traders, and farmers. These Africans saw themselves first of all as South Africans, not as representatives of certain tribes. The Coloreds generally belonged to the African Political (later People's) Organization, led by Dr. Abdul Abdurahman. They also implored the government to give the Black Peoples recognition in South Africa. Mahatma Ghandi started the South African Indian Congress in 1894, which fought successfully for the rights of South African Indians. The Industrial and Commercial Workers Union pioneered resistance among the South African working class. In various ways, these organs of resistance fought government oppression, though with limited success. For these nationalist groups, this was a period of exploration for alternatives and mobilization for a hard road ahead.³

¹Peter Walshe, *Church vs. State in South Africa: The Case of the Christian Institute* (London: Hurst and Company; and Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 6.

²Kuper, 424-476, see especially, 440; Walshe, 367, 552.

³Walshe and Roberts, 566-584.

The Dutch churches during this period were instrumental in the advancement of the Afrikaner people. Their ministers were generally perceptive nationalists. Such African nationalists as D. T. Jabavu, John L. Dube, and Chief Albert Luthuli, who led out in the struggle of the period, were members of the English-speaking churches. Like their Dutch counterparts, they saw a role for the church in the political development of the country. However, they thought of South Africa as belonging to all its peoples as opposed to the Dutch vision that conceived of the country as a bastion of White domination. The White English-speaking Christians seemed generally unconcerned about the political fate of the Black people in the new Union.

The Age of Apartheid (1948-1994)

The Legal Basis of Apartheid

The Union government's consolidation of its control of these wealth-laden lands had begun with the *Native Lands Act* of 1913, and was continued with the *Native (Urban Areas) Act* (1923), the *Native Trust and Land Act* (1936), and the *Black (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act* (all modifications of the *Native Lands Act*), all laws which were designed to take more land from the Africans while giving the appearance of legality to an intrinsically unjust system. The movements of the African population had begun to come under control through the pass laws even in Theophilus Shepstone's Natal in the mid-1800s.¹ These were the beginning of what was to become apartheid.

Apartheid refers to a systematic program of social engineering initiated in South Africa by D. F. Malan (1948-1958), perfected by H. F. Verwoerd (1958-1966), and continued

¹See Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane, *The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), 83-85.

wholeheartedly by B. J. Vorster (1966-1978) and P. W. Botha (1978-1989). It was a form of racial domination aimed at preserving the Afrikaner nation “against the same obtrusive barbarism the Voortrekkers faced 128 years” earlier.¹

The concept of Apartheid rested on four main ideas. First, the population comprised four racial groups—White, Colored, Indian, and African—each with its inherent culture. Second, the Whites, the civilized race, were entitled to total control of the state. Third, the interests of the Whites should take precedence over those of the others. This meant that the government provided superior facilities for the Whites and inferior ones for the subordinate races. Fourth, despite their divergent backgrounds, all White South Africans constituted one nation while Blacks belonged to (eventually ten) diverse nations. The Malan government embarked on implementing this philosophy as soon as it came to power in 1948.²

The racial discrimination introduced by apartheid had already been in operation from 1910 to 1948 to some extent. In these years, however, it had lacked the stern ideological character that it acquired under apartheid. The official apartheid policies were not new but they introduced more intense oppression than in the preceding periods.³

To achieve its goal, apartheid needed to restrict the Africans to places far away from the White areas. The *Group Areas Act* was designed to ensure this. People of color, who were conceived to be in White areas were moved to areas designated for them by the government. Indian, African, and Colored communities were forced to relocate to places further from the cities, the latter being regarded as White areas. Such centers as District Six in Cape Town,

¹G. D. Scholtz, Nationalist Party historian, in *Die Transvaler*—official newspaper of the party—on 15th December, 1966.

²Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, 189-190.

³De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 54.

Sophiatown in the Johannesburg area, and Pageview (also near Johannesburg) were dismantled in order to comply with the demands of the *Group Areas Act*. Apartheid was about apartness, keeping people apart on the basis of pigmentation. This penchant to avoid mixing colors expressed itself in one of its most cruel forms when the government split families on the basis of skin hue and nose shapes according to the *Registration Act* of 1949. It attempted to remove Black spots, pockets of Black residences, in areas that were considered White, all over the country. The major consideration was that White areas should be strictly White, untarnished by any Black presence, except if the Black people concerned were laborers. Even they should be seen at the right times and appropriate places since they were *Gastarbeiter*.

This separation of Black and White was not simply about keeping people of different ethnic groups in different locations. If Blacks and Whites were not to mix on beaches and parks, at schools, places of worship, restaurants, toilets, libraries, trains, buses, and all similar facilities, the main reason seems to have been the specter of *gelykstelling*, the fear that people allowed to intermingle might eventually intermarry and endanger the purity of the superior White race. To ensure that this never occurred, the *Immorality Act* (1950) was passed, which made sexual intercourse illegal across the color line. This law was a follow up on the *Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act* (1949), which disallowed interracial marriages.¹

To place *gelykstelling* beyond question, the facilities and amenities accorded Black people were made infinitely inferior to those made available to Whites. Like the townships in which they were located, Black schools were crowded, underfunded, and staffed with poorly trained Black teachers or White teachers of the caliber that could hardly teach anywhere else.

¹For a discussion of this legislation, see David Chinaiwa, "Southern Africa since 1944," in *A General History of Africa*, ed. Ali A. Mazrui (Berkeley, CA: UNESCO, 1993), 8:249-276.

Black teachers could teach only Black children, went exclusively to Black colleges where they were trained to disseminate an inferior Bantu education designed to keep Blacks in eternal servitude to the Whites.¹

On top of the fact that health services for the Blacks were almost non-existent, the government tried assiduously to stop those who, out of their own resources, attempted to help the Black people. This needlessly condemned many infants and old people to disease and death.²

Prisons were always bustling with criminals as well as people whom the government was turning into criminals, including those arrested for pass violations. The legal system was so structured that the officers were accountable to no one outside the system. Black prisoners rarely received a fair trial. People died of torture in jail, while others disappeared without a trace. The amount of intimidation that went on in prison and detention unnerved many intrepid anti-apartheid activists.³

Right after the National Party election victory in 1948, the Dutch churches worked hard to nurture separate development or apartheid. A temporary lull fell over the English-speaking, White-controlled churches. They complained every now and then but embraced White power, economic privilege, and disruption of human fellowship that were part and parcel

¹David Welsh, "The Growth of Towns," in *The Oxford History of South Africa*, ed. Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 2:172-242.

²Hobart Houghton, "Economic Development, 1905-1965" in *The Oxford History of South Africa*, ed. Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 2:76-77.

³Francis Wilson, "Farming, 1866-1966," in *The Oxford History of South Africa*, ed. Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 2:146-149.

of apartheid. There were exceptions, however, in terms of church authorities and clergymen. The Anglicans closed down their multiracial schools in protest to the enactment of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 while Roman Catholics took up the financial responsibility for maintaining their schools apart from government aid. In 1957 the Archbishop of Cape Town, Geoffrey Clayton, protested against the "Church Clause" that was designed to exclude Africans from attending services in White churches. As a result, a modified version of the bill was passed into law. Two Anglican clerics stand out in their opposition to apartheid laws during the early years of apartheid. Michael Scott supported the people of South West Africa at the United Nations, which led to his being denied entry into South Africa as a prohibited immigrant in 1950. Trevor Huddleston, a significant influence on young Desmond Tutu, a sympathizer with the resisters of the Defiance Campaign, protested indefatigably against the Bantu Education Act, the Resettlement Bill, and the destruction of Sophiatown. His protest led to his recall to England in 1956.¹

Popular Reaction

The abuses of apartheid fueled the most resilient phase of resistance against the system. Till 1958, Blacks had seemed content to confront the government with protest. Invariably, the response had been further tightening of control. To this point, the Black nationalists had unanimously called for fair treatment and recognition as ordinary South Africans in the land of their birth. In 1959, however, some Black nationalists began to think of Blacks as the only true citizens of South Africa. For them, the others, especially the Whites, did not belong to the country. The time was coming, so the thinking went, when the White populations would have to return to where they came from, unless willing to live at peace with Blacks. It was due to

¹Walshe, *Church versus State in South Africa*, 6-7.

this Africanist thought pattern that the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) was formed in 1959, splitting the ANC. ¹

The two major African parties agreed on one thing: since the Afrikaners were unwilling to settle for a negotiated peace in South Africa, they must be forced out of power, or at least be coerced, through an armed struggle, to negotiate. So they formed military wings. The ANC's army was called uMkhonto weSizwe (the Spear of the Nation) while the PAC's was named POQO (One Who Stands Alone). These organizations set about training combatants, outside South Africa, who would return to destroy government installations throughout the country, while at the same time attempting not to harm the White civilian population. Recognizing the limitations of an armed struggle in South Africa, these nationalist movements capitalized on a diplomatic approach which emphasized disseminating information about their mission while exposing to the peoples of the world the evils of apartheid.²

Though intended to silence all opposition to the racial rule at home, the cruel reaction of the successive apartheid governments facilitated the work of the nationalist offices abroad. The Hendrik Verwoerd government is remembered for the grizzly atrocities of the Sharpeville Massacre on March 21, 1960, in which 69 Africans were shot dead and 186 wounded for demonstrating against the pass laws. This event brought South Africa's ugly racism to world attention.³

¹See Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela* (Boston: Little Brown, 1994), 97-99; Stephen M. Davis, *Apartheid's Rebels: Inside South Africa's Hidden War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 3-12; Welsh, 194.

²Davis, *Apartheid's Rebels*, 10-12; Mandela, 327-33.

³Davis, *Apartheid's Rebels*, 12-14.

All the churches of South Africa roundly criticized the government for its brutalities at Sharpeville and elsewhere where unrest had subsequently spread.¹ At this time the Christian Council of South Africa, an ecumenical organization which had been formed in the mid-1930s, was still active. Its members met at Cottesloe for consultation on December 7 to 14, 1960, and rejected all the unjust discrimination of the government. The Cottesloe Consultations recognized that all the races of South Africa were in the country to stay and had permanent rights in the country. Cottesloe encouraged churches to allow members from all races to worship together and condemned the *Prohibition of Mixed Marriages*, migrant labor, the low wages paid to Blacks, and the job reservation.²

Cottesloe also called for cooperation among the churches and for justice in the trials of government opponents. The Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk rejected the recommendations of the Consultation. The Dutch Reformed Church signed them and rejected them later when Prime Minister Verwoerd registered his displeasure with the document. Such members of the Dutch Reformed Church as C. Beyers Naude, B. B. Keet, and Ben Marais, who supported the resolutions of Cottesloe, were forced to resign their positions in the church.³ They proceeded to form the Christian Institute which was developed in 1963 to challenge apartheid and the Dutch Reformed Church and later worked closely with the proponents of Black Theology and

¹Joost de Blank was the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town when the Sharpeville Massacre took place. In reaction to it, he accused the Dutch churches of conniving with apartheid and demanded the expulsion of both the Nederduitsh Hervormde Kerk and the Dutch Reformed Church from the World Council of Churches. Dr. Visser't Hooft, then the General Secretary of the WCC, rejected this call as an invitation to a new form of apartheid. Instead, Visser't Hooft detailed Dr. Franklin C. Fry of the WCC to organize the Cottesloe Consultation in December of 1960.

²Walshe, *Church versus State in South Africa*, 14-19.

³De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle*, 31-33; 58, 59; 80-81.

the Black Consciousness Movement which appeared at the end of the 1960s and was active through the decade of the 1970s.¹

While it was clear to the English-speaking churches--those churches that originated in Britain, e.g., the Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists--Roman Catholics, and Lutherans that apartheid was evil and should be abolished, the Dutch churches argued that separate development would be viable if administered properly.² The English-speaking churches maintained that separate development was synonymous with apartheid and could not be supported from Scripture. The difference between separate development, which the government now promoted, and apartheid, which the world condemned, was academic, they averred.³

B. J. Vorster's administration was marred by its extreme reaction to the 1976 student strikes. Ostensibly, the unrest was precipitated by the government's new emphasis on the role to be played by Afrikaans in Black schools. As if to underscore their victory over the Blacks, and to ensure that the latter served most efficiently in the Afrikaner-dominated apartheid system, the administrators made Afrikaans a language of instruction for some high-school

¹Walshe, *Church vs. State in South Africa*, 27-36; 149-171. The Black Consciousness Movement stressed pride in African heritage and insisted that Blacks take the initiative in their struggle for freedom.

²There were Dutch Reformed Church theologians who never agreed with apartheid. Among them was B. B. Keet who, from the very start, condemned the proposals for apartheid as evil. See his *Suid-Afrika: Waar Heen?* (Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University Press, 1955).

³De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 86-97. At the end of Cottesloe de Blank apologized for speaking harshly and for criticizing the Dutch Reformed Church for not taking a stand on racial issues. He retracted his demand for the expulsion of the Dutch churches from the WCC. It was not long after Cottesloe, however, before the Dutch Reformed Church withdrew from the WCC, thanks to the work of Dr. Koot Vorster, the next Prime Minister's brother, and Dr. Andries Treurnicht who was convinced that racial harmony in South Africa would come through apartheid, until his death in 1994.

courses. Already struggling under the burden of Bantu education and the general sense of Afrikaner oppression, the Black students refused to have anything to do with Afrikaans, a tongue they associated with heavy-handed misrule. When they staged a demonstration in June of 1976, the police reacted by shooting 176 students in a single week. By the end of seventeen months—the duration of the revolt—600 people had been killed—including Steve B. Biko—a leader of the Black Consciousness Movement, who was murdered in prison, and twenty-two Black Consciousness organizations banned.¹ In support of the Black struggle, 14,000 people had fled the country to either receive training as combatants or to carry out activities subversive of apartheid.² Further, from this point on, Blacks were prepared to fight the government and talk to the authorities only to supplement the gains they scored through fighting. The student riots had shown them that they could alarm the government and convinced some that they could possibly force it to its knees.³

The churches reacted to the 1976 killings. The moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church responded by sending condolences to families of those who had suffered the government's reprisals. He pledged his church's support to help wherever it was needed and made representations to the government about the grievances of the people of Soweto and the other townships. Still, he made no mention of police brutality.⁴

¹For an account on Biko and Black Consciousness, see Donald Woods, *Biko* (New York: Paddington Press, 1976), especially pp. 93-105, and Gail M. Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa* (London: University of California Press, 1978), 257-299. By the time of the student revolt in 1976, the Christian Institute had become deeply involved in matters of Black liberation. This involvement led to its ban in October 1977.

²See Baruch Hirson, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash* (London: Zed Press, 1979), 40-47; 59, 60; 99-100.

³See Meredith, 142-145.

⁴De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 104; idem, "From Cottesloe to Rustenburg: The Rustenburg Conference in Historical Perspective," *Journal of Theology for*

Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu, recently appointed Bishop of Maseru, Lesotho, spoke out on many occasions following June 16. He had written Prime Minister B. J. Vorster a letter on May 8, more than a month before the outbreak of violence, warning the Premier of an incipient outburst.¹ After the event, he commended the courage of the children who had died at the hands of the state police following that date. He told his audiences that the God of the exodus was still the God of the oppressed and exploited. God wanted the underdog to be fully human by giving them freedom. The process of liberation set free the oppressor as well as the oppressed. Black and White in South Africa were bound together and unless they moved toward freedom together, they would perish together.²

The other English-speaking churches, the Roman Catholics, and the Lutherans focused on an interpretation of the riots. They laid the responsibility for the riots squarely on government legislation and the draconian measures applied to maintain it. They openly declared that Blacks in South Africa were treated as less than humans. Most of these churches now fell solidly behind the Black Consciousness Movement, though at times with qualifications.³ After Vorster's administration, which ended in 1978, most churches were directly opposed to apartheid and had made this known. A few of them, however, including

Southern Africa 74 (1991): 24; Walshe, *Church versus State in South Africa*, 199-228.

¹See *South African Outlook*, July 1976, 102-104.

²Desmond Tutu, "Greeting from Bishop Tutu to the Soweto Students," *Pro Veritate*, June 16, 1977, 6.

³Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists stayed aloof, while the Anglicans, Roman Catholics, United Lutherans, and Congregationalists moved closer and supported anti-apartheid activities. Roman Catholics attacked apartheid with statements on justice, reconciliation, and the right to conscientious objection. Their Bishops' Conference confessed its failure in the past to respond with courage to the gospel's call for social justice. The Conference pledged to work assiduously in solidarity for the promotion of human dignity ". . . on the side, therefore, of Black Consciousness." Walshe, *Church versus State in South Africa*, 209, 210.

the Dutch churches, still held that there should be peaceful separate development to maintain a semblance of peace in the country.¹

As far as the new premier, Pieter W. Botha, was concerned, Africans needed to be taught a lesson by the stern use of the rod. The Botha era (1978-1989) is remembered as one of *kragdadigheid*, a period when force was used with abandon to quell all opposition to apartheid. The military was used to exert this force. Its budget soared from \$60 million in 1960 to \$3 billion in 1982. Its size tripled over the period. Militaristic indoctrination was given in White schools from the earliest stages up. A National Security Managements System was formed and operated by the State Security Council directly under Prime Minister Botha himself.²

At the same time, no apartheid administration ever held out more promise of reform than did Botha's. Botha promised so much positive change while delivering so much harsh treatment to the Blacks, however, that the latter resolved to make the country ungovernable until they became a party involved in the decision-making process wherever their lives were concerned.³

Beginning in mid-1982 Botha had announced the introduction of a much-touted new system of government.⁴ It was to be based on a new constitution which would be the foundation of a tricameral government with separate legislative houses for the Coloreds, Indians, and the Whites. It was clear that the first two houses were there to rubber-stamp the

¹De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 109-115; Walshe, *Church versus State in South Africa*, 215-221.

²Meredith, 215-221; Sparks, *Mind of South Africa*, 308-311.

³Martin Murray, *South Africa: Time of Agony, Time of Destiny* (London: Verso, 1987), 214, 219.

⁴*Ibid.*, 111.

decisions of the third, the White. What was more disturbing was that the Blacks, the major population group in South Africa, had not even been consulted concerning the proposed new constitution. It was evident that Botha had no plans of consulting them on the subject. Besides, the new constitution really had no adequate support among any people of color. Only 18 percent of the Indian and 12 percent of the Colored populations voted on the proposals.¹

In response to the government's glaring slight, Black township residents went on strike four days after the last votes were cast for the tricameral government. The revolt was precipitated by Piet Koornhoff, the minister of the so-called cooperation and development, who wanted to rid the government of the burden of financing Black municipalities. He proposed that these councils raise their own funds by hiking up rentals and water rates.²

The revolt began in Sharpeville again, and raged throughout the country for three years, at the end of which period more than 3,000 people had been killed in the violence. Thirty thousand were in detention in a country virtually mobilized into a martial state. The army was occupied both inside and outside South Africa, policing the streets, roads, electrical installations, and other places of importance, and conducting periodic military raids in Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Botswana, Zambia, and Mozambique, to emphasize South Africa's *dwangpostuur*--posture of threat--in the region.³

Through all this, anti-apartheid advocates insisted that South Africa needed a new leader. They wanted Nelson Mandela whose charisma had continued to animate South Africa from behind concrete prison walls.⁴ In addition to the African National Congress leadership,

¹Leach, 63.

²Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa*, 331-332.

³Meredith, 180-190; Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa*, 298-328.

⁴Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa*, 310-325.

which was negotiating Mandela's release, were church leaders. These included some prominent Dutch Reformed Church figures who had become disillusioned with Botha's *kragdadigheid*. As it seemed inevitable that apartheid would yield to a more egalitarian system, there was need to prepare for this eventuality. The Dutch Reformed Church had condemned apartheid in 1986 and was now prepared to bring reconciliation to South Africa. At last, most churches in South Africa were ready to think of the survival of their country as a nation, not as a collection of distinct ethnic groups. These churches saw a role they could play in the reconstruction of the country. Hence the role of some of their members in the drafting of the *Kairos Document*, which was first published in 1985.¹

When Botha continued with escalating force in a situation that others thought called for negotiation, Frederick W. de Klerk ousted the Old Crocodile, as the grouchy Botha was called by his opponents, and acted swiftly to release Mandela, thus bringing the promise of peace to the country. Despite all his efforts to do this and stay in power and thus avoid *gelykstelling*, de Klerk was realistic enough to bow to the pressure of the inevitable. Enough people wanted to

¹Meredith, 215-221. The *Kairos Document* was written to advocate the replacement of the apartheid government with a justiciable order. Its writers assumed that the existing government was beyond correction and must be replaced by a more representative one. The document perceived as the major flaw of the successive apartheid governments their defiance of God by setting themselves at enmity with human beings created in His image. Hatred for these people was seen as hatred toward God. The removal of apartheid was viewed as a work of love, aimed at destroying oppression, an action that would liberate both the oppressed and their oppressors (*The Kairos Document: Challenge to the Church: A Theological Comment on the Political Crisis in South Africa* [Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1986]). The authors of the *Kairos Document* called for the removal of the oppressors and for their conversion, as well as for the churches to obey God rather than the state. They distinguished among three types of theology: state theology, a theology that legitimates the actions of the state by justifying the evils of racism and totalitarianism; church theology, which insists upon peace and reconciliation at all costs, and a prophetic theology which holds that it is wrong to reconcile good with evil. Reconciliation without justice, they argued, was sin. Instead, Christians must confront evil, promoting truth, justice, and life at all costs, even the cost of creating conflict, disunity, and dissension along the way. See *The Kairos Document*, 7, 10, 19, 20.

see what Mandela could do for South Africa. He was sworn in as the country's President in 1994 and proceeded to set up a government of national unity. He has run the country for five years at the time of writing, and South Africa has enjoyed the most peaceful break in most of the three and a half centuries covered in this historical synopsis.

It is out of this context that Desmond Tutu comes, a context characterized by its espousal of non-violence from the days of Mahatma Ghandi in South Africa, as well as by its readiness to confront the intransigent government when its expectations were at odds with the will of the oppressed people. This political, religious, and social context that has shaped Tutu, and is one that he has admittedly helped to shape in his own proactive way. Desmond Mpilo Tutu has been working assiduously in the realms of both church and state to bring this respite to the country and to help bring a lasting reconciliation.¹

Desmond Mpilo Tutu

None of the religious leaders in South Africa symbolizes the struggle against apartheid as distinctly as does Desmond Mpilo Tutu. His life weaves intricately into the development of a movement seeking a peaceful denouement to the South African conflict. He was born in Krugersdorp on October 7, 1931, the son of Zachariah Tutu, a man of Mfengu extraction, and Aletha née Mathhare, a woman of Tswana stock.² He was the second child, an only son between two sisters, Sylvia Funeka and Gloria Lindiwe.³ His mother was a washerwoman who was paid

¹Allister Haddon Sparks, *Tomorrow Is Another Country: The Inside Story of South Africa's Road to Change* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 88-90.

²Villa-Vicencio, "Archbishop Tutu: From Oslo to Cape Town," in *Hammering Swords into Ploughshares*, 4-5.

³Shirley Du Boulay, *Tutu: Voice of the Voiceless* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 22.

in mere tokens for her work. Tutu is married to Leah Nomalizo né Shenxane, a school teacher and former student of his father. They have four children: Trevor Thamsanqa, Theresa Thandeka, Naomi Nontombi, and Mpho Andrea.¹

Tutu received his high school education at the Johannesburg Bantu High School, West Native Township, Johannesburg, between 1945 and 1950. He proceeded to complete a teacher's diploma from Pretoria Bantu College (1951-1953) and a B.A. degree from the University of South Africa (1954-1958).² He would have had to teach in the Bantu Education system had he not responded to a call to the pastoral ministry.

Tutu taught at his alma mater, Johannesburg Bantu High School, and then at Munsiville High School in Krugersdorp between 1955 and 1958. During the next two years he studied for his Licentiate in Theology at the Anglican St. Peters College, Rosettenville, Johannesburg. He was ordained as a deacon in 1960 and as a priest the following year. He received his B.D. Hons, and M.Th. (London) while serving as a part-time curate at St Albans, and later as a part-time curate at St. Mary's Blechinpley, Surrey, England.

From 1967 to the closure of the Federal Theological Seminary in Alice, Eastern Cape (1969), Tutu served as one of its lecturers as well as the Anglican Chaplain to the University of Fort Hare, also in Alice. For the next three years he lectured in the Department of Theology at the University of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland in Roma, Lesotho.

In 1972 he returned to England where he stayed till 1975, serving as Associate Director for the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches, based in Bromley, Kent. Thereafter, he spent two years in South Africa as the Anglican Dean of Johannesburg before he

¹Villa-Vicencio, "Archbishop Tutu: From Oslo to Cape Town," 5.

²Ibid.

served as Bishop of Lesotho from 1976 to 1978. Following that, he served the South African Council of Churches as General Secretary from 1978 to 1985. In 1986 he was appointed as the Anglican Archbishop of the Province of South Africa, in which capacity he served until he retired in 1996.¹ At the time of writing he is serving as the chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which is working at consolidating the peace process in South Africa in the post-apartheid epoch. He has also been invited to lecture in the United States and other parts of the world.

Tutu has received innumerable honors, including Fellow of Kings College, ten honorary doctorates, a designated membership in many international societies, and several international awards. The most prestigious may well be the Nobel Peace Prize, which he received in 1984.²

With all his achievements, Tutu remains an accessible and personable individual. His colleagues at the South African Council of Churches called him *Baba*, the Zulu term for Father, a term used not professionally, as Bishop, for instance, but as a term of endearment. He is warm and sensitive.³ He possesses what Black South Africans call *ubuntu*—personableness—for everybody, regardless of who they are. He takes time to attend to people whether they are celebrating their birthdays and their successes or smarting under the burden of their pain and anxiety.⁴

¹Ibid.

²Du Boulay, *Tutu*, 200-209.

³Sophie Mazibuko, "Archbishop Tutu: The Man," in *Hammering Swords into Ploughshares: Essays in Honor of Mpilo Desmond Tutu*, ed. Buti Tlhagale and Itumeleng Mosala (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986; Nairobi, Kenya: Africa/World Books, 1987), 13.

⁴Mazibuko, 16. See Dawn Engle and Ivan Suvanjiëff, eds., "A Nobel Laureate to Study: Desmond Tutu;" available from <http://theodore-sturgeon.mit.edu:8001/peacejam/tutu/>

Yet life has not been easy for Tutu. He has been subjected to the indignities of apartheid in South Africa. As a Black, he has been affected by the Group Areas Act which, for racial reasons, did not allow him to live where he might have liked to. In fact, it was on the basis of this legislative act that he had to leave Meyer Street in Sophiatown when the township was destroyed in 1954. The Federal Seminary, the institution he served during the years 1967-1969, was closed in keeping with apartheid's education laws. He has been deprived of a passport on the government's whims and had to break apartheid's laws to live in the Anglican Archbishop's residence in Cape Town. He has a practical experience with apartheid.¹

The future archbishop took numerous risks in fighting racial laws in an effort to remove discrimination. He was perceived as a revolutionary by the South African government, a label that often allowed it to dispose readily of opponents. His course of action was questioned also by the young Black revolutionaries in the country (who would rather fight the White oppressors to the bitter end) for corresponding with, and talking to such leaders as Premier Balthassar John Vorster and President Pieter Willem Botha. But Tutu responded to such pressures by remaining a courageous and gracious person. He intervened to save the lives of those turncoats who would have been killed for being traitors to their own people, spoke forthrightly to the government, and facilitated many attempts at peace. He even dared to confront the Blacks on the issue of killing each other during the bitter years between 1984 and 1987.²

tutu@circ/ulc4; Internet; accessed 3 September 1997; Mark Gervisser, "Doing the Arch, Mail and Guardian Profile: Tutu Profile"; available from <http://www.web.co.za/mg/news/96apr/11apr-tutu.html>; Internet; accessed 3 September 1997.

¹See Dawn Engle and Ivan SuyanjiEFF, "Interview with Archbishop Tutu," July 20, 1995; available from <http://theodore-sturgeon.mit.edu:8001/peacejam/tutu/interview.html>; Internet; accessed 3 September 1997.

²Du Boulay, 171-199. These were the years of conflict when Black South Africans resisted P. W. Botha's constitutional changes that excluded the input of African leaders,

Tutu has involved himself in the political and social issues of South Africa because he believes that faith without works is dead. He attributes both the direction and success of his work to his life of prayer, meditation, and fasting. He believes that he encounters God in prayer. The daily program of the SACC gave an indication of the priority of prayer when he served as General Secretary. The addresses he made while living at Bishopscourt in Cape Town showed the same tenor in his ministry.¹

Tutu's Theological Orientation

The Nature of Christian Theology

For Tutu, Christian theology is a human activity arising from Christians' reflection on their faith in the light of God's action in the past, present, and promised for the future. It constantly refers to Jesus as its center, the true revelation of God. Theology occurs when a Christian reflects on his or her experience in the light of his or her faith.² It is seeking to make sense of that experience when perplexities cause one to doubt the formulations of faith, when faith seems unable to inform the Christian's life in its totality. The theology of the Bible is existential and particular; it is rooted in human existence. Being so contextual, it does not initially claim universality which is reserved only for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

resigning the Blacks to live in the Bantustans. The Africans determined from this time on to topple the apartheid government and this decision was met with brutal force.

¹Desmond Tutu, *On Trial* (Leeds, England: John Paul the Preacher's Press, 1982), 32-33. For more on Tutu, see David Winner, *Desmond Tutu: The Courageous and Eloquent Archbishop Struggling against Apartheid in South Africa* (Milwaukee, WI: Gareth Stevens, 1989).

²Tutu, "Theology of Liberation in Africa," 165.

Therefore theology is a human activity which is conditioned by the theologizers.¹ It can neither be universal nor eternal; it is transient and speaks relevantly only when speaking to a particular issue. Nor can it ever be perfect. There necessarily must be many theologies. It is not up to anyone to judge which theology is right or wrong.² Theology must be relevant to the age and time when people are living. It must evolve according to epoch, place, and time. It is for this reason that the Bible itself has many theologies. Jesus alone is immutable.³

The Nature of Black Theology

Black and African theologies are engaged in liberation because of its importance. It is not an alternative to personal salvation in Jesus Christ. True salvation is holistic. Only a politically, spiritually, socially, and economically free Africa can make its contribution to the world church and the world at large.⁴

Black theology is an expression of liberation theology. It emphasizes theological contextualization. It seeks the liberation of those who are oppressed. In South Africa the oppressed are the Blacks, oppressed under a racial oligarchy. Hence, theology addresses the ogre of racism in its specific context. This is a major distinction between South African Black theology and Latin American liberation theology. Whereas the main focus in Latin American liberation theology is economic and class emancipation, South African Black theology focuses on the evils of racism. It seeks equality, justice, and liberation in that setting. Whereas, given

¹Ibid. Cf. Bonganjalo Goba, *An Agenda for Black Theology: Hermeneutics for Social Change* (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1988), 3.

²Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 76.

³Tutu, "Theology of Liberation in Africa," 165-166.

⁴Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 76. Basil Moore takes the same route when he writes that Black Theology cuts across the classical detachment of mainline theology (Moore, 6).

its class emphasis, Latin American liberation theology allies itself to Marxist social analysis, South African Black theology largely shies away from Marx and emphasizes *gelykstelling* and justice, leading to reconciliation among peoples separated by racial rule.¹

In this context of racial discrimination, Black theology seeks to make sense, to those who have been brutalized, of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. It concerns itself with the meaning of Black existence, with liberation, the meaning of reconciliation, humanization, and forgiveness. It is an engaged theology that cannot be neutral.² Consequently, it is aggressive and abrasive because of its evangelistic intent to wake Blacks out of their stupor of subservience and obsequiousness, and lead them to human fullness and liberty in God. Yet still it seeks to effect reconciliation between those who are at odds with each other, for it holds that God created the world for *shalom*.³ Hence it aims at awakening Whites to the realities of Black oppression, thus seeking to liberate both groups. It does not hold that the economic and the political elements alone matter. It is much more holistic.

The church belongs rightly alongside the crying hungry, the anguished poor, and the exploited ones. She must deal with real flesh and blood, always with the consciousness that "God loved the world, not the church." Yet we cannot value the world so as to denigrate the church.⁴ The Gospel of Jesus Christ constrains His people to work for justice, for peace and reconciliation.

¹De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 159-161.

²Desmond Tutu, "Freedom Fighters or Terrorists?" in *Theology and Violence: The South African Debate*, ed. Charles Villa Vicencio (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 71.

³Desmond Tutu, "Church and Nation in the Perspective of Black Theology," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 15 (1976): 6; cf. Goba, *An Agenda for Black Theology*, 4-7.

⁴Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 35.

Summary

This chapter has been a look at the background to what has turned out to be today the Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa. That commission has heard testimony akin to the content of this chapter except that this chapter lacked in graphicness what this chapter possessed in scope. What any history of South Africa over the time covered in this chapter must capture is a cacophony of sorrow and violence, a rapacious spirit on the part of the powerful in order to dispossess the powerless, regardless of race, and a determination to use power as long as time on earth permits.

Further, this chapter introduces Desmond Mpilo Tutu who has led both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and, as many admit, the church's charge against apartheid, in South Africa. He has become an icon around the world. The turn of this century comes with a unique interpretation to the way power has been preserved and the way people have related to each other over the past three and a half centuries in South Africa. This is Archbishop Tutu's perception of South Africa's journey of disparate peoples, whom he thinks are not too unique to teach the global village a lesson in neighborly living as the village is hurled into the consciousness of the Third Millennium.

First of all, Tutu argues that to view South Africa's tension as the result of white people's intolerance of the Black is to see only a small part of the problem. A part of the fact that this perception sadly ignores such important population sectors as the so-called Colored and the Indians, and it assumes that the so-called Whites are as united politically and in other matters of reality as they have been made out to be. The true picture is much more complex than this and at its core must lie an understanding that the country needs a unifying direction in terms of a philosophy which transcends the color of an individual's skin and all that pigmentation means in terms of that person's heritage in the South African context.

The need for this complex model which South Africa needs explains why, over the years, many Black South Africans have cooperated with Whites, much to the displeasure of other Blacks, and vice versa, why Blacks and Whites likewise have been caught in complex patterns of violence against one another, why churches have split over how to address apartheid, and many other difficult questions which still to this point necessitate the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Tutu suggests that our understanding of God, Jesus, and humanity, and finally how these relate to each other in the form of the church, holds the answer to South Africa's problem. As soon as human beings understand that their fallen state calls for salvation through Jesus Christ, and that as individuals who enjoy this salvation via membership to the church, they ought to work for the salvation of others who yet need to be saved. As soon as they understand this, they will regard each other with respect and seek each other's good. Nothing will destroy apartheid as certainly as our urgency for salvation and our evangelistic drive to pass on the gospel to those in need of it. So at the core to the dismantling of apartheid lies God's plan of salvation from the beginning to the end. The church needs to seek to be heard for all she is: the voice of Jesus Christ, the Lord of the whole world, no less.

Chapter 2 is an exposition of why, according to Tutu, the church is the institution best qualified to bring erstwhile enemies to the table of fellowship. Chapter 3 attempts to explain how the church might accomplish this task.

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH IN THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to set forth the fundamental principles undergirding Archbishop Tutu's concept of the church as an agent of reconciliation. The Archbishop holds that a correct understanding of the church depends on the proper grasp of a few fundamental issues related to her nature. The church is not an isolated phenomenon, arising in the world on her own. She is a creation of God, through the work of the incarnate Jesus Christ, and goes on today after His ascension, through the Spirit-driven activity of human beings.¹ Before speaking intelligently of the church, affirms Tutu, we need to know what God has revealed of Himself, who Jesus, the founder of the church, is, and what the fundamental nature of men and women who constitute the church is. This chapter briefly outlines the foundational intertwinement of God, Jesus Christ, and humanity in the construction of the church. As we shall see, while the ontological aspect of the church is assumed by the archbishop in his discussion of her role in God's plan, it is her functional dimension that is his pressing concern.

Tutu's Understanding of the Church

Tutu's usage of the term "church" seems to be informed by his background as an Anglican churchman. Anglicans have traditionally understood the church to be the

¹Tutu, *On Trial*, 6.

“congregation of faithful men [and women], in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ’s ordinance in those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.”¹ She is the Body of Christ which is united to Him by the Holy Spirit. She is a congregation of Christians who have received Christ’s word, have been baptized, and continue in the doctrine of the apostles and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers. The church exists in two forms—the invisible and the visible. The invisible church is that body which comprises the true believers in Jesus Christ who are alive today as well as those who have died. She is universal, consisting of people from all over the world. This is the mystical body of Christ, known only to God. The visible church is the institutional body which includes all those who belong to the church at the present time, whether they are true believers or not. These are the members “who are known and counted by men.”²

The church, for Tutu, is a sacrament. She is an outward and visible sign, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means of our reception of Christ. She exists neither on her own, nor for herself. She is an institution in the world that serves to blend the work of Christ and of the Holy Spirit in the present world. Her work has eternal consequences.³ This ontological view of the church has consequences for her work in the world. She can be fully involved in matters that could otherwise be understood as worldly, for the world is her plane of operation.

¹The 19th Article of Religion, *Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England*, 1553.

²Richard Hooker, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1594), I.xv.2, II.v.7, III.i.1-9, 11. Cf. Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 131, 132; 148-151; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 75, 76; 86, 87; idem, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 30, 31. Granted, there are differences between Tutu and Hooker born of time and historical context. Whereas Hooker discusses the church in terms of the state church of England, which he promotes, Tutu can think of none such because there is no similar ecclesiastical structure in South Africa. He seeks a church that is united ecumenically. Yet the two churchmen share the passion for a united church. Tutu, as a good Anglican, thinks of the church as united in Christ.

³Tutu, *On Trial*, 26; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 115, 119.

Justifying the involvement of church and state in their respective realms, Richard Hooker explains that the church and the state are one and the same society, only contemplated from different perspectives.¹ Tutu shares this view.²

He sees the role of the state as that of helping people live at peace with each other, thus opening the way to the prosperity of the citizens. Where harmony does not exist or has been compromised, the church shares the responsibility with government and other bodies in society to work toward the restoration of peace. Both during and after the apartheid era, there was need to reconcile the people of South Africa to one another.

Desmond Tutu is one of those who despise what is called cheap reconciliation, favoring true and intentional at-one-ment. He holds that the church is, *per definitionem*, the agent of this reconciliation. Since Tutu's theology is sensitive to the current situation in which Christians and others ply their daily activities, it must evolve, and evolve it has. During the 1970s his writings on reconciliation were urgent because he believed that reconciliation might avert a civil war in South Africa. He held that sooner or later Blacks would be free. For them to fight their way to freedom would lead the White population to lose the opportunity to recognize the Black people as fellow created beings, and hence wreck the country. It was imperative for the church to unite, lest she perish from her divisions. In this period Tutu was strongly influenced by the Black Consciousness Movement, and most of his writing set forth a Black theology which, in South Africa, was strongly allied to the Black Consciousness

¹Hooker, viii, 9.

²See Tutu, *On Trial*, 19; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 36-39; 167-168; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 66.

Movement.¹ His strategy during this period was to emphasize that the church should be involved in politics. Since God in the Old Testament revealed Himself as a liberating God, the church too should seek to liberate people. Jesus had come to set free those who were under the thrall of the devil. The church could hardly do otherwise.²

The first half of the 1980s witnessed a shift in emphasis. Tutu argued that, beyond liberation, the center of Jesus' mission was also to achieve reconciliation not only between God and humanity but among human beings as well. If the church shied away from the work of reconciliation, she negated the very core of Jesus' work. Further, harmony and unity, which thrive in the climate of reconciliation, are fundamental to very human existence. The essence of humanity itself hangs on unity. Yet to hold together, this harmony must be based on justice, hence the new anthropological nuance in Tutu's writings, a nuance based on the doctrines of creation and redemption.³

During the last ten years Archbishop Tutu seems to have put increased emphasis on the importance of service as a hallmark of the church. God's revelation is always for the benefit of others, he argues. The church, God's family on earth, is appointed to humanize and

¹For specific positive references to Black consciousness see his tribute to Steve Biko in *The Rainbow People of God*, 16-20; idem, "God Intervening in Human Affairs," *Missionalia* 5 (1977): 115.

²See Tutu's letter to Vorster in 1976; idem, "Liberation Theology in Africa" (1977); idem, "God Intervening in Human Affairs" (1977); idem, "Address at Steve Biko's Funeral" (1977), and idem, "Liberation Theology" (1978).

³See Tutu, "Facing the 1980s," *Crying in the Wilderness*, 105-118, and idem, "Fortieth Anniversary," in *Hope and Suffering*, 50-58. What seems to have been a strong influence in Tutu's direction is his appointment as the Secretary General of the South African Council of Churches (SACC). His work in this ecumenical capacity brought him into direct conflict with the Botha government, and he was forced to defend his work for the unity of the church on at least two occasions. The first occasion was when de Lange made allegations against the SACC in 1979, and the second was when he had to testify before the Eloff Commission in 1981. The church must address the scandal of division.

transfigure the structures of the world and to help set up the kingdom of God. This is to be done with humility, by serving the world in various roles, including the spiritual, the political, the economic, and the social realms.¹

The backbone of Tutu's argument continues to consist of his understanding of the nature and work of God the Father as revealed in the creation of the universe, as well as in the exodus event, the nature and work of Jesus Christ, as seen in the incarnation, the work, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus, and the nature of humanity, both the universe and humanity created in the image of God and redeemed in Jesus Christ. Such views and concerns are addressed in both this chapter and the next.

The God of the Church

As an unabashed African and as a member of the Anglican faith, Tutu perceives God as transcendent. His ways are not human ways. Nobody can behold His face and live. It was due to His holiness and otherness that Israel was prohibited from making images of Him. He dwells in inaccessible light, and the angels veil their eyes in His presence. He can be known only as He reveals Himself.² The character and acts of the God of the Bible distinguish Him

¹See "Agents of Transfiguration" (1986), *The Rainbow People of God*, 114-127; "Black Oppression by Black Oppressors" (1989), *The Rainbow People of God*, 158-158, and "The Nature of Christian Leadership" (1992), *The Rainbow People of God*, 236, 237.

²Desmond Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 27; idem, "African Insights and the Old Testament," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 1 (1972): 19. The Supreme Being is variously called *Modimo*, *Mdali*, *Qamata*, and *Mwelinzani [Mvelinqqangi]*. He is all-powerful, the Creator of all there is. He is utterly other than His creation, i.e., He is transcendent, not to be approached lightly by man for He will fill him with numinous awe. These attributes of God echo the first Article of the Anglican faith: "There is but one living and true God, everlasting . . . of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the maker and preserver of all things . . . and in the unity of His Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost." Gilbert Burnet, *An Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England* (London: T. Tegg and Son, 1836), 19.

from all the other deities that humanity has worshiped through time. He is the God who created light and order out of darkness and chaos. Out of Israel's despair of slavery, He brought deliverance to that people. Out of slaves, He created a nation of special people whom He led into the promised land. He has revealed His character most clearly in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He reconciled humanity to Himself, says Tutu, and became friends with it. He has also made all human beings into friends through Christ's death. The church that He has founded must today bring reconciliation to humanity.¹ Hence the church can be understood only in the light of our understanding of God.

The King of the Universe

The God of the church is unique and radically different from all other potentates because He does not owe His sovereignty to military prowess and conquest in battle. His rule over the world excludes the necessity of violence on His part because He has a higher claim over the world. He owns it by dint of the fact that He created it and continues to sustain it. Any counterclaims can only be usurpation.

The God of Creation

Tutu describes the God of the Bible as infinite in His grandeur (Gen 1:1-2, 4). He created the world *ex nihilo*.² He did not struggle to create, like the Babylonian deities. He is the *Pantokrator*--the Almighty.³ God created the universe to be a cosmos, not a chaos, a

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 71-72; 222; 262-263; idem, *On Trial*, 6, 26; idem, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 51-52; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 60, 86, 135.

²Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 27.

³Tutu, "Church and Nation in the Perspective of Black Theology," 8.

cosmos of harmony, order, unity, fellowship, communion, peace, and justice.¹ He created the world to reign as sovereign over it. While human beings would look after it, He would remain its absolute ruler, demanding undivided loyalty.² For Tutu this divine creatorship is of cardinal importance because it subjects the world and all in it to God's sovereignty. No creature or activity falls outside the purview of His rule.

This emphasis represents a parting of ways in South African theology, for today's African theological approaches have come under the influence of various schools of thought. Thus, while with Tutu and other Black theologians he recognizes that human beings are, under God, responsible for the universe, D. Chris Coetsee, a Dutch Reformed minister, seems to restrict this duty to the maintenance of the earth.³ Indeed, Tutu would agree with the need for Christians to do their best to humanize all the aspects of human life, motivated by their faith in God.⁴ But, from his Black theological perspective, Tutu goes beyond that and emphasizes that creation levels the ground beneath all human beings and makes them equal before God. They are all His viceroys because He has created them all in His image.⁵

At creation Adam and Eve communed directly with God who visited them as a friend visits friends. The animals did not prey on each other. The scene was one of peace, abundant harmony, unity and fellowship, as God had originally intended it to be. "This was God's

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 55.

²Ibid., 61, 66.

³See D. Chris Coetsee, "The World of God--A Challenge to the Church," *Missionalia* 14 (1986): 120. Coetsee sees our responsibility for the earth mainly in terms of its maintenance. This is influenced by early twentieth-century Dutch Reformed theology which reflects Abraham Kuyper's view of *sovereiniteit in die kring*--sovereignty in a given sphere.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 140-141.

intention for the entire universe because unity means peace, prosperity, fellowship, justice, wholeness, compassion, love and joy, *et al.*, conveyed in the virtually untranslatable Hebrew *shalom*. It depicts a condition in which God's will is done and His laws obeyed."¹

However, Adam and Eve elected to grab their autonomy from God and fell into sin. Sin disrupted the unity that had characterized creation thitherto. Harmony was lost to disharmony. Peace and love gave way to hatred, alienation, and enmity. The destruction of the fabric of concord affected the whole of creation. The ground brought forth thistles. Fratricide occurred, and in a short while the human community disintegrated when people could not communicate effectively at Babel. The new situation cried out for reconciliation and atonement--at-one-ment--the restoration to friendly terms of those who had broken away from each other.²

Very much in harmony with Ferdinand Deist, an Old Testament Professor at the University of South Africa, Tutu insists that as bad as the situation became, God regarded Adam and Eve as still salvable.³ He did not give up on the rebellious human race. This was the first revelation of His attitude toward human beings. He never gives up where they are

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 60-61. See also T. Richard Snyder, Professor of Theology and Ethics at New York Theological Seminary, who has dedicated his ministry to seeking to link faith and justice, and who uses South Africa as his case study, *Once You Were No People: The Church and the Transformation of Society* (Bloomington, IN: Meyer-Stone Books, 1988), 80. Snyder corroborates Tutu, explaining that *shalom* implies to wholeness, fulfillment, and overwhelming love. The people who had this *shalom* in the Old Testament knew prosperity and comfort. The point both Tutu and Snyder seek to make is that there can be no peace or reconciliation in the presence of inequalities caused by the oppression of some by others. Any effort toward establishing peace that fails to consider matters of justice betrays failure to understand the fact that peace does not simply mean the absence of war, but also requires that other aspects of life receive adequate and meaningful attention.

²Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 61.

³See Ferdinand Deist, "The Nature and Origin of Evil: Old Testament Perspectives and Their Theological Consequences," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 76 (1991): 74.

concerned. A plan unfolded to reconcile humanity to Himself. God sent His Son to effect reconciliation, to bring about at-one-ment, to restore justice, peace, order, friendliness, compassion, and wholeness. In Christ, God reconciled the world to Himself and restored the lost *shalom*.¹ The restoration of this state of affairs belongs to the core of God's total plan for the universe. It is not a peripheral dimension. In Tutu's view, even the Scriptures occasionally betray a nostalgia of a paradise lost and a paradise regained. In the descriptions of the messianic age, we hear echoes of the time of creation.² Indeed he maintains that the story of the Bible is the story of God's movement to restore harmony, unity, fellowship, and communion, to a point where God's rule and sovereignty will be acknowledged again.³ This liberation is to be patterned after the original picture of the primordial kingdom of God at creation.⁴ In that context He has commissioned the church to set people free from all that enslaves them and to promote joy and a glorious liberty that belong to the original kingdom.

Over against Bonganjalo Goba, who enlists the church in the creation of the *Novum*, the new creation of God's people through the liberating mission of Jesus,⁵ Tutu is careful to emphasize that the kingdom of Christ is realized when people are released from their basic

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 61.

²Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 160-161; idem, *On Trial*, 13.

³Tutu, "African Ideas of Salvation," *Ministry* 10 (1970): 119-120. When Adam and Eve sinned, God not only refused to abandon the earth on their account, but continued to love it and seek to restore it to Himself. He became actively involved in restoring humanity and the world by Himself ultimately becoming human and dying on the cross in response to human sin. This was informed by the divine outlook that always sees people as ever within the reach of salvation.

⁴Tutu, *On Trial*, 27.

⁵Goba, 6.

slavery to sin, because they have all fallen short of the glory of God.¹ He also warns that the liberating work of the church must not be its only benchmark. The world and its needs must not set the whole agenda. Over against those who would have the world decide what the church ought to do, Tutu believes that the role of the church must not be denigrated to enhance the value of the world. Moreover, the kingdom of God as revealed in the full work of Jesus must be kept in view.²

The God of History

Being the God of creation, God takes humans and the world seriously. He is the Lord of history. He acts in human history, and does so through human agents. He saves and rescues His people and covenant, maintains Tutu, from eternity in the past to the eschaton.³ Thus, in the exodus, Yahweh is a God of grace, compassion, and mercy. Being neither impassive nor impotent, He is moved by the agony and suffering of His people (Exod 3:7-8).⁴ In the exodus event He saved His people from physical and subhuman maltreatment.⁵ He is also the God of Shadrack, Meshack, and Abednego, the God who enters a fiery furnace. He is Immanuel, God with us, especially present when His people are in trouble.

¹Tutu, "God Intervening in Human Affairs," 116-117.

²Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 35-36.

³Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 78. See William Temple, *Personal Religion and the Life of Fellowship* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1926), 6-7.

⁴Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 68. Snyder comments that the Egyptians did not want the Jews to associate themselves with history, especially their past which made them a special people. They wanted them to be no people and so called them a name of no distinction—Hebrews—which was used to refer to large groups of people across the Euphrates (17). The same happened to the Black inhabitants of Africa who were called "Nigra," "Negroe," "Darkie" (Kaffir, Bantu, Plurals, etc.).

⁵Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 80.

In this connection, Tutu refers to William Temple a couple of times, underlining their common conception of Yahweh as the God of history. Temple argues that God works in human history; history is the arena in which His purposes are fulfilled. Biblical history is written in the light of God's purpose and judgment. "We shall be turning our backs on the Bible altogether," he concludes in terms that anticipate Tutu's concerns, "if we do not expect to find in history the working of God or fail to play our part in history as agents of His purpose."¹

While the Greeks taught that time was repetitive, moving endlessly in a circular pattern, the Old and New Testament Scriptures, explains Tutu, proffer a God who is unpredictable in His freedom, who packs history with surprises, yet focuses toward an end. He moves history toward a *telos* which is the kingdom of God.² History is linear, teleological, and eschatological. God takes the initiative to create new and surprising things (Isa 41:22-3; 11:5-9; Rev 21:1-4). He was in the world, working through history, involved in the business of the kingdom.³ The motif of the kingdom shows up throughout salvation history. This is what the prophets have taught us, insisting that time has a beginning and an end, that it is teleological, moving with a purpose toward a goal, a terminus, a consummation and a climax, to the fulfillment of God's purpose, which is the establishment of a kingdom of love,

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 27-28; Temple, 6-7.

²Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 78. See also the aspect of divine freedom in ever creating new situations along the universe's journey to the *telos* in Desmond Tutu, "'Barmen and Apartheid': A Sermon Preached at the Barmen Symposium, Seattle, April, 1984," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 47 (1984): 73-74.

³Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 79.

compassion, and justice. It will not be thwarted.¹ The kingdom of God is of utmost importance to Archbishop Tutu's theology.

Whereas God's plan for the universe is marked with linearity, we must admit that history is open-ended, not deterministic. Although God guides history to its telos, some events, to be sure, repeat themselves. Thus the return from the Babylonian exile is seen as the Second Exodus (Isa 43:16-21). Likewise, types abound in the Old Testament, foreshadowing what was to occur in New Testament times. The first disobedient Adam is a type of the antitypical, obedient Adam who reverses the primal disobedience at the tree by His death on the gibbet.² Moses and Joshua led the Jews out of Egyptian bondage across the Red Sea and into Canaan, while the second Moses and Joshua led the new Israel from sin's bondage across the Red Sea of baptism to the kingdom of God.³

By now a pattern has established itself. God created the universe to reign over it. Yet due to the fall of His human creation, not the whole of the universe is under His complete rule. It has to be restored to His gracious reign. But what is this kingdom? It is the programmatic

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 78. In an interview with Timothy Jones and Thomas of Giles of *Christianity Today*, Tutu underlines that the priority of the church is to be God's instrument for the extension of His kingdom in any setting. See Desmond Tutu, "A Prisoner of Hope," interview by Timothy Jones and Thomas Giles, *Christianity Today* 36 (1992): 41.

²Tutu, "Barmen and Apartheid," 73.

³Ibid., 74. Jesus is the second Joshua who leads His people out of bondage and of the wilderness of sin and alienation into the land of Shalom, a wholeness that characterizes the kingdom of heaven. His Sermon on the Mount is a new Torah like Moses received on Sinai (Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 82). The law and deliverance from bondage are married together in Jewish thinking. Jesus' *exodos*, which He was to fulfill in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31), is designed to evoke the exodus event when Moses led Israel out of Egypt. The atoning work of Christ is described as deliverance, rescue, setting free. His work is a ransom to many (Matt 10:45, 11). Exorcizing the demon-possessed, healing the sick, healing the blind and the deaf are signs that God's kingdom has broken into the worldly kingdom.

symbol of what the universe is all about. Already in existence in Old Testament times, this symbol is spelled out clearly in its twofold aspect in the New Testament.¹ It expresses itself concretely, here and now: socially, politically, and economically. Tutu's clearest definition of the kingdom describes it as the restoration of the whole creation, "that shalom--harmony, righteousness, and justice--which is the kingdom of God."² These belong to the kingdom of God, and the church is His agent to work with Him as His partner to bring to pass all that God wants for the universe.³ Thus, the kingdom has an internal (spiritual) and an external (socio-political) dimension, and it is present reality as well as future reality.

Yet the church is not that kingdom. She is merely an agent for its establishment. The kingdom is to be realized as the church transfigures the world to conform to the standards of the kingdom. The church is God's sign in the world, the first fruits of His kingdom, and His showcase of what reconciled humanity should be like.⁴ She is the visionary who holds before the people a vision of what society could become.⁵ Already, in this world, she pursues the goals of wholeness, justice, good health, righteousness, peace, harmony, and reconciliation, primarily by calling the world to repentance and conversion.

Tutu would agree with Snyder that the reign of God cannot be thought of only in terms of the future or merely from the perspective of faith. It is in our midst, it is fulfilled this day, and it is to be on earth as it is in heaven. The Archbishop would agree with Snyder's claim--

¹Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 160. For a more elaborate development of both the spiritual and the concrete aspects of this kingdom, see Tutu, "The Divine Intention," in *On Trial*, 9-35.

²Tutu, "Church and Nation," 6.

³Tutu, *On Trial*, 26.

⁴Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 119.

⁵Desmond Tutu interview by Michael D. Cheers, *Emerge* 6 (June 1995): 25.

with qualification, however—that it always finds embodiment in the shape of concrete political options available at a given time, because he believes that the church must critically distance itself from political movements.¹

Agreeing with Allan Boesak—his comrade in the antiapartheid struggle, and former moderator of the Nederduitsh Sendingkerk—Tutu argues that historical events do not just happen, but that God actively works through them to shape and challenge, confront and undermine, subvert and change human history toward the fulfillment of His kingdom.² He holds that God conquers the circumstances of the world in order to establish His kingdom, so that the present kingdoms will be His and of His Christ.³

Regarding the ineluctability of this kingdom, Tutu approvingly cites Teilhard de Chardin's most cherished conviction that the cosmos as a whole is somehow converging towards an Omega Point.⁴ Teilhard felt that cosmic evolution must have a terminus, and that this "end" can only be conceived as a point or center of universal convergence. He believed that the discovery of Omega was the ultimate recognition of a unified science, a science which has itself converged to "ultra-physics." But the scientific recognition of an Omega Point as the

¹Snyder, 128. Snyder and Tutu would differ in that the former supports Lucio Gera's view that the church must always have a political program that it supports. See Lucio Gera, cited in Jose Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 68. It does not seem that Tutu would like to align the church with a particular political movement as such. Thus, in 1990 he asked the priests under his archepiscopacy not to be members of any political party because that might involve them in conflict with parishioners who might differ in political persuasion. See Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 203-204. Tutu seems to go along with Temple's idea that members of the church in their individual capacities may be involved directly in politics, but the church must seek to announce the broad demands of the reign of God.

²Tutu, "Church and Nation," 6; Allan A. Boesak, *Comfort and Protest: The Apocalypse from a South African Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 75.

³Tutu, "God Intervening in Human Affairs," 112-113.

⁴Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 64.

discovery: the realization, namely, that the Omega Point of science coincides in reality with Christ.¹ Tutu, however, harks back to Hermann Gunkel's dictum that "*Endzeit ist Urzeit.*"

The Bible looks back to the primordial of the past for a picture of the anticipated eschatological future.²

The God of the Exodus

The preceding pages have shown that, in Tutu's view, God has claims over the universe because He created it. Although at present, due to the fall of Adam and Eve, His authority has been usurped by the forces of rebellion, and does not even approximate the divine intention for it, God has not given up on it. He resolutely guides and accompanies it to its *telos*. The exodus is the first decisive event in the Old Testament that shows His attempt to restore His kingdom to its original state at creation.

¹Wolfgang Smith, *Teilhardism and the New Religion: A Thorough Analysis of the Teachings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, 1988), 80. There have always been forces of attraction operating in cosmogenesis which must be attributed to the hidden presence of Omega acting in varied ways to draw evolution upward toward higher levels of complexification and consciousness as well as higher levels of unification through love. Omega is the one center of attraction within and yet outside the universe who is capable of drawing all things toward one another in sympathetic love by drawing them toward Himself. He is the giant magnet of unification at work within cosmogenesis from beginning to end. At no point is evolution self-sustaining or self-directed. It is guided by a force grounded in Omega. It is the logic of continual creation through unification. It is Christ-Omega who is the creator through attractive power from beginning to end. The attractive power of Omega is always in the direction of spirit and higher forms of unity, while the forces of negative attraction are always in the direction of matter and dispersion. See Donald P. Gray, "Teilhard's Vision of Love," in *Dimensions of the Future: The Spirituality of Teilhard de Chardin*, ed. Marvin Kessler and Bernard Brown (Washington, DC, and Cleveland: Corpus Books, 1968), 73-8.

²Tutu, *On Trial*, 16. Gunkel here means that the church always looks back to a historic movement of salvation and extrapolates from it what God will do in the present and the future. This is related to Teilhard de Chardin's idea that the cosmos is moving from a point alpha to a point omega (Hermann Gunkel, quoted in Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 166).

The God of Gracious Liberation

Tutu perceives the Old Testament exodus as the divine event par excellence.¹ Like Boesak, he sees God's liberation as a movement that courses through history. In history, God consistently fights for justice whether in His confrontation with Pharaoh or, later on, in His denunciations of the oppressive rich Israelites. His justice or righteousness is the liberation, the healing, the salvation that He wills to realize and actualize among the oppressed.²

Ferdinand Deist concedes that James Cone, who agrees with Tutu and Boesak on this point, is correct in affirming that the exodus is as central to the Old Testament as the resurrection of Christ is to the New Testament. The theme of liberation not only forms the core of the Pentateuch; it is also dominant in the pre-exilic prophets. Jesus, in the Gospel according to Luke, likewise draws lessons from this theme. It has rightly caught the eye of various theologians today although some of its important aspects seem to have been overlooked or drawn out of perspective. Thus Deist gives a particular slant to the exodus motif, emphasizing the fact that God's covenant with Israel antedated the exodus. He refuses to see the liberation of Israel from Egypt as primarily, let alone exclusively, a political event. Right through their history, God had to do everything for Israel through His might and His wonderful miracles—two central themes in the exodus narrative—since nothing else could save them. Israel's songs echo this conviction that Yahweh is the one who fought its cause over and over. Nothing they achieved was wholly their own accomplishment since it was mercifully done for them by Yahweh (Pss 77; 136; 105:12-15). Likewise, the federation of tribes at Shechem was

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 36.

²Allan Boesak, "Liberation Theology in South Africa," in *African Theology en Route*, ed. K. Appiah-Kubi and S. Torres (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 173-174; idem, *The Finger of God: Sermons on Faith and Responsibility* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), 28.

not a political milestone but primarily a religious community agreeing to obey God (Josh 24). Even the conquest of the promised land was not Israel's doing. God fought the wars for Israel.¹

Tutu and Boesak would not agree to an apolitical assessment of these events. To them the exodus and the whole conquest of the land are paradigmatic of what should happen in South African politics. Clearly the position adopted by the two Black theologians differs from that taken by the White theologian, Deist. Although ethnic undergirding assumptions may have influenced all three, it remains possible that Deist, an Old Testament scholar, may be more concerned with exegetical conclusions, whereas Tutu and Boesak, who have a more pastoral emphasis, would perceive liberation as a heuristic diachronic theme.

As pivotal to the Old Testament, Tutu sees the exodus event as a permanent symbol by which to interpret human history, as well as the whole Jewish cultus. Thus the Passover, built on the exodus, was central to Jewish liturgy. It was Israel's movement with God away from alienation and meaninglessness, away from uncertainty and misery, away from pain and humiliation toward service of the living God. In this sense it is not a myth. It recurs in the Psalms. The exodus-event legitimizes the proclamation of social justice by the prophets. It is the basis for hope in difficult situations. The "new exodus"--at the time of the Babylonian exile--is likewise understood in terms of the exodus.²

In the exodus, God is first known as the God of liberation rather than creation. In Tutu's eyes, Israel extrapolated backwards from the exodus event, concluding that the God who saved them from Egypt must also have created the world. Israel understood from the exodus

¹See Ferdinand Deist, "The Exodus Motif in the Old Testament and the Theology of Liberation," *Missionalia* 5 (1977): 58, 59.

²See Allan A. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence: A Socio-ethical Study on Black Theology and Black Power* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1977), 17-18.

that the God who had liberated them had a purpose for them. Their first relationship to God is traceable to the exodus. God did not encounter Israel in some cultic event like sacrifice or worship. Israel knew Him only as the God of creation because He had saved them from Egyptian bondage.¹ This Creator and Deliverer clearly had shown a deep interest in human affairs.²

By contrast, Boesak reverses Tutu's order of creation and the exodus. For him the progression seems to be chronological from the former to the latter: God created in Genesis, and recreated in the exodus. The Creator God is the God of the exodus, who in freeing Israel created a new people/humanity. His acts in history, including the exodus, are always described as re-creation. God is at work in everything that happens.³ For Tutu, however, the main hallmark of the exodus-event is that through it Israel came into being and experienced God corporately. It understood its own history as the history of a people, and then all history in terms of this event.⁴ This liberation of Israel is the central theme in the biblical description of what God has done and will do for humanity. For Tutu this experience is a type that finds fulfillment for Christians in the life, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.⁵

The exodus has another point of interest for the Southern African Archbishop. The God revealed through it is a God of justice who has taken a stand against oppression and exploitation. He fulfills His word. He redeems and liberates.⁶ God has brought liberation

¹See Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 61-2.

²Tutu, *On Trial*, 21.

³See Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence*, 88.

⁴Tutu, "God Intervening in Affairs," 113.

⁵Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 82.

⁶*Ibid.*, 54 and 154.

where there was oppression, injustice, and lawlessness. He sides with the slave rabble against Pharaoh.¹ Nor was it by accident, argues Tutu, that He sided with the weaker against the stronger. He never comes into the human situation neutrally but graciously to save, judge, or punish.² He invariably sides with the oppressed because of their condition.³ He is the same God revealed in the New Testament. Little wonder that in that setting God announces His presence in all human circumstances through the son of a village carpenter, through a village lass, born in a stable rather than a sumptuous palace. The first to know about His birth were not the high priest and the high and mighty of church and state, but humble shepherds. Even the Magnificat identifies God with the lowly.⁴ At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus' citation of Isa 61:1-3 (Luke 4:18-21) shows His commitment to the marginalized. He consistently elects to fight for them and finally dies for His choice.⁵

¹Ibid., 62.

²Desmond Tutu, "God Intervening in Human Affairs," 112.

³Tutu, "Theology of Liberation in Africa," 166. Our author argues that the oppressed must hear the message from the Bible as that of a Liberator God who sides with them, because they are oppressed. He hastens to qualify this statement, however, by adding that He is no jingoistic national deity who says "my people, right or wrong," but a God who saves and still judges those He saves. He saves from a death-dealing situation into a life-giving situation. Those whom He saves must serve others in order to bring others to a saving knowledge of God. Hence He saves the oppressed for the sake of their oppressors as well. Oppression and injustice dehumanize both victims and perpetrators of oppression.

⁴Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 27-28. Tutu uses this to show the association God has always had with oppressed people. By the same token he can argue that God in South Africa is with the laboring and dispossessed Black masses and definitely not with the White population, let alone the oppressive Afrikaner government.

⁵Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 83; idem, "God Intervening in Human Affairs," 114. Tutu shows the literalness of this passage in a word study dealing with "redemption" in the Old Testament. His major thrust is that Jesus intended material blessings for those He came to save. Boesak agrees, adding that Jesus' liberation is holistic. The year of the Lord that Jesus announces in Nazareth means total commitment to Yahweh, sociopolitical liberation of the oppressed, the care for the animals, and rest for the land. This is wholeness of life and total liberation. "This is the scope within which the Gospels should be understood, proclaimed and

A God who so prefers the oppressed has special relevance for South African Blacks who, over three centuries, lost the land of their fathers and were forced through various forms of coercion to provide labor to those who expropriated it. His partiality for the oppressed awakens their self-worth. For Tutu, God's choice of the oppressed negates all justification for siding with a government like South Africa's apartheid one, which was based on exploitation of some ethnic groups for the benefit of others.¹

Yet, the difficulty that Tutu encountered in helping his people visualize God must in some sense have been akin to what confronted Moses when he tried to convince Israel that God was about to deliver them from Egypt. Israel's first problem seems to have been its loss of memory: it needed to be reminded who its God was. It had forgotten its own fathers. As he first tried to liberate it, Moses sought to revive its identity. Pharaoh persisted to call the Israelites Hebrews, but Moses referred to them as the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Tutu, likewise, had to help South African Blacks by encouraging them to assert their worth in the fashion propounded by the Black Consciousness Movement. Pride in their past could enable them to hold their heads high—provided they would remember the days of old.²

lived" (Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence*, 24-26).

¹Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 64-5; 127-128. Boesak made the same claim, adducing Karl Barth, who, commenting on Amos 5:24, holds that God favors the threatened innocent, oppressed poor, widows, orphans, and aliens. God always stands against the lofty and on behalf of the lowly, against those who enjoy might and privilege and for those who are denied and deprived of right. Karl Barth, cited in Allan Boesak, *Black and Reformed: Apartheid, Liberation and the Calvinist Tradition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984), 93, 94. Goba agrees when he says that God sides with the wretched of the earth (Goba, 8).

²See Tutu, "Straighten up Your Shoulders," his address to a group of marchers gathered at St. George's Cathedral on September 2, 1989, after their march had been disrupted by police (*The Rainbow People of God*, 182-183). Cf. Snyder, 17.

Moses knew that oppressed people would be tempted to create a little god commensurate to their desperate circumstances. He decided to tell them that God hears, remembers, and sees.¹ He is a saving, living, liberating God, partial to the oppressed (Deut 10:18-20). After him, the prophets would announce that this God was present with them and accepted only a religion that had a sound sociopolitical component (Isa 1:15-17).² Tutu followed that precedent.

Boesak shares with Tutu this profile of God. The liberator, God of the exodus, the God who brings offenders to justice, whose fidelity and mercy endure, shows unchanging love in Jesus Christ. He is forgiving; He is able to save; He cannot deny Himself; He will be merciful. He lives, He intervenes in history and against history. He is the God revealed in Jesus Christ.³

Understanding that the God of the Bible is the Creator, Sustainer, and Liberator, who had and continues to have a plan for the destiny of the world, implies that He is first of all a God who exists for the world. Besides, since she exists supremely for God, the church too

¹Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 50 (cf. Exod 3:7-9, 12, 16, 17; 13:14; 14:30).

²Ibid., 80.

³Boesak, *The Finger of God*, 23, 24, 34. Boesak and Tutu refer to these divine attributes in order both to encourage the oppressed who might be forced to despair of God's ability and solicitude on the one hand, and to urge Christians to follow in the pattern demonstrated by God and Jesus Christ for the good of the poor, on the other. Boesak in particular addresses the question of state security. In the days of South Africa's *dwangpostuur*-posture of threat—he criticizes the politicians' trust in their country's armory, which indicates little trust in God. Tutu addresses this question differently. His position is that Whites will always have to contend with Blacks as long as the latter benefit little, economically, socially, and politically from their difficult existence in South Africa. As long as Blacks are not free in South Africa, nobody else will be free. Tutu emphasizes the grandeur of God to show how capable and willing a defender He is for those who trust in Him. Besides, His plan for South Africa will go through, without fail.

must exist for the world.¹ As the New Testament testifies, He was unquestionably concerned with human affairs when He became incarnate. He has shown Himself near through Jesus' death and resurrection.² To Christ we now turn.

The Christ of the Church

God sent Jesus into the world to effect reconciliation, to bring about at-one-ment that would produce unity, harmony, justice, peace, fellowship, wholeness, friendliness, and compassion. This was His intention for the universe from the very beginning. This reconciliatory work is of consummate importance to the whole Godhead: God the Father sent God the Son into the world "to restore that primordial harmony to effect reconciliation."³ The God whom Jesus came to reveal, like the father of the prodigal son, anxiously awaits the return of his wayward son.⁴ He sent Jesus to reconcile us to Himself while we were yet sinners.⁵

¹Tutu, "Church and Nation in the Perspective of Black Theology," 4; idem, "Liberation Theology in Africa," 166; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 74. See also Karl Barth, "The Community for the World," in *Theological Foundations for Ministry*, ed. Ray S. Anderson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, and Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 499.

²Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 37-38.

³Ibid., 55.

⁴Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 138.

⁵Ibid., 139. Bishop Manas Buthelezi of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa shares this conviction and points out that when Paul talks about "reconciliation" in his epistles, he is thinking primarily of a divine act that was both costly and creative in its impact: God's attitude to sinful humanity took a radical turn, but it took Christ's death on the cross to effect this kind of reconciliation. Buthelezi seems to differ from Tutu when he says that the human ethical implications of reconciliation in this sense are always related to decisions on the basis of faith in Christ. It makes no sense outside the context of Christ. A simplistic transfer of this biblical understanding of reconciliation to the sphere of politics--where unbelief, greed, and selfishness are basic motivations--is wrong. To do so is to abuse and misapply the biblical concept of reconciliation. See Manas Buthelezi, "The Uniqueness of the Church: Treasure in Earthen Vessels," *One World* 130 (1987): 5. Tutu holds that God saves people so that they may work for reconciliation, and this reconciliation should be applied to all aspects of life. It

“He did not wait until we were die-able, for He could have waited until the cows came home.”¹ He does not love us because we are lovable, but we are lovable because He loves us. He is the God who initiated the divine-human relationship. It is in grateful response to this that we serve God best.²

The Person of Jesus

Jesus is very God Himself.³ Witness the fact that the apostles and the New Testament church addressed Him with titles that are attributed to God. Yet He laid aside His glory and came into the world as a human being. His enfleshment was real and complete. He was born a helpless baby, in a stable, dependent on food and on people.⁴ Jesus came into the world as a man because in that form He could best identify with humanity (Heb 2:16), and He is forever

must be preceded by justice (Tutu, "God Intervening in Human Affairs," 115-116). Buthelezi, on the other hand, urges that there is no direct identification between political reconciliation and the reconciliation of conversion. Still the dissimilarity between the two theologians is not radical, Tutu explaining that adherence to the standards of God's kingdom must be the condition for reconciliation.

¹Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 139.

²Ibid. The death of Jesus redeemed us and the Holy Spirit sanctifies us (ibid., 269; cf. J. H. Roberts, "Some Biblical Foundations for a Mission of Reconciliation," *Missionalia* 7 (1979): 5).

³Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 169.

⁴Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 27; cf. idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 28. Tutu lays his emphasis on the revelatory function of Jesus. God has revealed Himself consummately in Jesus Christ. But He has gone beyond that: the incarnation is important because it shows that humans count. So from now on human beings are measured by the standard of the incarnate Jesus Christ, and no longer by the shape of their noses or the color of their skins.

united with the human race (1 Cor 6:19).¹ In being human, He became the standard for individuals to emulate and measure their humanity by, rather than by such criteria as skin color or social rank.² He underwent all this to reconcile humanity to God.

This account is in line with the traditional Christian view on salvation from sin. Tutu perceives sin as a relationship of alienation between God and humanity, caused by the latter's disobedience first in Eden and right through the years since the fall. Human beings are helpless against sin, hence their need of the atoning death of Jesus Christ. The effects of its deleterious inroads on God's relationship with humanity will finally be destroyed in the consummation of God's plan for the world. Sin has a personal as well as a social dimension. One has responsibility to repent of personal sin. But one can also confess the sin of one's friends and associations, or give forgiveness on behalf of one's people.³

The Lord of All Human Concerns

The incarnate Jesus revealed God to those He blessed by His ministry. He showed that God takes the whole of human history and human life seriously. His enfleshment was God's declaration that all aspects of human life are important to God. In Him God

¹Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 60. Barth avers that Jesus is the brother of all human beings, having bound Himself with all of them for cursing and blessing, for death and for life. He is interested in the world and is never without humanity, but always was and is and will be with it and for it (Barth, "The Community for the World," 525).

²Desmond Tutu, *Church and Prophecy in South Africa* (Colchester, England: Center for the Study of Theology in the University of Essex, 1991), 17. Tutu posits Jesus the man as the standard for true humanity deliberately to counter the pigmentocracy of the dominant minority in South Africa, which said that the lighter one's skin, the more human one was.

³Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 137-138.

demonstrated His lordship over all life: spiritual, material, secular, and profane.¹ God is Lord of all.² Satan's rule over the world is a usurped rule.

Jesus came into the world to inaugurate God's kingdom. He sacralized all things human by becoming human. He took charge of *all* human concerns.³ His God was the disreputable God who sided with the social pariahs and accepted sinners unconditionally.⁴ It

¹Ibid., 170.

²Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 55. Boesak adds that Jesus came to change this world through the incarnation, His identification with the poor, the meek, and the lowly. He engaged in the struggle for God's kingdom of peace, justice, and love, even at the price of His own life. In Christ's life, death, and resurrection God's involvement with the world becomes obvious. Justice, peace, freedom, and reconciliation do not come on the wheels of inevitability. They need to be fought for (Boesak, *Comfort and Protest*, 86-89).

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 67. On the basis of this understanding of divine involvement in the world, Boesak defines the task of the church as the preaching of the gospel, which is the message of the salvation of God that has come to all peoples in Jesus Christ—the proclamation of the Kingdom of God and the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It is the liberation and the restoration of wholeness to the whole person, not just of the inner soul. Jesus was not a disembodied spirit but the Word made flesh who took on the complete human nature; His message is meant for persons in their full humanity. Because Jesus is Lord and has a kingdom, His lordship applies to all spheres of human life, be they social, economic, political or whatever. Christians are called to participate in politics so that God's law and justice may reign and that His reign be demonstrated practically. Its essential witness in no wise excludes politics. The church's involvement in politics is a call for an alternative to violence. The church averts violence by obeying God above human beings, and thus shies away from idolatry of the state. The Christian's first duty is not to obey the state with perfect servility but to obey God supremely (Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 33-35).

⁴Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 28. Many Christians today agree that in Him has been revealed what and who we are called to be. We need not agree on the specifics of christology to realize the gap between the revealed and the actual place where we are. If we take seriously the life and work of Jesus it becomes clear that the forms of alienation we experience are opposed to God's intention. Jesus rejected both subservience and superfluousness. He neither denied suffering that came His way, nor did He blame the victims of society. He rejected sheer activism when He refused to take the Zealot option to overthrow Rome. Jesus shows that alienation ceases to be the final word when it is recognized, named, and fought. He was one with the oppressed, the downtrodden, and the outcasts. His followers are called to scrutinize and question all the powers that exist in our day (Snyder, 66).

was in this that Jesus Himself was Lord of *all* life: attending to the secular and the sacred, the religious and the political.¹

The Earthly Ministry of Jesus

It was as a human person that the adult Jesus could associate with the scum of society: sinners, prostitutes, and taxcollectors. His kingdom was signaled by healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, forgiving sins, and preaching the good news to the poor.² He cared for people and fed them when they were hungry. He neglected no one or any sphere of life.³ He was concerned for human comfort in every sense. This is demonstrated in that "our Lord broke not just man's law . . . in order to meet human need—as when He broke the Law of the Sabbath observance," argues Tutu (John 5:8-14).⁴ All His activities were connected with God's kingdom.

Tutu concedes that according to our current differentiation between the religious and the secular realms we would find nothing particularly religious in Jesus' consorting with the

¹Tutu, *Church and Prophecy*, 23.

²Ibid., 29-30.

³Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 27.

⁴Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 151. Boesak's comment on this matter is particularly perceptive. He contends that Jesus Christ was the concrete and living image of God. He was the true and authentic reflection of the gracious God in action. He brought a message of hope and liberation to those who heard Him and showed gracious acceptance to the people who kept Him company. He enthroned the human value of the oppressed above the vaunted authority of the oppressors. He refrained from "Christian sadism" that makes people grovel to show their sorrow for sin. He uplifted the fallen and sent them away in dignity. He liberated the Sabbath from being a tyrannical stipulation in the hands of the Pharisees. People were more important than the Sabbath; the law is to function in human service. In His regal association with the lowly people He authenticated their humanity. Jesus in the New Testament is the oppressed One. He is the Black One. For Blacks He is the Black Messiah and the irrevocable guarantee of their Black humanity (Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 13).

social and religious pariahs of His day.¹ According to His judgment, however, the prostitutes and other religious outcasts not only were candidates for heaven but would precede the "prim and proper ones" there.²

¹Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 28. Note that Tutu sees Jesus' statement "Only the sick need a doctor," as a refusal of an invitation to dinner by the Pharisees and Sadducees. Snyder agrees with Tutu. A large group of people in Jesus' day belonged to the class of the poor, diseased, physically handicapped, and socially undesirable. They were known as "outcasts," "publicans," "sinners," or "unclean." Some of them had resorted to begging in order to survive. The fortunate of society labeled, ostracized, and blamed these outcasts for their situation. To be where they were, these victims had to be sinners or the progeny of sinners. But scandalizing the fortunates, Jesus claimed that the unfortunates were His own people and the children of God. He became a fellow victim with them, rather than their accuser (Snyder, 43). It would seem that addressing the gross inequities of apartheid predisposed Tutu and the other liberation theologians to think in absolute terms. Jesus was not necessarily against the rich. For one thing, He would have had to be against the tax collectors. More to the point, He was opposed to the misuse of privilege and wealth, and overconfidence in wealth.

Barth seems to capture more clearly why Jesus was opposed to the Jewish elite when he argues that "the No of the Pharisees to those around was undoubtedly sincere, but it could not be significant nor fruitful because, as their name indicates, it was the No of separatists, of those who separated themselves and were separate from the rest of men by the fact that they did not think they had any share in their transgressions and corruption and the impending wrath of God, that they were not prepared to accept any responsibility for the actions and impulses of this *am ha 'aretz*, that they would not share the consequences of its folly and wickedness, and therefore refused to participate, of course, in the hope which dawned precisely for this *am ha 'aretz* this *profanus vulgus*" (Barth, "A Community for the World," 508).

Barth further comments that when Jesus saw these same multitudes, He was moved with compassion. He could not and would not close His mind to their existence and situation, nor hold Himself aloof from it, but it affected Him, and He made it His own, so that He could not but identify Himself with them. Applying this principle of Jesus to the church, he concludes that His community cannot follow another line: "Solidarity with the world means that those who are genuinely pious approach the children of the world as such, but those who are genuinely righteous are not ashamed to sit down with the unrighteous as friends, but those who are genuinely wise do not hesitate to seem to be fools, and that those who are genuinely holy are not too good or irreproachable to go down 'into hell' in a very secular fashion" (Barth, "A Community for the World," 508-509).

²Tutu, *Church and Prophecy*, 29.

On at least one occasion Tutu addresses the dearth of New Testament data dealing with politics in the teaching of Jesus.¹ It seems that since Jesus is the example of the church, the church should address political questions in the manner that He did while on earth. Addressing his own rhetorical question as to why Jesus was not politically involved against Romans that had a stranglehold on the Jews, Tutu explains that today many see politics and religion as unlikely bedfellows because Jesus was not politically active and seems to have barred His disciples from entertaining political ambitions. On this point, our author feels the need to share the following observations.²

First, Jesus apparently avoided politics because He wanted to keep attention focused on the kingdom of God. Nor could He have been apolitical since He saw Himself as faithful to the tradition of the Old Testament prophets who saw religion as encompassing the whole of human life.

Next, He taught His disciples to render to Caesar the things that were Caesar's and to God the things that belong to Him (Mark 12:17), which can hardly be interpreted to mean that there was some equality between Caesar and God. God's claims came before Caesar's because He is the Pantokrator, the Almighty.

Besides, His declaration of His mission is not figurative and has sociopolitical implications (Luke 4:18-21). He came to give people life and that abundantly (John 10:10). That life has to begin on earth and now.

Further, His de-emphasis on food and clothing was not because He regarded them as unimportant. Jesus' point was that God cared for the disciples' needs (Matt 6:24-34). They

¹See *ibid.*, 27-29.

²See Tutu, "Church and Nation in the Perspective of Black Theology," 7-9.

had to set their priorities in proper order. The kingdom and the righteousness of God preceded all considerations. The rest, however, would be attended to, at the proper time.

Still further, the judgment parable (Matt 25:31-46) mentions nothing that belongs narrowly to religion. It involves ordinary, mundane, secular things which, done or omitted, place one in heaven or hell. Religion is not divorced from the nuts and bolts of life. It is not just one aspect of life. It is the whole of life, or nothing.

Finally, the kingdom Jesus came to establish would be inaugurated on earth and consummated in the world to come. Ultimately, it was an eschatological reality. The whole of God's creation--humanity and all its organizations and structures--was to be made amenable to God's will. Christians were in this world, but not of this world, a tension between being in the world while not conformed to it. The shalom of God--His righteousness, His wholeness and peace, His justice and integrity--was the duty of the Christian. God has no interest in the status quo, for the kingdoms of this world are not permanent. They must give way to the kingdom of God, which will last forever. That kingdom cannot be fully realized now because its ever new novelties will surprise us out of the store of an unprecedented future. There is no doubt, however, that this kingdom should influence the life of the church in the present world. It is one of her chief preoccupations.¹

Thus, Jesus struck a balance between religious and socioeconomic life. Contrary to appearances, He was interested in the sociopolitical reality of Palestine during His ministry. He never abdicated His lordship over the cosmos. Christ's lordship over the world is of cardinal importance to Tutu's theology. This is understandable, given the concept that all of history constitutes a movement toward the primordial reign of God. This lordship is

¹Tutu, "Church and Nation in the Perspective of Black Theology," 9; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 83-84.

fundamental to His invitation to the church to participate in the sociopolitical and economic reform of unjust South Africa. Since God is in charge of all the aspects of life in the cosmos, Tutu reasons, to assert that any particular aspect does not fall within the purview of the Christian's concerns and involvement would be to distance the Christian, in that aspect, from God who involves Himself in all human activities. To advocate that God Himself was not involved in day-to-day matters would be to surrender these matters to the devil. Tutu goes beyond this when he involves the lordship of Christ, the unity of humanity, and the biblical theme of reconciliation.¹

To explain the role God plays in all of life's aspects, as He did in Christ's life, Tutu reminds his reader of the sovereignty of God. None but He is the legitimate ruler of this world.² Boesak likewise endorses this use of the divine sovereignty, insisting on the unity of God. His contention is that God's oneness and indivisibility condemns the compartmentalization of life. To bar politics from preaching breaks up the unity of life. It is bridling the restorative and renovative work of the Holy Spirit. Compartmentalization is the essence of heathenism where there is a god for the soil, a god for the desert, a god of wisdom, a god of wine. We tend to have portions of time when we are Christian because we are engaged in religious activities and we use religious language. Then we turn to the other areas. All too often God is reserved for our religious life, and the other deities of our other spheres of life must be left untouched by the preaching of the gospel.³ The other compartments of life that

¹Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 38-39; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 66-67.

²Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 67-68.

³Boesak, *The Finger of God*, 12.

have their own laws, and ways of doing things, are autonomous and "shut off to the Torah and the prophets."¹

There is also polarization between the personal and the social, between personal necessities and socioeconomic needs. Meanwhile nothing in the world is outside the purview of the judgment and mercy of God. "Politics is sacred business."² This conception is in keeping with Calvin's precedent. He believed that God's jurisdiction included the civil domain in society. Political institutions do not exist autonomously. They have to account for themselves before God. Scripture is the norm for all ethics and for all actions. Political traditions, economic and social structures, and all else are not divinely ordained, permanent, or eternal. They fall under the critique of the word of God. It is the church's responsibility to formulate this critique and probe the realities of our lives for the truth of the gospel message.³ Archbishop Tutu is in full agreement, owing to the generally held Anglican understanding that there is a single truth binding on all creation, which determines what is acceptable in both the "sacred" and the secular.⁴

Jesus, Heir of the Prophetic Tradition

In his effort to demonstrate that Jesus' ministry among the common people and sinners was part of the inauguration of the kingdom, Tutu explains that Jesus was the heir of the

¹Ibid., 11-12.

²A. A. Van Ruler, cited in Boesak, *The Finger of God*, 13. In this he follows Calvin who argued that politics could not be separated from spiritual truth. Cf. Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 156; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 37.

³See John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), IV, xx, 32, p. 1520, 1521; André Bieler, quoted in Boesak, *The Finger of God*, 13.

⁴Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 28; cf. William Muehl, "Politics, the State, and Christian Character," in *The Anglican Moral Choice*, ed. Paul Elmen (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow Company, 1983), 202.

prophetic tradition.¹ These sages condemned as worthless a religiosity that was exclusively consumed with the worship of God, divorced from the commonplace living concerns of ordinary people (Isa 1:14-17; 58:6; 61:1-2). They resisted all that was opposed to the reign of God on earth. This they did because all of life belongs as a whole to God, both in its secular and sacred aspects.² The faith they taught was not something to be lived out at a certain place or on a particular day of worship.³ As we noticed, neither they nor Jesus could approve of our practice of compartmentalizing life (See Isa 58:1-8).⁴ In their work, religion and politics join forces.⁵ Jesus' war, like theirs, was against Satan. It involved His fight against suffering, disease, hunger, and poverty—all results of evil. Disease placed people under bondage to Satan. Jesus came to bring wholeness and healing where disease reigned unchecked.⁶ He was

¹This statement must be understood in the sense of the prophet as a forthteller of God's will rather than in the sense of a foreteller of the future. See *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (1974), s.v. "prophet."

²Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 29. Boesak comments that the prophets included all facts of life in their proclamation of God's Word. They unflinchingly and uncompromisingly confronted the kings and princes on social justice issues. The work of Jesus has profound political ramifications. The privatization of the Christian faith does not have any basis on His deeds and words. The proclamation of heaven without reference to earth is irrelevant and meaningless. Earthly reality includes politics, family, and all other aspects (Boesak, *Finger of God*, 14).

³Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 118.

⁴*Ibid.*, 29.

⁵Tutu, *Church and Prophecy*, 20; *idem*, *The Rainbow People of God*, 158.

⁶Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 57. William R. Faw, a counselor for a rehabilitation agency in Chicago, states this with clarity: "In casting out demons, Jesus engaged in social reconciliation, for the demoniacs were forced to live in graveyards, barred from Jerusalem, enemies of the people. Jesus restored them to their enemies, to society. In healing the sick and the lame, Jesus brought social reconciliation, for previously the sick could not go into the temple because they were thought not to have God's *shalom*. Jesus brought wholeness" (William R. Faw, "Christ's Church: God's Colony and Agency of Reconciliation," *Brethren Life and Thought* 23 [1978]: 58).

engaged in establishing the kingdom of God in these acts and successfully inaugurated the kingdom of justice, peace, love, and fullness of life. In this kingdom God is on the side of the oppressed, marginalized, and exploited.¹ The prophetic ministry that Jesus espoused was not intended to end with Him. The early church adopted it from Him. Early Christians seem to have attracted people more by their community spirit than by their preaching. The community leveled the differences between rich and poor, male and female, free and slave, young and old.

Yet Tutu's reader is not allowed to go with the impression that Jesus was an ordinary activist who spent all His time in blameworthy association. Not even His enthusiasm for God's kingdom made Him a "busy-ness" monger. He was a Man of God, a Man of prayer. Prayer and spirituality were the core of His life. No amount of activity or commitment detracted from His spiritual concerns. But after having been with God, He was all for others.² He had a rhythm of involvement and withdrawal, action and retreat, of which Christians need more.³

The God of Reconciliation

Important as the ministry of Jesus is, it has provisional significance compared to His salvific death on the cross. The central teaching of the Christian faith, argues Tutu, is about

¹Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 30, 36, 124. Disease is chosen because it represents a physical state of the body. Tutu shows that Jesus was not concerned for the "soul" in the spiritualized sense that many people think of in connection with religion (see Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 85). Jesus cared for all types of human needs. Human political freedom is a basic need toward which the church of Christ must strive.

²Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 30. Tutu uses this argument to show that his political concern does not arise from thirst for power. He believes that it is hardly possible to be really in touch with Christ and ignore the suffering of His creation.

³Tutu, *Church and Prophecy*, 16. With this statement Tutu tries to plod middle ground between activism and religiously informed non-involvement. Neither is acceptable for the Christian because if those who fight for justice are not motivated by the Spirit of God, their struggle will be like apartheid itself that they are fighting. Meanwhile, Christians cannot justifiably ignore the plight of those who are denied justice and still claim to be Jesus' disciples.

the reconciling work of our Lord Jesus Christ.¹ He came to restore a sense of human community that sin had weakened. He came to say that God had intended humanity for *koinōnia*, togetherness, yet without destroying our otherness.² Jesus is "the victim who gave His life once for all in the all-sufficient and perfect sacrifice on the cross[,] availing for the forgiveness of our sin."³

Two things need emphasis: the grace of God and the efficacy of the death of Jesus on the cross. It is true indeed that salvation is always a work of grace achieved through the death of Jesus Christ. Because of the death of Jesus, human beings do not need to prove themselves to God. They can do nothing to make themselves acceptable to Him. Jesus came to do that for them. In fact, human beings exist only because of divine love.⁴ Jesus achieved the purpose He set out to fulfill: He brought humanity into a relationship of peace with God under which He could be the unrivaled king of the universe once again as was originally the case. In Him, humanity was at peace again with God.

The Efficacy of the Work of Jesus

Tutu never treats Jesus as a purely formal historical or symbolic sign of the event of reconciliation. He is not a contingent fact of history. He is the One in whom, as the

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 148; cf. idem, *On Trial*, 17. This concept is cardinal to understanding Tutu within the South African context. Whereas the official teaching of the Dutch Reformed Church (hereafter referred to as DRC) was that people are different, irreconcilable races, Tutu radically teaches that the core message of Christianity is reconciliation between God and humanity and among human beings themselves. For a similar view see Walter Kasper, "The Church as a Place of Forgiveness," *Communio* 16 (Summer 1989): 162.

²Tutu, *On Trial*, 17.

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 121.

⁴Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 138.

reconciling God-man and the reconciled man, the event of reconciliation has actually taken place for the sake of all human beings, who is Himself the reality and revelation of the world's reconciliation with God, continually ruling and acting in His work of reconciliation not only during His lifetime but as our contemporary. He is the eternally active primary subject and the object of the reality of human reconciliation with God.¹ He is never the reconciler only in an existential sense as He is for Bultmann.² Thus, for Tutu, when Jesus died on the cross the veil in the temple separating mortals from God was literally sundered from top to bottom, signifying that we are no longer separated. Jesus has actually wrought reconciliation between humanity and God.

In this regard, Tutu can also be contrasted with Snyder. While the latter agrees to the uniqueness and fullness of Jesus' sacrifice, he thinks otherwise about its finality. "There is not to be a once-for-all solution to the reality of alienation," argues Snyder, "not even by God." No single event can transform all history, says he. All the generations of humankind must participate in this transformation. Jesus told us only that atonement is possible and that it involves struggle, even death. "To know Jesus is to complete what is lacking in His afflictions, through our struggle and sufferings. His afflictions did not end the alienation. The battle is not over," argues Snyder. Christ's action was full and complete, but not final. It does not end the conflict.³

Both Tutu and Snyder seek to foster Christian involvement in solving the problems of the world. But because Tutu grounds this necessity in such ideas as the purpose of history, the

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 115.

²For this view regarding Barth, see Herbert Hartwell, *The Theology of Karl Barth: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), 136.

³Snyder, 98, 99.

nature of humanity, etc., he necessarily differs from Snyder who invokes the non-finality of Jesus' work to motivate Christians to complete His work. Tutu calls on Christians to apply the completed work of reconciliation while Snyder calls on them to complete this work themselves.

Georg Kretschmar in an article on reconciliation agrees with Tutu and explains that the preachers of the early church understood redemption as the attainment by men and women of the goal for which they were created, namely fellowship with God. It is attained by the Lord's joining in solidarity with the human race through the death of the cross in order--by virtue of the indissoluble union between divinity and humanity in Christ--to take humanity through death into God's power that vanquishes death, and to present the race before God in resurrection and exaltation. Christ's victory over sin, impiety, and death is substantially what Paul calls reconciliation between God and the cosmos.¹

Here the sin of the individual is embedded in the social order. Christ's victory is the end of the power of the sinful fate that lies over the world. The rapture into the communion of God's heavenly kingdom has taken place in Christ, and has consequently been imputed to humanity. For the individual it remains a promise in which is fulfilled the truth that already constitutes the people of God out of all nations. Reconciliation occurs as people allow themselves to be brought over from the community of those still enslaved to sin, impiety, and death to the community of those who have been salvaged from this state. To transmit the invitation to move from one community to the other is the decisive service of the church to humanity. The early Christians were convinced that there were two worlds.²

¹See Georg Kretschmar, "The Church's Ministry of Reconciliation: A Service to Humanity Throughout the Ages," *Studia Liturgica* 18 (1988): 22.

²Ibid., 24.

Tutu and Kretschmar differ in that Tutu would see the embeddedness of the individual sin in the social order to refer to other forms than the religious concept of sin. For him, sin has social, political, economic, and spiritual ramifications. It cannot be only spiritual.

Adoption through the Work of Jesus

By grace, human beings are reconciled to God. We can now call Him Father because we have received the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Spirit of adoption. Sinful mortals may call the God who lives in unapproachable glory, "Daddy." He is "Abba" to those who believe (Gal 4:6-7).¹ Coetsee concurs, adding that God adopts the believer as "son" or "daughter," and Jesus accepts each one as "brother" or "sister."² We belong to the family of God and are made brothers and sisters no matter what our ethnic background may be. Through the cross God has effected reconciliation among us all. Through Jesus He has brought us from darkness into light (Col 1:13) and has forgiven us. He has led captivity captive and has given us spiritual blessings (Eph 1:2-3). He has acquitted us through Christ (Rom 8:1-2). He has accepted us in the beloved (Eph 1:6) and cares for us more than He cares for the sparrow (Luke 12:5-7; 22:31). By dying to forgive their sins, He shows that humans matter enough to die for. He has given us access to Himself through the Spirit of Jesus.³

Tutu emphasizes two major elements of utmost importance in this concept of adoption. There is, first, the value that humans have been given in Jesus Christ. God has adopted them as His children. Christ calls His hearers to see in themselves people whom the God of heaven has saved. This must awaken them to their own personal worth, although it be predicated on

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 262; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 59.

²Coetsee, "The World of God—A Challenge to the Church," 124.

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 38.

grace. Further, Tutu keeps the balance between political, social, and economic liberation on one hand, and liberation from sin on the other. As important as liberation from political bondage, economic deprivation, and social stigmatization is, it should never be sought to the exclusion of liberty from sin. The victims of oppression quickly become oppressors unless they have been liberated from sin.¹ They both have a common humanity which has been tarnished by the Fall. To preach anything less than the full gospel may imply that the oppressed of today could be the oppressors of tomorrow.² Liberation is to be set free from sin, the most fundamental bondage. But there is no doubt that this liberation spills over into all other spheres of life,³ since Jesus is Yohua, Liberator, the messenger of the reality of liberation and hope. Liberation, in this broader sense, is closely related to adoption.

The Sociopolitical Implications of Jesus' Redemptive Work

Professor Simon Maimela, a Lutheran minister who is an administrator at the University of South Africa, argues that the nature of atonement is determined by the nature of the sin to be atoned for. Since for him sin is a social reality that has to do with the relations between wealthy and poor, "there can be no reconciliation with God unless the hungry are fed, the rich are healed, and justice is given to the poor. The justified sinner is at once a sanctified person, one who knows of his [or her] freedom as inseparable from the liberation of the weak and helpless," Maimela opines.⁴ Tutu would agree that there are social sins and that their

¹Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 77.

²Tutu, "God Intervening in Human Affairs," 111. See Simon Maimela, "The Atonement in the Context of Liberation," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 39 (1982): 45.

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 37.

⁴Simon Maimela, "The Atonement in the Context of Liberation," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 39 (1982): 34.

problems need urgent redress. But priority should be given to the salvation from the guilt of sin in the heart, salvation which is given us exclusively by Jesus Christ. Maimela seems to emphasize the simultaneity between salvation and social awareness. Tutu emphasizes the priority of liberation from sin, followed by the material manifestations of liberation.¹ He also appears to leave more room for education on the latter while he emphasizes the indispensability of the forgiveness of sin. There is little doubt that educating people regarding their role as Christians is what he has done throughout most of his ministerial career.

Boesak concurs with Tutu's emphasis in this respect. Commenting on Isaiah 1 he remarks that

when there is estrangement from God, it is inevitably manifested in estrangement from one's human associates. In the Old Testament, godlessness always meant neighborlessness. If God was no longer known and served then the inevitable consequence was hatred, oppression and anxiety. Then what was right was always twisted, the orphan and the widow found no help, justice became bitter wormwood, and the poor received less attention than the price of a pair of shoes.²

In the light of the priority of salvation from sin Tutu insists that adoption is not to be selfishly appropriated for personal ends. All who believe must do service for God by humanizing the world. Jesus has broken the middle wall between all peoples, whatever their points of difference might have been, to make their humanization possible.³

The Unitive Effect of the Redemption through Christ

The breach of the middle wall has practical implications. From the onset of His ministry Jesus was aware that the Jews, among whom He worked, were divided. Outside the

¹See Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 56-60.

²Boesak, *The Finger of God*, 47.

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 262. The issue of humanization is addressed in chapter 3.

nation, but involved with it, were the Roman oppressors who made vassals of the Jews. There were also other Gentiles, and Samaritans. Within the nation itself were rival sects, such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Zealots.¹ There were further divisions between men and women, rich and poor, free persons and slaves. Jesus broke down the divisions to the point that people did not feel only equal but were brothers and sisters, members of the one family of God.² This is why, referring to His death, He declared that He would die to draw all human beings to Himself, understanding that His chief work would be a unitive function of reconciliation (John 12:32).³ This unity was important to Jesus as is evident in His high priestly prayer (John 17). He did not desire it for pragmatic or economic reasons. Disunity is a scandal that drives people away from God's agency, the church. Today likewise, baptism in Jesus Christ makes Christians from diverse walks of life brothers and sisters.⁴

Professor John W. de Gruchy of the University of Cape Town concurs with Tutu. For de Gruchy, the historical purpose of God's reconciling action in Jesus Christ was, and remains, the creation of a new humanity out of people and nations divided by ethnicity, culture, gender, and material interests. These sources of alienation are far from sacred. They must surrender their absolute status and claims. People must subject their historical and class interests to the

¹Ibid., 118. In similar fashion John V. Tooke, a South African Methodist layman, outlines this scenario of brokenness at every level in an evocative way, and he makes it look like South Africa of the apartheid years, showing the similarities between the violence of *Pax Romana* and that of *Pax Pretoriana*, the conflict between apartheid's collaborators and the revolutionaries, the distance that the Sanhedrin maintained from the *am-ha-aretz* with the listlessness shown by many South African churches toward the victims of racial discrimination and capitalism. See John V. Tooke, "The Church as a Community of the Resurrection," *Missionalia* 14, no. 3 (1986): 134-136.

²Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 118.

³Tutu, *On Trial*, 14.

⁴Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 7, 62, 119.

gospel of Christ. Reconciliation in Christ, which lies at the heart of the unity of the church is neither platonic nor invisible, nor is it based on neutrality with regard to the issues and conflicts in the world. Reconciliation, God's gift of grace, acquires an ecclesiological dimension through repentance, conversion, and engagement in the struggle for justice. De Gruchy's emphasis, like Tutu's, undercuts the apartheid belief that ethnic and other differences are a divine sanction intended to keep people apart. While otherness should not suffer in interracial relationships, the segregation of apartheid is definitely intolerable. Yet as we have seen above, de Gruchy seems to advocate a message that cuts both ways. It seems that he would be readier to criticize the Blacks, if need be, than Tutu, and be more willing to preach the good news to the Whites as well, in spite of their oppressive role in South Africa.¹

In synthesis, for Tutu, the reconciling Christ who came into the world in incarnate form wore a seamless robe, which symbolizes the unity of all humanity.² The church has been

¹See John W. de Gruchy, *Liberating Reformed Theology: A South African Contribution to the Ecumenical Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, and Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1991), 224.

²Just as through the sin of one person humankind became alienated from God, fellow human beings, and creation, so also through the act of one, the God-man, Jesus Christ, God restored and reconciled the world to Himself (Rom 5:8-11). All who respond in faith to this truth are freed from the reign of sin and by grace are restored to a rich, full, and eternal life (Rom 5:20-1). They become a new creation, reconciled to God and in principle severed from the past and heading toward a new future (2 Cor 5:16-9; Phil 3:7-14). Being reconciled to God inevitably results in involvement of reconciling the world to Him. Therefore believers must work towards reconciling the world to God. Those who respond to the gospel call will be involved in reconciling activity (Coetsee, "The World of God—A Challenge to the Church," 124.)

True spirituality does not mean fleeing the problems the world experiences, but being involved with it with a view to pointing out God's alternative by word and deed. As Christ is completely involved in creation, Christians should persevere against the stubbornness of the world and the hardness of people's hearts. The vindication of the Christian never comes in this world. One always works in faith toward the latter day (Acts 3:21; Rom 8:18-23; Heb 9:28; 2 Pet 3:13) The restoration of all things in a most absolute sense gives great courage to persevere in a situation that gives not much intimation to ultimate reality (Coetsee, "The World of God—A Challenge to the Church," 124-25).

commissioned to proclaim the message of reconciliation, which is fundamental to unity.¹ For this she exists. Since it is grounded in the salvific work of Jesus Christ, the gospel that she proclaims to the oppressed must not only mean liberation from political, economic, and social oppression but fundamentally from sin to which all human beings are in bondage. It must emphasize above all God's initiative to reconcile humanity to Himself and human beings to each other. It means readiness to accept God's forgiveness, to forgive one another and to give up hate, and a refusal to conform to worldly standards. Thus perceived, the liberating and reconciliatory work of Jesus Christ is like the exodus. It is a link in salvation history and part of the work of restoring the kingdom of God that was in the beginning.

The Church of God

Jesus, the second member of the Godhead, is involved in the work of reconciling the world to God and returning it to its original status of allegiance to Him. When He ascended, He assigned His followers the task of continuing His ministry, till His return at the consummation of the kingdom that He inaugurated. These followers constitute the church, whose nature we shall now consider.

The Godward Dimension of the Church

A Divine Creation

The church takes her cue on both identity and practice from the character and activity revealed in and by Jesus Christ. God has created and assigned her a special function in the world. Her special duty is to reflect His character, to do what is most important to Him, and to

¹Tutu, *On Trial*, 15.

obey His injunctions regarding how she must live in order to fulfill God's intention for the world.

The church is a divine creation.¹ She is the New Israel of God, the new people of God. She is the body of Christ, a supernatural divine fellowship originated by God Himself through the Holy Spirit.² She constitutes a unity of brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus.³ Her members are united by common baptism and made members of the body of Jesus Christ who has razed to the ground all irrelevant boundaries like race, gender, culture, status, etc.⁴ She is a community of reconciliation, a forgiving community of the forgiven,⁵ a *koinōnia* spread all over the earth.⁶ The church's mission is to live out the mysteries of God's love (1 Pet 2:9-12; 1 John 3:1, 2). For this the church is changed from glory to glory (2 Cor 3:18) and made like Christ.

Thus understood, the church is not merely a human organization, determined by ethnic or national boundaries, but a global fellowship that transcends space, culture, race, geographical bounds, and sex. Time and chance do not affect her identity and fortunes in a

¹Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 183.

²Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 56.

³Tutu, *On Trial*, 7.

⁴In his 1976 letter to Prime Minister B. J. Vorster, Tutu explains how Christians are united through baptism (See Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 25). Unity as a theme based on creation came to prominence in the early 1980s. In his earlier years Tutu emphasized Black Consciousness, which he regarded as fundamental to a healthy integration between the alienated races in South Africa. This might have led him to postpone the issues related to unity. He would have opposed any unity without equality, hence his repeated efforts to make the Black people feel human enough to stand up against White abuse before they could be persuaded to integrate with their erstwhile masters.

⁵Tutu, "Barmen and Apartheid," 76.

⁶Tutu, *Church and Prophecy*, 13.

decisive manner. She is catholic, holy, apostolic,¹ and one. She is also variously characterized as a home for sinners and a school for saints, as well as an earthen vessel that holds a divine treasure.² Tutu agrees with Barth, that each individual assembled in the community is in Jesus Christ a *justified* and *sanctified* sinner, yet also a justified and sanctified *sinner*. Each person is both of these together.³

In emphasizing the divine origin of the church Tutu intends to place her beyond the assaults of the state. He wants to make it clear that the state, with its indefensible burden of apartheid, is not qualified to set the agenda for the church. This does not mean, he contends, that the government could not intervene legally if the church was shown to be involved in criminal activities. Yet it denotes that the Bible, not the state, should determine what the church does. The church obeys God rather than man, whatever the cost.⁴

Elsewhere Tutu appeals to the pedigree of the church as a foundation for her involvement in the business of God, her founder. Devised by God, she should be a humanizing and transfiguring presence in the world. To clinch his argument, our author cogently contends

¹Peter Hinchliff of Baliol College grew up in South Africa and taught at Rhodes University in Grahamstown in South Africa. He accents the ecclesiological mark of holiness in his treatment of social concerns. He explains that the holiness of the church derives from Christ, not from her members. She is holy because she is the body of Christ and has been called to fulfill His purposes (Peter Hinchliff, *Holiness and Politics* [London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1982], 123). This agrees with Tutu's conception of the holiness of the church, because she is perceived as holy even though her members are still considered sinners. See below. Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 131-132. By apostolicity Tutu means that the church has been commissioned by God, and follows the teaching and example of the apostles. She is called to reflect Jesus' gentle, loving, peace-loving, caring and forgiving character. He also beckons her to stand on the side of justice for the poor, hungry, homeless, and naked. She is *Jesus' witness*, who must be willing to lay down her life for the cause of the master.

²Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 183.

³Tutu, *On Trial*, 31; cf. Barth, "The Community for the World," 519-20.

⁴Tutu, "Barmen and Apartheid," 76.

that since the church comes from God, He alone can judge her properly. She will be readier to listen to Him than to the state. To God the church owes her ultimate allegiance. Anybody else attempting to control her is a usurper.¹

The church embraces living members who are the church militant. Those among her members who have passed away make up the church quiescent. Evidently death itself casts no lasting boundary against the unity of the church of Christ: "I think the prayers of those who have gone before are working for us as well. Our cries and our joys and our bewilderments—all of those are being taken up in tremendous offering of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."² The saints in glory constitute the church triumphant. Neither life nor death can separate the members of the church. Christ binds together all redeemed humanity, Black and White.

The Family of God

The church is a worldwide family of God. When one part suffers, all suffer. When one rejoices, all rejoice. The members of a family are not always unanimous about things. Yet they are still united, if they agree on fundamentals. They can enjoy unity without uniformity. They must respect each other's point of view rather than impute unworthy motives to one another or seek to impugn each other's integrity.³ Likewise, no human difference poses a major threat to the church, although one divisive factor brought about by apartheid in South Africa (i.e., race) has had devastating effects. Racial fragmentation ranks high among Tutu's

¹Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 83.

²Desmond Tutu, "Deeper into God: Spirituality for the Struggle," an interview with Jim Wallis and Joyce Hollyday in *Crucible of Fire: The Church Confronts Apartheid*, ed. Jim Wallis and Joyce Hollyday (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, and Washington, DC: Sojourners, 1989), 69.

³For the implications that this character of the church has on her praxis, see chapter 3.

concerns,¹ especially since in the creation story Adam is referred to apart from any mention of nationality and race.

In Adrio König, a Professor Emeritus at the University of South Africa, Tutu has found an eloquent ally on this point. König argues that all human beings are interrelated. There is but one humanity, and all humans have important features in common. All are created by God in His image. All are sinners and all have been saved by a common sacrifice through a common faith, and all are called to live in love. All are condemned in the sin of Adam. Adam incorporates and represents all. But so does Christ as well. He died for all and through faith saves all (Rom 5; 1 Cor 15).

Moreover, the Bible forecasts a time when all nations will be drawn together. Isaiah and Micah share the vision of all nations of the world converging on Jerusalem (Isa 2 and Mic 4). Paul sees this as being achieved in the death of Jesus Christ, who recreates the human family into one humanity (Eph 2:15). God wants one humanity, and this is one reason why the church should be united. She is the forerunner of the one humanity that will come to the New Jerusalem from all nations (Rev 21-22).²

Manas Buthelezi observes that while many churches in South Africa are concerned to keep the worship of “the race god inviolate,”³ what is unique about Christianity is its power to transform strangers into neighbors. Although the truism goes that points of racial contact are points of friction, the Christian gospel makes points of contact points of fellowship. Fellowship

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 7, 8, 63-65, 103, 127.

²Adrio König, “The Interrelatedness of Human Beings,” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 76 (1991): 99.

³Manas Buthelezi, “Christianity in My World,” *Katallagete* 5 (1984): 24.

is by definition a situation of contact. There can never be fellowship without human contact.

Anything that curtails human contact sabotages the essence of Christian fellowship.¹

In Jesus, human divisions into warring nations are resolved, and humanity becomes a family of brotherhood. It is this fellowship that the South African way of life has worked hard to destroy, and this has turned Christianity in the country into a caricature. Racism eats away the very heart of the gospel.²

God's Preserving Agent in the World

Against the canker of worldly division, the church is also the alternative society of the God who reigns, declares Tutu. She is compassionate and caring in a world of harshness and insensitivity. Where people are mere statistics, she shows the value God places on human beings. Where there is grasping and selfishness, she provides communion for all members to enjoy in the present age.³ The church is the light of the world, the hope of the hopeless through the power of God. She works to transfigure a situation of hate and suspicion, brokenness and separation, fear and bitterness. She is also the salt of the earth. "Society without the church is corrupt."⁴ Tutu is basically in agreement with William Faw, who explains that for centuries salt has been used as an agent of preservation. The church is the preservative of the earth. She fulfills this function by pleading for the world the same way

¹Ibid., 24-25.

²Ibid., 25.

³Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 39. According to Bosch, new values become operative in place of the old: "Instead of hoarding, sharing; instead of ambition, equality; instead of domination, solidarity and humble voluntary service" (David J. Bosch, "The Church and the Liberation of Peoples," *Missionalia* 5 [1972]: 11).

⁴Tutu, "Barmen and Apartheid," 77; idem, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 31.

Abraham pleaded for the most wicked city of his days, or Paul interceded for the people traveling with him by boat to Rome although he knew the ship would be destroyed.¹

While Tutu would indeed "plead" and intercede for the world, as he prayed for Vorster and for Botha, he would also like to challenge the world. He is clearly influenced by the conviction that the church has a prophetic function. Beyond praying and interceding for the world, she must also speak *to* the world. She must address the world with a view to changing it into an approximation of the kingdom of God.

The Eschatological Dimension of the Church

It has been disclaimed earlier that the church could be the kingdom of God. She is the first fruits of the kingdom. Thus, she does not belong to the world. Here Tutu has the support of many of his South African colleagues in theology. Bosch attributes the non-belonging of the church to the fact that she lives in a yet unredeemed world. She is "too early for heaven and too late for earth, a permanent anachronism, a stranger on earth."² She calls the kingdom to mind and proclaims it. She knows of the kingdom, hopes for it, and believes in it. She is no more what she once was and not yet what is destined to be. She is a sign of the kingdom. Although it is like nothing that exists in the world today, the kingdom is also a present reality.³ De Gruchy adds that the anticipation of the kingdom pulls the church to the future and keeps her working towards a transformed society.⁴ Charles Villa-Vicencio of the University of Cape

¹Faw, 53.

²Bosch, "The Church and the Liberation of Peoples," 16.

³Ibid. Boesak holds that the church lives for a kingdom that is not in this world and proclaims signs of that kingdom in this world. See Boesak, *If This Is Treason*, 13.

⁴John W. de Gruchy, "Midwives of Democracy: The Role of the Churches in Democratic Transition in South Africa," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 86 (1994):

Town, South Africa, agrees with his colleagues and, like Snyder cited above, argues that this kingdom is realized in this world through immediate political context. For him, the church in the world is--annoyingly--turbulent even in the most responsible societies. She follows the cry of the underdog. To ignore this cry is to depart from the church's most fundamental contribution to society.¹

At first blush, it seems that Villa-Vicencio sees the function of the church as that of a visionary pressure group that survives by achieving immediate goals that it sets for itself. This seems to be a workable recipe for any organization, whether religious or otherwise. But he makes it clear that the church does not work along the lines of other organizations. She has guidelines of her own. He advises that two poles must be avoided in a theology of reconciliation and nation-building. On the one hand, she must eschew absolutizing relative political systems and ideologies that would identify God with a system of political opinion. On the other, she must shun the use of divine absolutes to reduce all political systems and ideologies to the same level of inadequacy and sinfulness, allowing the Christian to remain theologically indifferent to all political choices. The details of a theology of nation-building depends on its particular social context. It has to be developed in relation to basic theological tasks considered here to be placed on the church's agenda for nation-building.²

As Villa-Vicencio sees it, if a theology fails to address the most urgent questions asked by ordinary people and does not side with the marginalized, it is no theology at all. It is merely interested in reified doctrines about God. Such a theology is false since theology has

24-25.

¹Charles Villa-Vicencio, "The Kingdom of God and the People's Democracy: Towards a Nation Building Theology for Africa," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 74 (1991): 4.

²Ibid., 8.

the critical and permanent task of promoting liberation from every captivity in each generation.¹ Tutu would anchor his praxis on the gospel rather than on a utopic vision. The church must seek the best for society because God does this and enjoins it in the interest of the kingdom.

The kingdom, explains Tutu, is present and future. Its present and future phases are linked by Christian hope, an active hope. As E. F. Ceronio, a Latin American liberation theologian, argues, "it is both possession and yearning, response and activity, presence and journey. . . . [It] is essentially activity and commitment. . . . It is not escape from time but effective upbuilding of history."² This is the vision, which, far from diminishing the importance of intervening duties, rather undergirds the acquittal of them with fresh incentives. Only those whose lifestyle and conduct demonstrate the presence of the kingdom here and now may be partners in the consummated kingdom. The function of the kingdom today is to fire up the zeal of the church to work for a just world, since authentic Christian eschatology is always eschatology in the process of fulfillment.

On this basis Tutu decries the fact that, historically, Christianity has been a desert sect that has doomed entire communities to passivity. Its preaching has been an "opiate of the people," sending people on a hallucinatory "trip" to the future, leaving this world to Marxist and other utopias.³ The conception of the church as a caring movement, earthed in this world's activities, is consonant with Jesus' teaching. His religion was not an opiate. Nor is Christianity

¹Ibid.

²E. F. Ceronio, quoted in Bosch, "The Church and the Liberation of Peoples," 18.

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 29; cf. Bosch, "The Church and the Liberation of Peoples?" 18.

about "pie-in-the-sky-bye-and-bye-when-you-die."¹ People want a fulfilled life here and now. Our Archbishop sees nothing inconsistent with the Christian faith in one's desire to find happiness in the present world, for Christ has promised to give life abundantly to His followers (John 10:10). Christianity does not concern itself with man's soul only. It is the most materialistic of the great religions.² This is not to say that Tutu dismisses eschatological considerations. He believes in the end of the world and a judgment such as Matt 25:31-43 intimates. But he maintains that the end must be related to the present. He insists that the end-time judgment has little to do with strictly spiritual activities such as whether we prayed or did not pray, whether one attended church or not, but whether we fed the hungry, clothed the

¹Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 28. Though Tutu does refer to the Bible's yearning for the restoration in terms of the concept of paradise lost and paradise regained, he would agree with Boesak who argues that the new heaven and new earth are not, in a sense, paradise lost and restored. For Boesak, the new heaven and the new earth will be so new that nothing in them will remind us of anything we have ever known. A new earth is necessary because this one has been raped, robbed, torn, and filled with anger and revenge, and hurt and pain. It has never been home for God's children. A new heaven must replace the existing one also because it was in heaven that the dragon first reared its head. The cries of God's faithful have filled the dome of heaven and the rest of creation (Rom 8:22). Heaven has been polluted by the flames of the dragon's breath. It is neither sanctuary nor sanctified. It has smelled factory smoke. Missiles have coursed through it. Nuclear weapons as well as the carnage of Nagasaki and Hiroshima have had their course in its plain view, and so have gas ovens and the burnt villages of Asia. The abominable prayers of the powerful, cruel rulers of the world, e.g., "Gott mit uns," "In God We Trust," and "Soli Deo Gloria," have ascended to heaven. See Isa 65:17-25 (Boesak, *Comfort and Protest*, 127-128). Tutu refers to Paradise regained in the sense of the return of primal peace while Boesak refers to it with a view in keeping our religion earthy and not ethereal in emphasis.

Snyder states the matter in a slightly different manner. He holds that although the biblical vision posits a dramatic change, it nevertheless has clues in the present. The change is not such that it eliminates the need for struggle. The victory God gives us is not a victory of perfection but the stability to say no to the power of death and alienation. The utopian vision is a historical possibility, not simply a neurotic dream born of fantasy and frustration (Snyder, 79). As was noted above (p. 30), Snyder's radical stance is informed by his assumption that Jesus' work was not complete, though it has in a sense definite final significance. Tutu has no doubt about the efficacy of Jesus' work. But he sees it as a springboard from which the church is launched into action, as agents mediating a *fait accompli*.

²William Temple, cited in Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 85.

naked, gave water to the thirsty, or visited the sick and those in prison, especially the least of Jesus' brethren.¹

Commenting on Mark 10:13-16, Boesak remarks that Jesus' reference to little children as the citizens of the kingdom is not predicated upon the notion of childlike simplicity, trust, innocence, or open-mindedness. Jesus refers to little children, meaning that the kingdom of heaven is for nobodies, the despised, the unimportant ones. The first are last and the last first. By caring primarily for insignificant people, God fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty-handed (Luke 2:52-3). He restores the underdog to justice and confuses the way of the ungodly (Ps 146).² For Tutu, religion should teach us compassion for the disadvantaged.³ Christians, like Christ, are people for other people.⁴ Their greatest preoccupation is to make the world a habitable place in anticipation of the consummation of the kingdom of God.

The role that these South African theologians outline for the church is directly antithetical to apartheid, which Tutu characterizes as unchristian over and above being immoral. Its claim that God created people for apartness is fallacious and opposed to both biblical principle and the whole Christian tradition. God has created humans for fellowship, community, and friendship with one another and God, in harmony with all creation.⁵ Thus, the work of the church in condemning apartheid has nothing to do with political affiliation but

¹Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 28, 47.

²Boesak, *The Finger of God*, 72.

³Tutu, *Church and Prophecy*, 24.

⁴Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 29.

⁵Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 54.

everything to do with biblical and Christian commitment.¹ Rather than political, the church must be motivated by the imperatives of the gospel. She must condemn evil whether perpetrated by Blacks or Whites. The gospel that she preaches is always subversive of evil, oppression, and exploitation,² because it is based on the Bible, which Tutu regards as a most resolute opponent to systems of injustice, oppression, and exploitation.³ Having been written to help believers deal with their experiences of suffering under persecution, it helps those who are subjected to suffering. It touches a resonating chord in those undergoing similar experiences.⁴ Still, when engaged in such witness, the church needs to be willing to pay the price for her testimony.⁵

In sum, the church has been set up in the world to be the first fruits of God's kingdom in the present. In this she continues the work Jesus Himself initiated. As He associated Himself with different kinds of people, the church cannot be reclusive or divorced from the world. She must live in close touch with the world God created, has lovingly redeemed, and soon will restore fully. Yet since the kingdom of God has not yet been realized, the church's witness to the coming kingdom will not always be welcome to the present world. As a result, she will often be persecuted by oppressive worldly systems, whose values are inimical to the irenic and humane goals of God's eschatological kingdom. The church lives in the present

¹Tutu, *Church and Prophecy*, 18.

²Tutu, "Barmen and Apartheid," 77. Tutu is aware of oppression in the developing world that has been perpetrated by the native leaders. He is under no illusions that when South Africa is at last liberated, there may be an unjust ruler some day.

³Tutu, *Church and Prophecy*, 13.

⁴*Ibid.*, 17.

⁵Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 74.

world by the foreign values of a kingdom not yet fully come, and therefore will often suffer for her witness against the world's destructive tendencies, an aspect to be considered later on.¹

The Human Dimension of the Church

In spite of this weighty assignment, the church as the *ekklēsia* of God still consists of human beings whose failures show up even in her best institutions. She consists of justified sinners, justified on a continual basis—dependent on God's gracious mercy.² Far from infallible, she is subject to correction, not by the state but by her constituency.

Created in the Image of God

Human beings show various characteristics, including the need to worship something better or greater than themselves. There is a God-shaped vacuum that only God can fill. They naturally tend to worship—give due worth to the person or object worthy of that honor—something or someone.

From God's perspective, particularly significant is the fact that human beings are of infinite value, having been created in God's image.³ They have been fashioned by God, like Him and for Him. They have been made for the infinite. "Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee."⁴ Their value is intrinsic and has nothing to

¹Ibid., 65, 66.

²Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 157. While Tutu readily acknowledges these shortcomings on the part of the church, he takes exception when the government wants to dictate what the church can or cannot do. He holds that church councils, consisting of those who practice the true religion—and this would exclude members or leaders of churches who give support to apartheid—can justly criticize the church when she errs.

³Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 39, 46, 54, 62, 98.

⁴Augustine of Hippo, quoted in Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 146. Coetsee enlightens the issue when he says that human beings are creatures-in-relation. The most fundamental of their

do with extrinsic attributes. According to Gen 1:26, they are God's viceroys--rulers over creation on His behalf--whatever their color, gender, and nationality. Precious in God's sight, they are redeemed by Jesus Christ who for their sakes died on the cross, rose from the grave, and reigns at God's right hand.¹

On this point, too, Tutu enjoys the support of many fellow South African theologians. König notes that Jesus is the image of God, into whose image human beings are renewed in order to resemble the lifestyle of Jesus and the Father. This analogy is carried by the use of "as" in the New Testament statements: "Forgive one another *as* God has forgiven you"; "Be merciful *as* your Father is merciful"; "Walk in love *as* Christ loved you" (Eph 4:32-5:2; see also Matt 5:48; Luke 6:36; Phil 2:5). If Christians are to be truly the image of God, they must fit His lifestyle of love.²

Coetsee comments further on the importance of the human creation made in the image of God. Not only did God create men and women in His image, He spoke to them and gave them authority to govern, develop, and guard the world (Gen 1:26-28; 2:15). He entrusted to them the future well-being of the universe by giving them the power of choice. Even after the Fall, He did not deprive them of the talents He had lent them to fulfill their divine calling (Gen 4:17-22). God's image in fallen humans, though marred, is not destroyed. Crowned with

relationships is to the Creator God, who helps them find their origin, meaning, and purpose. They will always be religious, no matter how falsified their religion becomes. They are also related to creation. They can never be truly human in isolation from creation (Coetsee, "The World of God--A Challenge to the Church," 123).

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 7. Reference to the death and resurrection of Christ underlines both the value of those He died for, and the certainty of the triumph of the struggle for justice in South Africa. Since He so regards them, they cannot be victims of injustice forever. In His love, He will liberate them one day, and for South Africa that was to be soon.

²König, "The Interrelatedness of Human Beings," 98.

honor and glory (Pss 8:4-8; 139:13-16), they possess an inherent worth that sets them apart from all other creatures.¹

Bernard Lategan, editor of the South African theological journal *Scriptura*, adds that humans were created as almost divine (Ps 8:6a-8). The goal of their creation has not yet been realized (Heb 2:8-9). Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, they are on their way to the full meaning of their status.² S. P. Abrahams, of the University of Fort Hare, at Alice, in South Africa, suggests that creation in the image of God ultimately has to do with being responsible stewards of God's earth. The phrase goes beyond mere status; it describes a relationship. People destroy themselves when the relationship is commandeered to serve self-interests and not its original purpose.³

While these renowned South African scholars raise significant insights in their understanding of biblical anthropology, none of them sets forth as commanding a picture as Tutu does. Arguing from his Bantu background and from the travail of the oppressed, which his White colleagues cited above can hardly claim, he sees in God's image relational implications. While he grants that the vertical relationship will suffer when humans misunderstand each other and their assignment on earth, his personal background and his experience of oppression impressed upon him the importance of a horizontal relationship, demanded by the Christian faith.

¹Coetsee, "The World of God--A Challenge to the Church," 121.

²Bernard C. Lategan, "New Testament Anthropological Perspectives in a Time of Reconstruction," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 76 (1991): 89-90.

³S. P. Abrahams, "The Nature and Origin of Evil: A Response to F. E. Deist," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 76 (1991): 82-85.

Once human beings become aware of their place of honor as created in God's image, they often regard themselves with grateful respect. A person who despises him/herself despises others too. Self-respect is a prerequisite for the respect of, and reconciliation to, others.¹ Human beings should treat themselves with dignity and genuflect to one another as they do at the table of the Sacrament.² This can be done only when people have been liberated spiritually, Tutu insists.³

Once they cease to hate themselves, people are able to fulfill the two great commandments Jesus promulgated: wholehearted love for God and love for one's neighbor as one loves oneself.⁴ Love for God and others without self-respect is impossible. The love for God without the love of neighbor, or vice versa, is unacceptable. Christian life calls for both a horizontal and a vertical aspect to the Christian life.⁵ Hence, true worship of God is no escape from reality, from one's own needs and those of other people. As a worshipping community,

¹Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 79. Boesak confirms this observation arguing that each person's humanity affirms the humanity of the rest. Short of that, there is no wholeness (*Black and Reformed*, 51). Margaret Mehren, another South African, contends that we can accept others only when we accept ourselves completely, including our own sinfulness. This makes it possible for us to accept the faults in others as pardonable. See Margaret Mehren, "Francis of Assisi: Reconciliation with God, Humanity and Creation," *Missionalia* 19 (1991): 189.

²Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 60.

³Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 79. This spiritual liberation definitely means release from the guilt of sin. But it means more. Africans in particular need to be set free from their supine obsequiousness before their White *baase* (Tutu, "God Intervening in Human Affairs," 111, 115; idem, "Church and Nation in the Perspective of Black Theology," 6, 11).

⁴Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 31.

⁵*Ibid.*, 70. Tutu objects to the narcissism that apartheid has created among the White people of South Africa. One of his arguments is that anyone who loves God and oneself is not a true Christian. Christianity ineluctably leads us to love others, especially the poor and the oppressed.

the church is called to adhere to the great principle of loving God supremely and loving people truly.

Created for Freedom

God has created human beings in His own image. One of the marks of this image is freedom. He has created us freely, for freedom. This is why we are held responsible for our behavior. We are not even coerced to go to heaven.¹ We have liberty “to accept or reject alternative options, freedom to obey or disobey.”²

Freedom is indivisible.³ It consists of the reasonable contentment of all in the community, all sharing in the resources of the land and sharing those goods that the whole community produces together. “Freedom is unstoppable,” explains Tutu, because the will to be free is not defeated even by the worst kind of violence.⁴ It is an inalienable right from God who bestows it on His people. People who want it obtain it. Nobody has to beg it from another. Besides, God takes sides with freedom seekers. He does not side with them because they are morally better than their oppressors. He does so because setting the oppressed free

¹Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 99.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., 98. Buti Tlhagale opines that total freedom and full personhood come from communion with God and others. Christian freedom involves conversion based on the command to love others as oneself, creating ties of service to another. It is love that creates new people. Freedom is indivisible. It is not the individual disposition of an individual person (Buti Tlhagale, “The Anthropology of Liberation,” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 76 (1991): 61).

Similarly, Temple relates personal freedom to the freedom of others. The Christian conception of people as members in the family of God forbids the notion that freedom may be used for self-interest. It is justified only when it expresses itself through fellowship; and a free society must be organized to make this effectual. It must be rich in sectional groupings or fellowships within the harmony of the whole (William Temple, *Christianity and Social Order* [New York: Penguin Books, 1942], 49).

⁴Tutu, “Freedom Fighters or Terrorists?” 72; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 29; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 7.

also frees the oppressors. He will often act decisively to bring justice, peace, and reconciliation to those created in His image, the liberator God.¹

At the same time, freedom is intrinsically related to *koinōnia*—community. Community is a quality of both true humanity and genuine Christian faith. All fulfilled human beings are entitled to freedom of association, thought, and expression. Censorship should never be used over adult people. Too many restrictions to the individual stifle creativity.² Humanness entails humaneness and sharing. This fosters communion with other people. Capitalism endangers this attribute because it plays into the hands of “our inherent selfishness.” It is a system that does nothing to reward those who get on well with others. Human society needs to be compassionate and caring, where nobody is a “superficial appendage”; old and young are made to feel wanted, belonging and unresented.³

Such dimensions have implications for the church. Both the human and divine dimensions of the church demand that there be communion among God’s people and solidarity with society at large. Since communion is true only when it is free, the church in South Africa is called to embrace freedom as a major value. This means that the congregations will be warm to all people, regardless of their ethnic and economic backgrounds. It also implies that the church will decry any state laws or social conventions that militate against individual and social freedoms at all levels.

¹Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 89.

²*Ibid.*, 99. In this context Tutu decries the fact that much Black South African talent has been laid waste and left unexploited because it was not appreciated in a country whose dominant minority felt threatened by the achievements of their subordinates. He believes that what has not been harnessed could have enriched the lives of all in the country.

³Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 98; *idem*, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 100.

One specific concern illustrates the social problems Tutu has in mind, namely, the problem of migrant labor that was practiced in apartheid South Africa. The Black men who came to work in the mines were kept in tribal groupings in single-sex compounds and hostels. This denied them free association with their families, people of other tribes, and people of other races. Tutu finds this dehumanizing to these men, their families who suffered from the system, and to those who imposed the suffering on them. Worst of all, this *Gastarbeiter* system destabilized the family. It is the church's duty to fight this system that undermines the integrity of the Christian faith. It unquestionably makes it difficult for the church to proclaim unity or love when many of her voiceless children languish in the mines, Bantustans, and townships. Allowing these slave-like conditions to continue made confession of the Christian faith a farce.¹

Created for Fellowship and Interdependence

Human freedom is closely tied to human interdependence, another of the anthropic dimensions of the church Tutu dwells on. He observes that despite their sinful tendency to separation on grounds of race, tribe, gender, age, and other factors, human beings need to recognize that the fate of each group resulting from this separation is inextricably tied up with the destiny of all the others. Hence, to destroy community on the basis of biological accidents is reprehensible and blasphemous.²

Individuals too may tend to separate from each other. Free to associate, and because they were created for fellowship, people will seek out those who complement them, regardless of ethnic, economic, and other considerations. Made for each other, their lives are not fulfilled

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 86-90.

²Ibid., 87.

unless they live peacefully, side by side. They were created for interdependence.¹ A human being is truly human only in human community. *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*.²

Humans break the law of interdependence at their own peril. The dehumanization of others leads to self-dehumanization. On the basis of this principle, Jesus enjoins reconciliation between estranged people before they can proceed to worship (Matt 5:24). No one who loves God can hate his brother or sister, and vice versa. The vertical relationship is authenticated by the horizontal one.³ This is an inescapable implication of understanding the human dimension of the church, which entails the recognition that her members have been created in the image of God, since God Himself created the human being as a "thou" whom He could address.⁴

¹Ibid., 93-94.

²Literally, this expression means that a person is a person through other persons. It lies at the foundation of Bantu culture with its emphasis on *ubuntu*, which is approximately translated "humane humanness." A real person is one who is personable and affirming to other people, who builds them up in ways within his or her reach. *Ubuntu* does not negate individuality while emphasizing community. It is neither universalism nor is it individualism. It strikes a happy balance between a healthy individuality and a robust universality of perspective.

König's caution as far as balancing community and individual is *a propos* indeed, when he warns that the concept of individuality does not negate humanity but rather confirms it. Each individual right is a right for all individuals. For this reason insistence on group rights is a suspect demand. Individual rights are shared by all groups through individuals who are members of groups. But individual rights are not all in themselves. The structures must also be examined to ensure that the individual is not brutalized by a wicked system (König, "The Interrelatedness of Human Beings," 100). But his caution ministers to another audience than one of *abantu* who truly possess *ubuntu*. For Tutu's discussion of *ubuntu*, see *The Rainbow People of God*, 122-125, 227.

³Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 175-176; idem, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 147.

⁴Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 140-141.

Human interdependence is a comprehensive phenomenon, implying that human freedom is unitary.¹ The destruction of one person is the demise of the rest.² Not to realize this predisposes one to be on the losing side with oppression, injustice, and exploitation. It is to range oneself against God, justice, peace, reconciliation, laughter and joy, sharing and compassion, goodness and righteousness,³ for God not only participates in the struggle for justice, "He owns it," insists Tutu.⁴

Rank greed and blinding prejudice prevent some from seeing God's part in the struggle for justice. Such attitudes are tantamount to fighting against God, and those who resist Him need to be reminded that when they turn against the church—God's ally in the fight for righteousness—they end up the flotsam and jetsam of forgotten history.⁵ A noble and just cause will prevail.⁶

The interdependence of human beings in relation to freedom has led Tutu to argue that his involvement in the Black liberation struggle is intended to liberate the White oppressors as

¹Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 93.

²Ibid., 67.

³Ibid., 43-44. Buthelezi perceives a stance against such freedom as a pro-apartheid one and condemns it as the antithesis of what God is about, for whereas the gospel creates a possibility and occasion for even enemies to be reconciled, apartheid has, in fact, torn apart potential friends. For that reason, to resist and to expose it is doing more than rejecting a given public policy: it is giving witness to the heart of the gospel (Manas Buthelezi, "Giving Witness to the Heart of the Gospel," *International Review of Mission* 73 [1984]: 417).

⁴Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 176.

⁵Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 51. Since Tutu holds that freedom comes from God and belongs to us by creation, he concludes that it is to be at war with God to deny anybody that right. Such a course courts disaster and leads to inevitable defeat.

⁶Tutu, *Church and Prophecy*, 28. This explains the downfall of such prominent South Africans as Connie Mulder who was embroiled in the Information Scandal in 1968, the shameful end of the successive political careers of Prime Minister John Vorster in 1978, and President Pieter Willem Botha in 1989.

well. Setting both the oppressor and the oppressed free is also a humanizing process since both are dehumanized in the their master-servant, oppressor-oppressed relationship.¹

As unitary and interdependent, humanity is both male and female. Both male and female together point to the interdependence of our race, for the divine image in human beings includes both genders (Gen 1:27, 28). The self-sufficient human person is subhuman. Men and women have distinctive gifts, and both sets of gifts are indispensable for truly human existence. Hence, the church has lost much by opposing the ordination of women. The ministry of the church to her members and the world has been distorted and rendered defective due to the refusal of men in the church to ordain women, thereby dehumanizing men. On the one hand, some things in the ministry have nothing to do with one's gender. On the other, some peculiarly feminine insights will enhance a woman's contribution. The church needs the contribution of female ministers: their gentleness, their graciousness, their compassion.² There is so much about God that corresponds to both His femaleness and His maleness. God is both Mother and Father.³

Still, the need to recognize the image of God in human beings exceeds their mere male-female dimension. This image, Tutu explains, extends to children as well. Children are human too. Parents are warned against invariably seeking to determine what is good for their children.⁴ Children's rights need to be recognized in an equitable society that accords rights to all: the right to a full life, to a stable family existence, to free and compulsory education,

¹Desmond Tutu, "God-given Dignity and the Quest for Liberation in the Light of the South African Dilemma," *Ecunews* 24 (1976), 11-16.

²Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 119.

³Ibid., 120.

⁴Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 122.

freedom of movement and association, freedom from ignorance, hunger, and fear, freedom of thought and worship.¹ Indeed, we all need them. The contribution of the young to society is evident when adults tend to be cynical given the problems their communities face. Children are those who instill hope, for they believe that the world was created for a purpose. Their outlook is a necessity for the church to embrace, since the church exists to proclaim hope to an otherwise hopeless world. Conversely, young people depend on adults for guidance and discipline, to fulfill their potential as well as become and remain responsible.²

Created in the image of God, as male and female, young and old, human beings of different backgrounds and age groups need to recognize, acknowledge, and appreciate one another. None of them being self-sufficient, they depend on each other to make their own lives worthwhile in the world. The church is a union of mutually dependent people called out from a society of males and females of diverse backgrounds and age groups who return to society to serve. In this sense she is an anthropic union formed under God to meet the needs posited by human interdependence. She never severs ties with society in order to serve Him.³

The Unity of the Church

Human interdependence is the anthropic foundation for church unity. The members of the church are drawn together by a filial bond, as members of the same family. This is not so for pragmatic reasons.

¹Ibid., 123.

²Desmond Tutu, *Alternatives to Apartheid* (Oxford: Oxfam Publications, 1990), 5.

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 93.

Tutu perceives unity as a major concern of the Bible,¹ a corollary of reconciliation.² Just as the apartheid government of South Africa was monstrous in ordering separation while God had intended the cosmos to be one,³ so the unity of the church authenticates her witness to Christ in a fragmented society. It is only as society sees human beings from disparate walks of life live in harmonious unity that it can take the church seriously as God's alternative to the world's chaos. Moreover, a united church alone can provide a viable answer to the animosities and alienations of the world.⁴ As Secretary General of the South African Council of Churches, Tutu worked assiduously to encourage its member churches to strive for unity since Jesus Himself prayed specifically for oneness among His disciples and those who would later come into the church through their witness.⁵

Yet, while of noble pedigree and entrusted with a lofty mission on earth, the church still consists of human beings who are her members as well as the target of her labors. Her members are simultaneously justified and sinful and should look to God's will for the proper exercise of their function on earth. Most significantly, Tutu's understanding of human nature does not dwell so much on how the humanity of church members impinges upon her composition and ontology as it does on the duties of the church toward the human beings she serves. His view of human nature serves to point up those functions the church must carry out to be of use to human beings.

¹Tutu, *On Trial*, 11; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 159.

²Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 60.

³Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 117-119.

⁴Ibid., 117.

⁵Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 163-164.

Men and women have been created in God's image to rule and develop the world as His representatives. They are called to find fulfillment in interdependent fellowship, regardless of racial, gender, and credal differences. They have been created for unity as a single human race. They have also been created freely by God, so that they may live and thrive in freedom. But, as has been pointed out, these marks of humanity help us only obliquely in describing the church ontologically. They more clearly serve to point at the direction she must take in structuring herself and in seeking to serve humanity.

Summary

This chapter has focused on defining *what* the church is in the light of her being founded by God, on Jesus Christ, and on the task assigned her in the world. The church has a divine origin, though influenced by the nature of her human members. She has not been conceived by human ingenuity but is the creation of God, the Creator of the universe. Because of His indomitable love, He chose to save the world and proceeded to do so through His divine-human Son, Jesus Christ, who inaugurated the church.

In thus entering the world Jesus became the brother of all humanity. He raised and engaged the church as His coworker in establishing His kingdom in His world. By right of creation, He reigns over the world today, but anticipates an eschaton when sin has been vanquished, and His rule over the world will be total. The task of the church in this design is to assert the sovereignty of God in the world, and to do this both in word and in deed. She has been raised by the Creator, Redeemer, and Reconciler God to be an institution of re-creation, of redemptive and reconciliatory relationships. She exists for the world. This is *what* the church is. Acting otherwise or ignoring the distinctiveness she derives from God is to fail to see herself in proper light.

Archbishop Tutu's ecclesiology builds upon his doctrines of God and of Christ, as well as his understanding of human nature. His doctrine of God is essentially functional. Rather than addressing the distinctions between the absolute and the relative attributes of God, for instance, his doctrine is drawn from the things God does. Since one of the clearest accounts of God at work is recorded in the exodus account, what he remembers most clearly about Him is that God is the God of liberation. He is the God who sides with the oppressed against the oppressor. This functional approach surfaces again in Tutu's christology.

As Archbishop Tutu views Him, Jesus is undeniably the divine Son of God. Yet His significance for the human race in the present world lies primarily in the fact that while He lived and worked in first-century Palestine, He identified Himself with the poor, the sick, the unpopular, and the ostracized. Tutu spends little time discussing the *homoousion* issue or how the human and the divine natures of Jesus Christ relate to each other. He can hardly be accused of docetism since, for him, Christ is a man of flesh and blood like all humanity, who died under accusations of treason for what He did for ordinary people.

Jesus saw the image of God in the people He ministered to. There was potential beneath their haggard looks and the rugged clothes they wore. In the outcast He saw the pillars of God's kingdom. Once reconciled to God and their fellow human beings through His death, they would be His messengers of reconciliation to the world. Sharing this vision with them, He sent them to spend their lives in improving the lives of others. They were the first-fruits of the church.

The mission Jesus left for the church is a practical one. She was to be an engaged body. Tutu does not dwell on such marks of the church as apostolicity, holiness, and catholicity. One finds them hardly stressed in his writings. His focus is on function and unity. Both are closely related to one of the greatest burdens of his ministry: bringing freedom, peace,

and reconciliation to peoples for several centuries alienated because of racially and economically inspired oppression. The church can be effective in South Africa, maintains Tutu, only when her members perceive all human beings as created in the image of God, and as His family. If people see each other as brothers and sisters in God, they will treat each other with respect, which precludes the possibility of countenancing the oppression of any among them. A church community that takes itself seriously as the family of God and is sensitive to the unmet needs of those around it will necessarily *act* to relieve any ills that prevail among the people God has created and redeemed.

So far we have seen how Archbishop Tutu argues that as surely as God is Creator, Reconciler, and Redeemer of the world that He made for humanity, which He is drawing to its fulfillment in the eschaton; as surely as Jesus Christ lives, the One who has fulfilled God's will, has been raised by God from the dead, and lives indeed for the world; as surely as this is not a mere hypothesis or arbitrary theory but God's revelation of the reality of His action, so surely does the community of Jesus Christ exist for the world. As God exists for it in His own divine manner, and Jesus Christ in His divine-human way, so the Christian community exists for the world in its own purely human way.¹

Tutu's theology is in general accord with the theologies of most other liberation theologians of South Africa. With Manas Buthelezi, he emphasizes the necessity of fellowship among the races in the South Africa church. He shares Allan Boesak's emphasis on the centrality of the Word of God in theological praxis and, like Simon Maimela, appeals to human nature as a key to understanding what the church's duty is in her attempt to overcome

¹Ibid., 89.

apartheid. And for that matter, he shares some key insights with scholars who lay no claim to liberation theology.

However, Tutu is unique in at least two ways. First, he devises what has been called a relational Black theology that advocates a both-and interpretation, which shows complementarity and relationality between African and Black theology, while it remains solidly grounded in core tenets of the Anglican faith. Hence his appeal to creation, the Fall, the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, and the final consummation of God's work in the world as a framework of his brand of Black theology of liberation.¹ Second, whereas most Black theologians of liberation are primarily concerned to make the gospel of Jesus Christ relevant to the South African oppressed, Tutu is also concerned to present a congruent gospel. The message of the church must be firmly based on God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. If the church fails to live up to her calling, then she has neither relevancy nor substance.

Chapter 3 attempts to explore Archbishop Tutu's understanding of *how* the church can fulfill her assignment in the world to bring back the peace and harmony that were lost when sin invaded the world.

¹See Hopkins, 139.

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH AS GOD'S AGENT

OF RECONCILIATION

Archbishop Tutu has contributed significantly to bringing reconciliation to apartheid-troubled South Africa. At the same time, he has not been a lone voice crying for justice. In this chapter, his concept of how the church must work toward realizing this reconciliation is addressed with reference to other South African theologians who have spoken alongside him in an attempt to bring peace and harmony to the country.

This inquiry features several related emphases. First, the archbishop avers that the church has been created to effect reconciliation in a world that is woefully torn asunder by alienation, hate, oppression, and injustice. She is appropriately equipped with resources that are uniquely hers to help in the process of returning peace to the land. Next, as a watchdog for the oppressed in society, she must defend her charge while simultaneously confronting those who brutalize the disadvantaged. She must advocate a change in the structures of oppression. Furthermore, since reconciliation can be effected only between equals, the church is called to foster a willingness on the part of all involved to stand up unapologetically for their rights as human beings, while making room for others to exercise their full humanity as well. Finally, Tutu underlines that reconciliation involves more than just burying the hatchet. It is a costly process that has to be entered upon volitionally and deliberately by all involved. As a result of this cost factor and the need for all to desire reconciliation, the church may have to be satisfied

with proclaiming the need for and the means of reconciliation while the nation decides whether it will take the therapeutic road to peace.

The first part of this chapter sets the stage for the practical steps the church can adopt to effect reconciliation in South Africa. These steps are considered to be integral to the process of reconciliation. For over twenty years Archbishop Tutu has battled to show that it was the responsibility of the church to bring at-one-ment to a country riddled with tensions. Only as this was accepted, did he try to suggest *how* she could carry out this function.

Can a Divided Church Effect Reconciliation?

The concerns of this chapter have been captured poignantly in questions raised recently by some South African theologians. A few years ago, Martin Prozesky, professor of religious studies at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, raised the question as to whether, and if so how, Christians could expect the church to assist in bringing reconciliation to the then tension-riddled apartheid Republic of South Africa, given the fact that not all South Africans are Christians and that the church itself is divided along denominational lines.¹ In the context of a gathering in Pietermaritzburg which Archbishop Tutu attended and addressed, Prozesky even questioned the capability of the South African church to handle questions of peace and reconciliation in a situation like South Africa's.

Klaus Nürnberger, a Lutheran minister and teacher of theological ethics at the University of South Africa, responded to Prozesky by pointing out that true Christianity cannot shy away from peacemaking. Christians are expected to be *eirēnopoioi*--peacemakers--in a world of turmoil. To deny them that responsibility is to stand opposed to one of the cardinal

¹Martin Prozesky, "Can Christians Overcome Apartheid? An Evaluation of the 'Statement of Affirmation' of the National Initiative for Reconciliation (NIR)," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 54 (1986): 54.

injunctions of the Sermon on the Mount.¹ Archbishop Tutu's statements at the Pietermaritzburg summit indicate that he concurred with Nürnberger's viewpoint.²

C. W. H. Boshoff, professor of missiology at the University of Pretoria, shares Prozesky's misgivings when he writes: "To assert that peace and order should be established and maintained in a plural society on the basis of the gospel of Christ is to lose sight of the fact that all members of society are not professing Christians and that all of them will therefore not be bound to conform to this claim."³ Robert J. Schreiter, editor of the Orbis Faith and Culture Series, whose sample of political surveys includes a substantial discussion of the South African situation, sharpens the question further when he notes that the churches in South Africa are not just unrepresentative of the whole population but that they were also on both sides of the apartheid question, some supporting apartheid and others fighting it.⁴

Allan Boesak is even more specific. He asserts that the church in South Africa divides into three groups with regard to apartheid. One group, dominated by the Blacks, condemns apartheid as irreconcilable with the gospel and therefore to be resisted with all human might. A second group, most of whose members are White and Dutch Reformed, regards apartheid as part of the will of God for South Africa. Others still, among the English-speaking Christians of South Africa, see apartheid as an evil which is still the best solution for the time being. They hold that since the country should not be overrun by Blacks, apartheid should maintain

¹Nürnberger, "Can Christians Overcome Apartheid as Christians?" 57.

²See Desmond Tutu, "The Process of Reconciliation and the Demand of Obedience," *Transformation: An International Dialogue on Evangelical Social Ethics* 3 (1986): 3-8.

³C. W. H. Boshoff, "Church and Mission and the Liberation of the Nations in the South African Context," *Missionalia* 5 (1977): 53.

⁴Robert J. Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992, Cambridge, MA: Boston Theological Institute, 1992), 15-16.

some order.¹ Boesak agrees with John De Gruchy that the church in South Africa is no longer divided only denominationally but also along lines of differing perceptions of society, differing social goals, and differing means of achieving them.²

It seems that many in South Africa assume that the Christian church has compromised her position to the point that it is questionable whether she could be the agent capable of bringing peace and reconciliation to the country. Moreover, there are differing opinions as to the meaning of reconciliation itself.

How Is Reconciliation to Be Defined?

William R. Domeris, a teacher of Biblical Studies at the University of Cape Town, took issue with the position taken by the 1985 *Kairos Document* to the effect that there could be no reconciliation in South Africa until the oppressors apologized to the oppressed of the land.³ In agreement with the *Kairos Document*, John de Gruchy outlines what sounds like a program of reconciliation when he writes that cheap reconciliation must be shunned and repentance precede

¹Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 47.

²De Gruchy, "The Struggle for Justice and Ministry of Reconciliation," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 62 (1988): 44. His assertion is aptly substantiated by J. S. Kruger in his article "Theology as a Response to Social Challenge," *Missionalia* 7 (1979): 17-30. See especially p. 25.

³The *Kairos Document* asserts that it is unchristian to seek reconciliation and peace where the cause of offense is unremoved. To accept such reconciliation is sin; it amounts to being an accomplice to one's own oppression (18). See William R. Domeris, "Biblical Perspectives on Forgiveness," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 54 (1986): 48-50. In agreement with the *Kairos Document*, Vincent Brümmer, Professor of Philosophy of Religion at the University of Utrecht and Director of the Netherlands School of Advanced Studies in Religion and Theology, explains that forgiveness without repentance is logically not possible because without repentance there is only condonement and not forgiveness. Forgiveness is the willingness of one that has been offended to identify with the offender in spite of what the latter has done. Forgiving one who does not recognize his/her wrongdoing is merely to acquiesce in the breaking of a relationship. See Vincent Brummer, "Kairos, Reconciliation and the Doctrine of Atonement," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 88 (1994): 48-9.

reconciliation. Those holding power and privilege must be able to acknowledge guilt for the injustice and oppression of the apartheid society. This the church can encourage by confessing her own guilt and acting vicariously for the nation. The church should further evince repentance by working with the victims of apartheid. Confession of guilt must espouse the struggle for justice.¹

In an effort to broaden the base of the debate on reconciliation, Domeris notes that the Bible does not offer a comprehensive doctrine of reconciliation² and posits that the duty of the Christian is to forgive unconditionally whether an offender apologizes or not, as Jesus forgave His crucifiers while they remorselessly put Him to death.³ De Gruchy has noted in this connection that the irony of the South African situation is that the oppressed are more ready to forgive than the oppressors are willing to repent. This defeats the purpose of forgiveness, which he sees as liberating the guilty and granting them a fresh start in relationships. The question remains whether forgiveness is coterminous with reconciliation.⁴

Amid this uncertainty as to what the church can or cannot do, and questions of what that reconciliation might even be, Tutu remains convinced that the church is God's agent to bring peace to South Africa. He declares: "If there is to be reconciliation, we who are the

¹De Gruchy, "The Struggle for Justice," 50.

²Domeris, "Biblical Perspectives on Forgiveness," 48-9.

³De Gruchy, "The Struggle for Justice," 51.

⁴Domeris, "Biblical Perspectives on Forgiveness," 50.

ambassadors of Christ, we to whom the gospel of reconciliation has been entrusted, surely we must be Christ's instruments of peace."¹

With Brümmer, Tutu holds that reconciliation between people denotes the restoration of relationships that have been disrupted or destroyed.² Richard T. Snyder shares this insight but places his definition of the church's work of atonement—a term he uses as a synonym of “reconciliation”—in the context of the purpose of the creation of the human family, explaining that atonement is the making at-one of what has been separated. The doctrine of atonement is the church's attempt to comprehend and articulate the process by which God redeems a lost people, a people alienated from the basic unity for which it were created. It is transformation through reconciliation.³ J. H. Roberts concurs, adding that reconciliation is achieved by means of an atonement which deals with the unification of striving factions by making amends for whatever caused the trouble.⁴ The nature of the broken relationships determines the kind of reconciliation needed. Reconciliation is also necessary for our relationship with God which has been disrupted by sin.⁵

For Tutu, reconciliation points to wholeness. It is intended to reconcile sinners to God and to bring salvation. On the horizontal plane, it connotes unity, harmony, peace, justice, fellowship, friendliness, compassion, and wholeness (2 Cor 5:19). The death of Christ was

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 222.

²Ibid., 222; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 38; cf. Brümmer, “Kairos, Reconciliation and the Doctrine of Atonement,” 42.

³Snyder, 96.

⁴Roberts, “Some Biblical Foundations for a Mission of Reconciliation,” 3-17. The term translated reconciliation in the New Testament is *katallagē*. It appears in only five New Testament contexts, namely, Rom 5:10, 11; 11:15; 2 Cor 5:18-20; Eph 2:16, and Col 1:20, 22.

⁵Brümmer, “Kairos, Reconciliation, and the Doctrine of Atonement,” 42-3.

intended to draw all people to Himself, uniting and reconciling them (John 12:32). His own prayer was also for unity among His disciples (John 17:11, 20-23). Christianity sees disunity only between believers and non-believers. Any other disunity is evil. Such separation is fundamentally antithetical to God's very purpose for the world, that of breaking separating walls between peoples. The very essence of the church is a rejection of the separation of people.¹

The Irenic Ministry of the Church

As seen earlier,² the story of the Bible is one of God's mission to restore the harmony that characterized God's rule at the beginning. The church is called to work toward unity within her own ranks as well as the unity of humankind, as proclaimed, for instance, in Isa 11.

Tutu perceives apartheid as fundamentally antithetical to the central act of Jesus, by foisting separateness, disunity, enmity, and alienation—the fruits of sin—upon the people. It is unchristian and unbiblical in that it denies the central verity of the Christian faith. To this, Boesak agrees, arguing that Christ has reconciled humanity to God through His life, death, and resurrection, reconciled people to people and has become their peace (Eph 2:14) in bringing them to one faith under one Lord through baptism. Racism negates this by contaminating human society and defiling Christ's body.³ With Temple, Tutu sees the purpose of reconciliation as bringing all things under Christ, thus expressing the kingdom of God in the world, a kingdom that will be consummated at the end of world history.⁴

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 64, 65.

²See pp. 43 and 44 in chapter 2.

³Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 105.

⁴Tutu, *On Trial*, 20; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 168, 169; cf. Temple, *Christianity and the Social Order*, 40-41.

The Church and Reconciliation

Reconciliation is the opposite of alienation.¹ Christ's central task was to restore the peace and community which sin had routed between human beings and God as well as among human beings themselves. It was a task He alone could achieve.² When He ascended to heaven, He gave His church the mandate to be a ministry of reconciliation.³ Because this *koinōnia* has not yet been realized in our world, God calls Christians to be peacemakers--sharers in His Son's ministry of reconciliation. Peace comes when they beat swords into ploughshares. This is the only way they shall extend the kingdom of Christ over what today are human kingdoms.⁴ So reconciliation is not optional. God expects it of human beings living side by side. Driven by the Holy Spirit, the church witnesses to God by being a community of reconciliation, a forgiving community of the forgiven.⁵

¹Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 163, 166; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 42, 56, 64, 127.

²As we have seen in the previous chapter (pp. 30-31), Tutu accepts the uniqueness, fullness and finality of the reconciliation Jesus has effected between God and the world.

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 42; cf. Thomas F. Torrance, "The Foundation of the Church," in *Theological Foundations for Ministry*, ed. Ray S. Anderson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark and Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 199; Barth, "The Community for the World," 529.

⁴Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 93-4.

⁵Tutu, "Barmen and Apartheid," 67; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 67-68. Tutu agrees with D. Chris Coetsee in affirming that the church is the bearer of God's healing for the world. This function is evident when the obedient, Spirit-filled worshiping church heals broken people, broken relationships, corrupted structures and dashed hopes. She intercedes with God on behalf of governments and those in power (1 Tim 2:1-8). Where human failure has brought about disillusionment, the church is called to live in hope and indomitably, faithfully and practically proclaim the alternative way. This can only occur when Christians are convinced that God is in charge, that His kingdom is real, that it is going to be revealed and that the future will be as He has promised (Titus 2:11-15) (Coetsee, "The World of God--A Challenge to the Church," 126).

The church not only speaks of forgiveness and reconciliation but is called to demonstrate both in deeds.¹ She must live them out, for the church of Christ is not intended to be just a holy society founded to perpetuate His memory, to remember His teachings, or to proclaim His gospel. Rather, she exists to continue the work of the incarnate Son. Her nature and assignment are the result of the humanity, the historical life and work of Jesus, and grows out of the fulfillment of His ministry in the flesh.² The reconciling church of Jesus Christ seeks to win men and women to Him so that, converted by the Holy Spirit, they may accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.³ As shown in chapter 2, the accent here falls upon the Christian claim regarding the uniqueness of Christ as Savior. The church herself is the demonstration of reconciliation and forgiveness.⁴

The finality of the sacrifice of Christ was sealed by the event of the resurrection, the triumph of life over death, light over darkness, love over hatred, and good over evil. Hope prevails over despair. The resurrected Jesus reigns as King of kings. This unseats oppression, injustice, and suffering, and tells the story that what Christians suffer on earth is not the whole story. Freedom and justice, peace and reconciliation are God's will for all His people. God will prevail, love over hate, justice over injustice and oppression, peace over exploitation and bitterness.⁵ On the basis of the reconciliation between humanity and God, as well as victory

¹Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 31.

²Tutu, *Church and Prophecy*, 17; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 85; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 117, 127; idem, "God Intervening in Human Affairs," 112; cf. Torrance, 209; Barth, "The Community for the World," 527-28.

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 63.

⁴Tutu, "Barmen and Apartheid," 76.

⁵Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 83.

over sin and evil achieved decisively through Jesus Christ, Tutu anticipates the victory of justice in South Africa. This is why he has worked for it.

Tutu, who was inspired by Barth's role in drafting the *Barmen Confession* of 1934, shares this insight with the Swiss scholar, who wrote:

In the resurrection of Jesus the claim is made that God's victory, in the person of His Son, has already been won. Easter is indeed the great pledge of our hope, but simultaneously this future is already present in the Easter message. It is the proclamation of a victory already won. The war is at an end. . . . The game is won, even though the player can still play a few further moves. . . . It is in this interim space that we are living, the old is past, behold it has all become new.¹

All human reconciliation is a corollary of the efficacious sacrifice of Christ and of His sovereignty. These constitute the chief and all determining factors.²

The church, as the rainbow people of God, is called to be a channel of peace, justice, and reconciliation. Her members are expected to work together for confession, forgiveness, restitution and peace.³ God calls her to be the assembly of His fellow workers, agents of transfiguration, of transformation, changing all the ugliness of this world into the beauty of His kingdom.⁴ This principle works in mundane daily fare as in the sharing of bread and wine in communion.⁵ It assumes that nobody is untransfigurable.⁶

¹Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (London: SCM Press, 1958), 122.

²Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 18, 262-263; idem, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 83; idem, *On Trial*, 13. Cf. Temple, *Personal Religion*, 21.

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 262.

⁴*Ibid.*, 115.

⁵*Ibid.*, 121; Tihagale explicates that the Eucharist presupposes the mending of rents in the tissue of society. It is an anticipation of and a call to communion that Christians do not yet possess. The communicants are a journeying and sinful community. Still, the communion is not intended as a denial of social conflict. See Tihagale, 60.

⁶Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 121, 122.

With this apprehension of transforming salvation in Jesus Christ, the church is set free and understands that God believes in other people as He does in the church. She can relax in His acceptance and in turn love the world as Christ has loved the church. She ministers to all people on earth, not just Christians.¹ The church is not narcissistic and therefore cannot live for herself. As a unitary force, she needs to share worship, insights, and resources.²

The Unitive Function of the Church

The church's irenic role precludes any divisive activity on her part, which is manifested in denominationalism. Divided churches are ineffective and wasteful. It is wasteful for each corner of Soweto to have a separate church building for each denomination. Money may be saved by pooling resources into one or two church buildings to be used by all and could go around farther to cater to the needs of the dispossessed or grant scholarships to worthy students. The church must offer a united witness. Even more important, she must be united because division undermines the gospel of Jesus Christ, who brought reconciliation and broke down the middle wall of partition between Christians. A disunited church is no answer to the animosities of the world, its hatreds and separateness. Church apartheid has little to say when fighting against political apartheid.³

Here again, Tutu reminds one of Archbishop William Temple's stand. If the church must be the instrument of uniting the world, she must first be united herself. Unfortunately,

¹Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 66.

²Ibid., 68.

³Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 116, 117.

she has lost even the semblance of outward unity. The divisions began when Jews would have no part in the salvation brought by God through Jesus Christ.¹

Temple went somewhat further than Tutu. In his eyes the disunity of the church is evil not mainly because it causes inefficiency in the church or blunts her impact on the world. It also prevents her from doing within, for her members, what she should do. Disunity upsets the church's spiritual chemistry. As soon as a group breaks off, the parent church is impoverished, and her claim to be the true church is correspondingly impaired. Besides, when division occurs, there is a bifurcation of focus, creating a bipartisan perception of responsibility.² Hence, the two Anglican leaders shared a zeal for the ecumenical activity of the church and both labored at advancing the sense of social accountability in the ecumenical movement. Temple's thought was seminal in the founding of the World Council of Churches. He died in 1944, four years before the organization was formed. From the very fact that Tutu calls for this unity, it can be inferred that he has seen the movement at work and has witnessed some of its limitations with regard to unity. While Temple maintained a global perspective, Tutu was more concerned about the evils of denominationalism in South Africa.

Both emphasized that if the church is to be the source of fellowship which bridges all divisions--Jew and Gentile, Greek and barbarian, bond and free, capital and labor, British and German, White and colored--she must be one, comprised of representatives from each of these sections of humanity so that everyone may be valued according to the worth each has in God's

¹Ibid., 29. Temple cites the division between East and West. It commenced when the Roman pontiff was exalted unduly, and has continued to be a *skandalon* even to those who would like to consider reunion. The Reformation introduced two main strands to Christianity: Evangelicalism and Catholicism. The evangelical branch proved to be susceptible to breakaways, and the Catholic is given to excessive regimentation, while the church of England seems to be fostering fellowship between these two schools of thought.

²Ibid., 30.

sight. A disunited church can neither unite the world nor be the thing the church is called to be i.e., the living witness of the fellowship of all human beings with one another in the obedience and love of Christ.¹

Manas Buthelezi argues that “the church is the people of God gathered in the name and under the mandate of Jesus Christ.” She consists of the material of sinful and divided humanity. The whole universe achieves unity and common purpose once Christ is acknowledged and worshiped as Lord. No other name (economics, nationalism, politics, etc.) can unite people than the name of Jesus. Bowing to these other names is bowing to other gods. Christ alone has authority over all the earth.²

Both Buthelezi and Tutu deplore the disunity of the church. Concentrating on the church in South Africa. Tutu seeks to resolve the issue of fragmentation by stating that as a family, the church should be united. She should recognize her true nature and carry out her function as a united body. Buthelezi focuses on the church as a congregation, possibly of one denomination. He sees the possibility of divine intervention to arouse her to her responsibility

¹Ibid., 30-31.

²See Manas Buthelezi, “Church Unity and Human Divisions of Racism,” *International Review of Mission* 73 (1984): 419. Buthelezi contends that unity is possible when each believer recognizes that at the heart of being one is bearing one another’s burdens (Gal 6:2). In order for anyone to be Christ’s disciple, he or she must take up the cross and follow Him (Matt 10:38). The core of Christian unity requires that one be prepared to come to unity with another person who has become one’s burden. It means identifying with a brother or a sister although he or she may have a heavier burden to carry. It means loving one’s neighbor although love may not be requited. This is no easy task. It explains why Christ describes it as taking up one’s cross and carrying one another’s burdens. He maintains that Christians are by conversion provided with the capacity to empty themselves in order to minister to the lowly of the world. They can submit themselves in service to others (424-425).

Tutu does emphasize the concept of burden bearing and sharing among Christians. See *The Rainbow People of God*, 64-65. Yet he accents it in the context of family feeling within the church as a natural outgrowth of filial bonding that necessarily belongs to all baptized members of the church. In this case, Buthelezi seems to impose it on the Christian as a responsibility.

when he points out that if the church is tardy in coming into unity, God may use those who do not know Him to bring the church to her senses as He used Cyrus to chide Israel (Isa 45:1). He may use forces outside the church to liberate the church. We can neither plan nor pray for this, but it remains a biblical model.¹

As stated above, for Tutu, the most significant injury resulting from ecclesial disunity is that it undermines the credibility of the gospel. The church can enjoy what she now lacks when she is freed to witness against injustice, oppression and exploitation: when she stands with the poor throughout the world and when she become the voice of the voiceless. That is what it means to be coworkers with God. Of course a church that achieves this unity must have an ecumenical insight and not rejoice in being a lonesome sect.² Interestingly, however, Tutu's ecumenical emphasis does not address the question of what to do when churches differ as to their definitions of theological truth.

The Humanizing Function of the Church

For Tutu, the church is a community, a family that fosters fellowship without undermining cultural distinctiveness.³ Families share and, in a close-knit family, rather than expecting to get back in proportion to what one puts in, one receives according to one's needs.

¹Buthelezi, "Church Unity and Human Divisions," 425.

²Tutu, "Barmen and Apartheid," 76.

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 64-5. Klaus Nürnberger would agree, adding that the church represents the integration of diverse elements into the harmony of a greater whole. This is done out of appreciation of the need for complementarity and interdependence of the diverse components. Reconciliation with God and with one's neighbors, which is the center of the Christian message, does not sacrifice one's identity, but rather, one's autonomy. The body of Christ consists of various elements under one Head. This image is universalized into the vision of a new world in which all cosmic powers are integrated under the sovereign God revealed in Jesus Christ (Eph 1) (Klaus Nürnberger, "Ethical Implications of Religious and Ideological Pluralism—A Missionary Perspective," *Missionalia* 13 [1985]: 95-96).

This is the spirit in which Jesus, who was rich, for our sakes became poor that we may be rich (2 Cor 8:9).¹

As a family the church is commissioned to humanize the world with the principles drawn from the word of God, in whose image humanity was created.² Humanization means helping people to behave in an essentially human manner, and is closely related to the Nguni/Tswana-Sotho concept which defines *umuntu* as a person who behaves in a human manner—*ubuntu*—and treats other people with the respect befitting their station as human beings—*abantu*—created in the image of God. It means teaching the young in the family about the interdependence of the human race. It also means helping them understand that any such practices as oppression and injustice must be opposed because they dehumanize both their perpetrators and their victims. Over and above being opposed to the God of Scripture, who took Israel out of Egypt and gave them liberation, oppression and injustice make the oppressed

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 120. In a similar vein, Tlhagale writes that when God becomes their Father, Christians become brothers and sisters, part of the same community. The power of God is verified in the love of neighbor. (See Tlhagale, 60.) Similarly, Temple underlines the fact that in Jesus' teaching our relationship to God is set forth as a family relationship, as children before their father. This also means they are the brothers and sisters to the other children of the Father. It is practical polytheism when we behave as if we believed that each one of us has his or her own God (Temple, *Personal Religion*, 37).

²Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 121. Bieritz gives humanization of people a rather new twist when he emphasizes an internal element which Tutu would agree with, especially in the light of his concept of *ubuntu*. He writes: "To remove from a person the possibility of knowing and confessing himself guilty in a quite irreplaceable way is to threaten his humanity." For a person to be able to say "I am to blame," is part of being human. No other creature can incur and acknowledge guilt in this sort of way. Humanity comes to expression precisely at the point where, in confessing our inalienable guilt we transcend and dissolve every a priori or a posteriori nexus of cause and effect. "Humanity as [*sic*, should be "has"] the capacity—or better, the gift—of assuming, amid the web of anonymous, necessitudinous, ineluctable causes and effects, a real personal responsibility and so pointing to a free space beyond this web" (Karl Heinrich Bieritz, "Humankind in Need of Reconciliation," *Studia Liturgica* 18 (1988): 47).

doubt that they are children of God, which is blasphemous.¹ Such ungodly practices also blind the oppressors to a correct perception of themselves—failing to see themselves as part of a corporate humanity.²

Concurring, Allan Boesak poignantly relates humanization to the context of racism in South Africa. He maintains that racism is dehumanizing because it denies some people their rightful status as created beings whereas the Bible teaches that all people are made in the image of God. In this it denies the unity of humanity and stands in the way of the stewardship involved in having dominion over the earth. Although humans are not physically like God, they have a unique relationship to Him. This relationship is the background for the mandate given humans to exercise dominion over the earth. The power to do this must be shared among men and women. The dominion is one of service which necessitates interdependence among humans, on the one hand, as well as between humans and the created world, the other. To have a part in this dominion is the essence of being truly human. It means fulfilling one's potential in carrying out God's ordained responsibility.³

¹Tutu, "The Process of Reconciliation and the Demand of Obedience," 4. Black personhood is damaged by self-hatred and self-contempt while White personhood is hurt by the blasphemous effect of injustice and racism, by participation in unjust oppressive society, spurious assurances of their worth and by their affinity to amassing things.

²Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 63. Snyder makes the same point quite effectively when he declares that being a user is a state of alienation because a user has lost the basic relationship of mutuality and interdependence that is characteristic of the image of God. While being a user has many benefits, the cost is the same, namely, alienation. The means of alienation that we each experience are imposed identities and relations of oppression. No change will occur in the configuration of our situation until we change our identities and relationships (Snyder, 29-30).

³Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 103. Boesak admits to Reformed influence when he argues that traditional Calvinism taught that Christians were responsible for their world in what they called "world formative Christianity." Christians should make their own world as part of their discipleship to Jesus. Doing their part to reform the social world is part of their spiritual life. (See Nicholas Wolterstoff, cited in *Black and Reformed*, 89.) For *Black Reformed*

Tutu emulates Temple, arguing that Christianity is the most materialistic¹ of all the great religions.² No aspect of the human life falls outside the gamut of the Christian life. Christianity is not dualistic. It assumes upon itself the responsibility to bring about wholeness, justice, good health, righteousness, peace, harmony, and reconciliation. The church is the God-appointed agent of the realization of these in the universe.³

theologians this means being involved in the liberation struggle. God receives the sacrifice of human effort and struggle. He is the source of all bravery, courage, justice and truth. He is the surety of our lives should they be sacrificed in the struggle for others, like Jesus' was. The broken world we live in should not be accepted as final, idealized and institutionalized. Nor should such evils as racism be tolerated. The brokenness of the world calls for reformation and healing of people who do not naturally seek the glory of God or the good of a neighbor, and structures that do not have a liberating or humanizing effect on human lives. Reformed Christians are charged with the responsibility to challenge, shape, subvert and humanize history till it is in keeping with the divine norm of God's kingdom (Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 98).

¹Materialism here denotes being in close relation with, and attaching value to, the material world as opposed to the idealistic conception of *sōma sēma* which characterized such movements and gnosticism in the early period of the church.

²William Temple, cited in Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 71; idem, *On Trial*, 26; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 177. In the full context of the reference Temple writes: "Christianity is by far the most materialistic of the great religions; its central affirmation is, 'The word was made flesh.' It is materialistic, not because it is unspiritual, but because its spirit is so strong that it need not eschew matter . . . but faces it and dominates it" (*Personal Religion*, 17). He further argues that the fundamental biblical principle is that the earth belongs to God. People may enjoy its use but since it is God's all must have equal access to it. Only God was the ultimate owner of land and other property. See Isa 5:8; Mic 2:1, 2. The evil involved here was the denial of fellowship in property. Christianity before the conversion of Constantine observed the need to recognized equality in the enjoyment of God's bounty and the justice of a claim advanced by the needy to share with those who had more than a sufficiency (Temple, *Christianity and the Social Order*, 27).

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 42, 94, 134. For concurring views, see M. A. Kruger, "New Testament Anthropology," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 76 (1991): 95-96; Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 38, and Temple, *Personal Religion*, 23.

The Church: God's Sacrament¹ in Human Society

According to Tutu, God uses material things as vehicles and instruments of spiritual grace and divine life. Christianity is sacramental through and through.² Everything and everyone ultimately exists to serve the purposes of God's kingdom. Nothing exists for its own sake or as an end in itself. Thus, even when the prophets encountered God—Moses, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Saul, etc.—they were fully equipped and sent out on a mission. He enhanced their personal gifts into what He wanted them to be and then sent them out, for the honing of these gifts was for the sake of others.³ Likewise, Jesus, once baptized, emerged from the obscurity which characterized the first thirty years of His life. He was guided into the desert to confront the devil. The Spirit is never given so that the individual may wallow in His possession. He is given to equip the individual for practical combat with Satan and tangible service to other people as a means of grace.⁴

¹The Anglican Book of Common Prayer defines a sacrament as “an outward visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.” (*The Book of Common Prayer: and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church* [New York: T. Nelson, 1929], 595). According to Roman Catholic doctrine, sacraments are means of grace because they are powers of sanctification or instrumental causes signifying and containing the grace proper to them in such a way that they mediate and produce it *ex opere operato*, that is not by virtue of the personal merits of the minister or recipient. Tutu uses the term to denote that anything that human beings do on earth has eternal consequences. Nothing they do is exempt from that sacramental quality which makes what they do a vehicle and an instrument of spiritual grace and divine life.

²Tutu, *On Trial*, 26.

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 119.

⁴*Ibid.*, 115.

The Scope of the Sacramental Work of the Church

Following the mission of Jesus, Christianity is concerned with the here and now, which determines the hereafter. This link between time and eternity comes from the conception that time in the Judeo-Christian tradition is of eternal consequence.¹ Human life and decisions are important. Since life belongs to God, all that goes into it must ultimately seek to glorify Him.² It is on the premise of the sovereignty of God and of all religious life as a sacrament that the church in South Africa is to call the government to order.³

The church must humanize the world, including politics and the liberation struggle, for Jesus Himself became flesh.⁴ Everything in the world must be judged by the standards of Christ to determine if it contributes to God's Kingdom, frees people from needless bondage, humanizes people, makes them responsible beings, and enhances life.⁵ It is the Christian's

¹Barth, "A Community for the World," 512.

²Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 67, 204.

³Tutu, "Church and Nation in the Perspective of Black Theology," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 15 (1976): 9; idem. *Hope and Suffering*, 59, 159-182; idem, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 55-56; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 118-121.

⁴The work of reconciliation is linked to the incarnation and has a revelatory function. In and through His person and work Jesus Christ reveals to us not only that God is our Creator and we are His creatures but also the true God and the true man, in particular God as the covenant-God and man's destiny as God's covenant partner. He reveals the actuality of man as fallen man who has broken the covenant, but that God has chosen to restore him to Himself. When humans know what God has done, they respond gratefully by witnessing to Jesus Christ (Hartwell, 139).

⁵Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 152, 204. Tutu's concern is for the faith to affect the lives of the public in the manner in which the prophets touched the daily lives of ancient Israel. He recalls Temple who posits that Christians are concerned with all that helps or hinders the bringing together of men and women to see the world as God sees it, and to adopt the scale of values which is appropriate to the heirs of eternal destiny. The test of the constitution is what character it will produce in the citizens (Temple, *Personal Religion*, 25-26, 55).

Boesak also maintains that Jesus rules not only in the church. He has sway in the world as well, because He is concerned with both. He cares for the future of both. Therefore

understanding of the teachings of Christ that determines one's opinion toward action, policy, and attitude. The pursuit of justice should not be based on politics. One should always be critical of political systems, testing them against God's standards. A system that usurps the place of God and requires absolute loyalty must be resisted. By contrast, it should be obeyed whenever it remains within its legitimate authority. There may be times when it forfeits the allegiance of its subjects, for the Christian's first undivided loyalty is to God. Christians must fight to repeal by peaceful means any laws that militate against the gospel's imperatives.¹

This implies that the church must refuse to obey unjust laws. They dehumanize and hurt God's children.² The scrutiny that Tutu advocates excludes no facet of life. The Christian religion belongs to the whole of life whose total sphere it is called to transform.³ Whenever it fails to do this, it is a sham, an empty husk.⁴ Christianity is not just a private matter; it has public consequences based on public choices. It cannot be neutral either, especially where injustice reigns because in such cases neutrality is complicity.⁵

the church is concerned for the plight and life and future of the world because it is God's world. The church cannot sit by while the "powers that be" destroy the world. The world cannot be ravaged by war while the church sits quiet. Peace is an ecclesial concern. Hunger is also a concern for the church. Peace can never be separated from justice. It is concerned with human fulfillment, liberation and wholeness of both individual persons and corporate humanity (Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 151).

¹Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 33, 36, 54.

²Tutu, "Barmen and Apartheid," 77.

³In keeping with this viewpoint, Tutu's concerns for the world as God's creation are wide ranging. They cover problems of population growth that threatens to outstrip available resources in Africa, earth management and conservation as well as special care to curb the erosion of the topsoil (*Crying in the Wilderness*, 105), a halt on the use of nuclear energy, proliferation of nuclear weapons, and positive, serious work in promoting world peace (*Ibid.*, 106).

⁴Tutu, "Church and Nation in the Perspective of Black Theology," 9.

⁵Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 34.

Boesak strongly concurs with Tutu when he writes that "neutrality is the most reprehensible partiality there is. It means choosing for those in power, choosing for injustice, without taking responsibility for it. . . . It is the most detestable sort of 'Christianity.'" Christians cannot be neutral in the face of the cries of the poor and wretched when they have been assigned the task of conciliation. They need to speak out for justice and liberation. "Those who will not choose for themselves will be doomed to the choices made by others."¹

The Sacramental Nature of the Church and Her Relation to the State

Viewed in this light, the Christian faith asserts that God uses ordinary things as sacraments, as vehicles of His spiritual grace and divine life. The church serves in the world as such a sacrament. She is set as a sign in the world, the first fruits of God's kingdom, to demonstrate what God intends for human society, united in its variety, to attest that Christ has effectually torn to the ground all the separating walls.²

De Gruchy brings out the conditions under which the church can be such a sacrament:

In order for the church to fulfill its calling as a sacrament of God's reconciliation and sanctification of the world, it can neither ignore issues of oppression and injustice or restrict itself to some ethnic or class ghetto. It must embrace all of human effort and toil to transcend and defeat all dividing and dehumanizing powers. It is called to achieve this in humility as a church of the victims of society, as a church of the people. This involves it into embodying the conflict of the world as God's representative, in order for the whole of humanity to be transformed by the gospel and brought under the reign of God.³

¹Boesak, *The Finger of God*, 29-30. John Riches explains the reason behind this conviction when he writes, "To opt out of using one's power to work for greater peace and justice would be to connive with present injustice" (John Riches, "Biblical Theology and Pressing Concerns of the Church," in *The Kingdom of God and Human Society*, ed. Robin Barbour [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993], 220).

²Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 119.

³John W. de Gruchy, *Liberating Reformed Theology: A South African Contribution to the Ecumenical Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, and

The church as a sacrament should relate to human society, hence to human governments. She perceives governments as God's servants to minister to the needs of human beings under their authority. This power, this authority, therefore, should be earned by those in government. It should not be foisted upon the state's subjects. The state is to protect the rights of the people, empowering the subjects to fend for themselves. Rather than dividing people into conflicting classes it must promote peace and distribute wealth fairly in the land. Failing that, "the hungry masses will [not] forever just look on the groaning tables of their wealthy neighbors." Society will be saved if its greedy tendencies are curbed. If they are not, people will be valued only as producers and consumers, not as individuals with infinite value, created in the image of God.¹

In his treatment of Rom 13, Tutu accepts wholeheartedly the need to submit to temporal rulers. Still, he emphasizes that their rule is not absolute. It is only acceptable when it benefits the people. Christians must never submit themselves to rulers who subvert justice. The emphasis here is on the voluntary nature of this submission.²

Cape Town: David Philips Publishers, 1991), 224.

¹Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 108, 110, 112.

²Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 152. Boesak adopts a similar argument in the treatment of the same text. He argues that the call for obedience to government does not entail blind submission to civil authority. The term Paul uses is the same one he uses for submission to each other in the church and submission to one another in marriage. It means to order oneself under. It implies willing and spontaneous action, independent of force and coercion. The term *hypotassō* is used in the place of the usual *hypokouō*. The latter is used for clear unconditional submission that the Christian must accord God. Paul's use of *hypotassō* is probably designed to distinguish between the type of obedience the state deserves from that owed to God. Submission to the state is licit only if the state has regard for the word of God. The government is to be reminded that it is made of mortal men, like the ones it oppressed. It cannot scoff continually at God, for the universe is a moral one. He adduces Dan 3:16-18; Acts 4:5-12, 19-20, 29; 5:29; John 18:8-11; 19:11 (Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 36, 145). Cf. Hinchliff, *Holiness and Politics*, 70.

Elaborating on Tutu's concerns, Bosch argues that the church that prays that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven must not leave matters of politics and social concern to chance. She must not think dualistically, because Scripture only sanctions a qualified distinction between the world and the church.¹

Tutu argues that the presence of the church in the world must always be felt because Christians, from the early centuries, drew no distinction between religious and other aspects of living. As he sees them, church and state were not two distinct entities. Society was viewed as a unified whole. There was no dichotomy between the sacred and the secular.

Interestingly, Tutu quotes T. M. Parker who contends that the term *ekklēsia* was used among the Greeks to denote a religious as well as a political congregation. The political head was often the sacral head as well. Time and again kings were worshiped.² So for Tutu the etymological background of the word precludes any cleavage between the secular and the sacred. This was foreign to Jewish thought. The king of Israel was a viceroy and representative of God. He was called to rule God's people as God would, concerning himself with the poor, weak, hungry, and marginalized.³ The concept of the church as a sacrament stems from an incarnational view of the institution, which means that the church is an extension of Jesus Christ. Seen from an incarnational perspective, the church serves as a blending of the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the present world. Her work has eternal consequences.

¹Bosch, "The Church and the Liberation of Peoples," 13.

²Tutu, "Church and Nation in the Perspective of Black Theology," 7. See T. M. Parker, *Christianity and the State in the Light of History* (London: A. and C. Black, 1955), 1.

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 155; cf. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence*, 81-86.

In his occasional use of the incarnational language, he emphasizes that the church gives concrete form to the spiritual work of the Holy Spirit.¹

For Tutu, the key to maintaining a truly sacramental faith in the world is by keeping a critical distance between the church and the government. The marching orders of the church do not come from the social order. There must be a distinction between what the church does and what the world in general does. Consequently, any activism,² though it might claim to be grounded in religion, must be avoided. Likewise, prejudice often hides behind religion. Religious fanatics have done much damage to the world while hiding behind religion.³

What Tutu seeks to foster in promoting political activity among the members of the church is a holistic sense of responsibility for all aspects of life on the part of the believers. He possibly is so emphatic about the need to be involved that he seems to be contradicting himself when he cautions that the church must distance herself from government. There need be no self-contradiction when it is understood that on one hand Tutu cautions against an understanding of Christianity that in principle will not participate in "political" matters because they are, *de jure*, dirty, while on the other, he would like Christians not to be so mired up in politics that the church becomes a particular political party at prayer, as was allegedly the case with the South African Dutch churches in the days of apartheid. In his view, the church must monitor all the affairs that pertain to human existence, including matters of government, yet she

¹Tutu, "Church and Nation in the Perspective of Black Theology," 8, 9; idem, *On Trial*, 16, 26; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 177; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 114-118; 131-132; 158, 159; 262-263.

²The term "activism" is used in the negative sense of functioning as a pressure group that opposes the established ways of doing things no matter what the merit of such ways may be.

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 115. As Snyder agrees, "Activism is action without waiting. It only leads us deeper into our alienation" (48).

must neither endorse any one party as *the* one for all to join, nor support any regime without question.

The Sacramental Function as Genuine Spirituality

As Tutu sees it, the function of the church in the world is closely related to her spirituality. The authenticity of true spirituality is demonstrated by the Christian's ability to reflect God's healing, restoring, forgiving, reconciling, admonishing, comforting presence in the world alienated from Him and yet which remains the object of His love, so much so that for it He gave His only Son. God does not wish Christians to live in a spiritual ghetto, insulated from real life. Jesus is the paradigm for Christians. He did not remain on the Mount of Transfiguration but came down to where a boy was languishing for healing. He rejected religious escapism, exemplifying that love for God is authenticated by love for other people.

The Christian faith has a horizontal as well as a vertical dimension.¹ God's chosen people must reflect His character so that others might know Him.

Tutu and the other scholars who agree with him on this point are keen to promote spirituality. Yet Tutu painstakingly advocates it as the fundamental core of true reconciliation. Himself a man of prayer and deep devotion, Tutu has been challenged to think of human life as an indivisible unit. True religion, for him, has to do with the whole person. All aspects of life are affected when one suffers. Hence, Tutu reasons that oppressed people must find it

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 70. Coetsee argues that true spirituality does not mean fleeing the mess the world has become, but being involved with it, with the view to pointing out God's alternative by word and deed (see Coetsee, "The World of God--A Challenge to the Church," 125). Pressing this same point, Snyder urges that Christians should shy away from Manichaeism which posited a dualism emphasizing the heavenly, spiritual, and invisible at the expense of the earthly, physical and visible. "The scandal of particularity that characterized the Christian claim that a particular Jew, born of a particular family, in a particular time and place, is the messiah, cannot be avoided. Nor can we be devoid of the scandal that attends all attempts to give institutional shape to our vision" (Snyder, 111).

difficult to be truly spiritual. At the same time he remains strongly opposed to spurious spirituality, a spirituality that uses religion as an easy way out of the world. To facilitate the transition from unbelief to faith, Tutu advocates that the church should be truly spiritual as well as prophetic. She has encountered God not for self-aggrandizement but for the sake of others. She meets Him at the burning bush in order to be sent to set the captives free. This is the pattern evident in Jesus' life and work. His life shows a rhythm of engagement and disengagement. He spent whole nights alone in prayer, replenishing His resources, before spending Himself prodigally on the behalf of those to whom He ministered.¹

In the face of earthly turmoil, the church has no right to be quietistic under the guise of holiness and spirituality. It is worldly to be concerned only with one's own life, rights, and fixed modes of behavior. The world learns nothing new from this kind of behavior because it divides into individual cliques, interest groups, cultural movements, nations, religions, parties and sects of all kinds, each of which is sure of the soundness of its cause and each anxious within its limits to maintain and assert itself in face of all the rest. The world can quietly acquiesce in its divisions if the community of Jesus Christ finally suffers from the same deficiency. That is, if it takes the form only of another, and perhaps even more radical separation, and if it does not accept the solidarity of its particular humanity with all other good or harmful manifestations. On the other hand, the church cannot be part of the activism of the world.²

¹Desmond Tutu, "A Prisoner of Hope," *Christianity Today* 36 (1992): 41, 42.

²Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 115. By "activism" Tutu refers to the spirit behind much protest activity that is related to liberating people which does not pay particular attention to Jesus Christ as the Prince of Peace. While he will support any initiative that seeks to foster peace and reconciliation, he sees the need for the church to temper all such activities by being present as a partner in all liberatory work.

So far we have observed that in Tutu's thought the church is charged with the responsibility to bring reconciliation between God and humanity, and among human beings themselves. This duty is carried out in a context that may set her at odds with governments since the church discharges her responsibility in the interest of humanizing people, which is not often the first priority of governments. For the church to achieve her irenic ministry, she must view herself as God's sacrament in the world. This self-perception is the key to true spirituality.

The Restitutive Ministry of the Church

As a reconciling community the church carries out a function assigned her by Jesus Christ, whose own mission on earth was to achieve reconciliation. But, insists Tutu, reconciliation always presupposes a prerequisite, i.e., justice. Justice implies that those who have been wronged will, as much as possible, receive restitution when scores are settled. In a place like South Africa this might imply resettling Black people in so-called "Black spots" that recently were lost to White farmers under the provisions of the Group Areas Act. This is conceivable to Tutu because Scriptures have no room for peace devoid of justice. Justice is an integral part of God's shalom--peace--which also includes righteousness, wholeness, fullness of life, participation in decision making, goodness, laughter, joy, compassion, sharing, and reconciliation.¹ In fact, justice is the foundation of genuine reconciliation. It is self-defeating to justify a truce based on the unstable foundations of oppression. Such a truce can be maintained only through institutional violence.²

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 92.

²Tutu, "Freedom Fighters or Terrorists?" 74.

This is a point of qualified convergence between Tutu and Schreiter. Robert Schreiter lists three fallacious types of reconciliation. One is hasty peace, an attempt to avoid ill feelings that may result from seeking to identify the root cause of alienation. Another is reconciliation without justice, a process of palliating the wrong done against a victim without intending to give it any redress. The last sees reconciliation as a managed process in which the alienated are supposed to leave their fate to experts who tell them how to react to each other in an acceptable fashion and thus be reconciled. Concurring with Tutu, he holds that justice is not an alternative to reconciliation; it is a prerequisite. Justice is fundamental to reconciliation, which can only happen if the nature of the violence perpetrated is acknowledged, and its sources are squelched. To use reconciliation as an alternative for justice is to fail to understand the conflictual realities that create gulfs which reconciliation seeks to bridge. It is to fail to recognize how difficult it is to overcome violence.¹

Thus, for Tutu, the church, as God's agent of reconciliation, should shun shouting peace where there is no peace. Peace presupposes confrontation. She must confront people with the heinousness of their sin, whether political, personal, or structural. In the South African setting this means that those who have benefitted from apartheid should be faced with their sin and led to confess before God and their victims the hurt they have inflicted. Once forgiven, they must give restitution where possible.² Reconciliation does not happen just by

¹Schreiter, 22. In Schreiter's view, reconciliation and liberation, which are part and parcel of justice in the South African struggle, must be held in tension. He argues that conflict, which he relates to the demand for liberation, is part of Christian life. As a result, he contends, God is at war with sin in the world and will remain at odds with it till the eschaton. While God is fighting sin, the church will also be fighting it among the believers, which causes conflict. Christians must never, says Schreiter, settle for a truce between reconciliation and injustice. Tutu is not so ready to sanction conflict. Yet he recognizes that when there is conflict, it should not be hushed up. It must be addressed candidly with a view to resolving it.

²Tutu, "A Prisoner of Hope," 41.

saying let bygones be bygones.¹ The offenders must seek to restore to their victims property, dignity, and human respect that have been shorn under the colonial and the apartheid systems.

Coetsee concurs. The call to reconciliation must not be reduced to an oral summons since true reconciliation radically affects the lifestyle by transforming the mind (Rom 12:1-3; Col 3), attitudes, activities, priorities, ideals, and relationships. Such a transformation results in a lifestyle that is conscious of the need for reconciliation, for those who have discovered the joy and preciousness of being at peace with God (Rom 5:1-5) can hardly resist the longing to be involved in reconciling others to God. Truly restored humans may never be at peace in the face of anything that inhibits the manifestation of reconciliation.²

Reconciliation, however, should be between equals who stand up and can look each other face to face. Tutu further insists that no one should demand forgiveness while his or her foot is on the neck of another. People can forgive each other only as valuable individuals, as equals.³ Therefore the church must remember to preach reconciliation and at the same time cater to justice first since there is no reconciliation without justice, and there is no justice where

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 222.

²Coetsee, "God's World—A Challenge to the Church," 124. Consistently, Boesak also argues that the church must resist cheap grace. It must not accept subterfuge in place of authenticity in its anxiety to realize love, peace and reconciliation in the world. It must not fall for peace and reconciliation where none exists at all (Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 28). John de Gruchy concurs, adding that cheap reconciliation is *ersatz* and wants to do away with the struggle. True reconciliation follows the model of the cross, resurrection and the reconciliation of all things in Christ. That is the way of the gospel (de Gruchy, "The Struggle for Justice," 46).

³Tutu, "The Process of Reconciliation and the Demand of Obedience," 5.

people are not equal before the law.¹ Clearly, reconciliation is costly because it implies confrontation. God's Son died to make it possible.²

Making a similar point, Boesak argues that in His act of reconciling the world to God Jesus showed that the world was not guiltless. The world had to be brought face to face with its guilt, since true reconciliation, like true peace, always presupposes confrontation. He confronted the world with the truth of its pseudo-innocence. It would not be enough to tell the world that it was no longer guilty. "Reconciliation is not feeling good; it is coming to grips with evil."³ Similarly, peace is not merely the absence of war. It is the active presence of justice which results in the well-being of all. It is characterized by Christian love, itself an act of justice. Justice is doing what is right in the political, social, and economic arena, thus creating a climate of love within which there can be at-one-ment, peace.⁴

Nor is true reconciliation just a cessation of hostilities. It involves the fundamental repair of human lives, especially the lives of those who have suffered. It takes time.⁵ It may require reparations. Archbishop Tutu's involvement with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which was started in 1996 is a natural consequence of his conception of reconciliation and is in agreement with Boesak's view on the subject. He went into this Commission with the assumption that true reconciliation would be realized in South Africa only if the crimes of apartheid were examined and the victims allowed opportunity to vent their feelings of anger and hurt as well as to be a significant part of the reconciliation process.

¹Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 85.

²Ibid., 38.

³Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 29.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., 21.

In Tutu's eyes, Black Consciousness, with its emphasis that Black people bear the image of God equally with all other peoples on earth, is a crucial movement toward true reconciliation.¹ "True reconciliation is a deeply personal matter."² It can only happen between persons who assert their personhood while they acknowledge and respect that of others. People do not get reconciled to dogs.³ No reconciliation is possible in South Africa except between real persons. Blacks must recognize themselves as God's children with privileges and responsibilities that are the concomitants of the exalted status of being God's children.⁴ Such conditions were met, Archbishop Tutu believed, when Professor Willie Jonker confessed before an audience his personal guilt and sin, that of the Dutch Reformed Church and that of the Afrikaans people as a whole. Tutu forgave Jonker personally, as well as on behalf of the African population. To some, Archbishop Tutu appeared altogether too hasty to accept Jonker's confession. When a dispute arose over the confession and Tutu's acceptance of it, he declared that he could not refuse to forgive, though he feared that he might have been presumptuous in offering forgiveness on the behalf of other people beyond himself.⁵ He argued that when Jesus called Zaccheaus, He did not know that the tax collector would accept His

¹Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 41, 62.

²Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 19.

³Tutu perceives Black Consciousness as a movement by which God sought to rouse the Black people to their sense of intrinsic value and worth as children of God, and to glorify Him for creating them Black.

⁴Tutu, "God Intervening in Human Affairs," 115.

⁵Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 222-225.

forgiveness and love. He made Himself vulnerable. But on that very account, Zaccheaus offered to make restitution.¹

The Prophetic Ministry of the Church

There is general agreement today that rather than function merely as a foreteller of coming events, the biblical prophet is an envoy of God serving in a non-institutionalized way, often criticizing society in the name of God. He or she is essentially a forth-teller, a bearer of revelation immediately related to God's word, rather than a foreteller. What prophets assert, they proclaim as the word of God. The church is the permanent presence of the word of God.²

Tutu welcomes this definition of prophecy and urges the church in South Africa, as a prophetic church, to proclaim a certain "thus says the Lord," speaking against injustice, oppression, exploitation, and dehumanization of people, as well as of personal salvation from sin.³ This prophetic function of the church entails speaking up for the downtrodden and

¹Ibid., 224. Tutu's reasoning here is much like that of William Temple who argues that while many people are agreed that God will forgive us if we repent, little emphasis is laid on the fact that only the petition for forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer has a condition. It is correct to emphasize the necessity of repentance as a condition of forgiveness long as we understand the term in its NT sense of changing our outlook to regard people as God regards them. Our forgiveness rests on our attitudes, not toward God alone, but towards His other children as well. "He is always ready and eager to forgive; but how can He restore us to the freedom and intimacy of the family if there are other members of the family towards whom we refuse to be friendly." See Temple, *Personal Religion*, 46; cf. Domeris in the introduction of this chapter.

²See *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology*, ed. Karl Rahner (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968-1970), 5:110-113; *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. F. L. Cross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), s.v. "Prophet," 1133; Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), Klaus Koch, *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition: The Form Critical Method* (New York: Scribners, 1969), 210-220; Gene M. Tucker, "Prophetic Speech," *Interpretation* 32 (1978): 31-45.

³Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 36.

seeking justice on their behalf. Concurring, Keith Clements comments that the church is truly free only when she condemns injustice. To fight oppression is part of her very nature.¹ Tutu can only assert that "if we follow Jesus Christ and accept the implications of our faith, we do not have any other option than to oppose oppression, injustice and evil."²

At the same time, the archbishop explains that the church must not fail the rulers by acting in a "time-serving capacity," a phrase Tutu uses to underline that the church must not side with injustice to ensure her own comfortable existence in the world. The rulers need this ministry. This conviction arises from Tutu's concern for both the oppressed and the oppressors, who both bear the image of God. The oppressors need the prophetic witness of the church to avoid the sin of blasphemy while the oppressed need the advocacy of the church in order to live decently.³

In Archbishop Tutu's view, the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of God implies a prophetic ministry in the tradition of the ancient Hebrew prophets, who frequently preached justice and equality to those in power. The church must affirm the rights of every human being, especially those of the oppressed and voiceless. Wealth and land must be distributed, justly and economic policies that increase poverty must be scrapped.⁴

As to the duration of this ministry, Tutu insists that there will always be need for the church's prophetic function as from the first century A.D. on the church has never ceased to proclaim what it meant to be reconciled in a world where standards other than the Christian

¹Keith W. Clements, "Bonhoeffer, Barmen and Anglo-Saxon Individualism," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 54 (1986): 17-20.

²Tutu, "A Prisoner of Hope," 40.

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 70; idem, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 114.

⁴De Gruchy, "The Struggle for Justice," 47.

principles prevailed. This stance of the church is in line with keeping the critical distance Tutu suggests should exist between herself and the political structures. Thus he contends that in today's South Africa the church must be in critical solidarity with the new government, giving support to those initiatives which may lead to the establishment of both a new and a just social order. She remains prophetic in stance while she helps in the realization of the legitimate goals of the new state, encouraging whatever is just and true, for truth and justice will never end, nor will the struggle for the reign of Christ ever stop.¹ With regard to the criterion of such critical solidarity, Tutu suggests the testimony and touchstone of Scripture, while de Gruchy suggests that the plight of the poor must be the criterion for proper praxis.² The two views are not as diverging as it might seem since for Tutu the situation of the poor is the context of the interpretation of Scripture.

Even in the best of nations "there will always be the voiceless, marginalized ones who feel miles away from the corridors of power and [believe] that they count for nothing." Tutu exhorts the church to stand up on their behalf, to vigilantly declare to those in power, "Thus says the Lord."³ This is what the Old Testament prophets did. Elijah confronting Ahab over

¹Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 32, 33; 113; cf. de Gruchy, "Midwives of Democracy," 17.

²Ibid., 15.

³Tutu, "A Prisoner of Hope," 41. Snyder agrees with Tutu's view on the prophetic function of the church. We quote him: "Prophetic preaching is the voice of the oppressed that has been silenced, but it now made audible. It is the vehicle for the collective voice of the alienated. The prophet is one who has heard the groanings and hopes of the people and who articulates them on the behalf of the poor. Prophetic preaching is conflictual precisely because it tells the truth of the condition of the alienated and because it points to a vision of a reconciled world that can only be accomplished through a struggle against those persons and structures and identification that maintain the alienation" (Snyder, 105). Yet the difference in accent is clear between Tutu and Snyder. Tutu underscores the centrality of the word of God in the prophetic witness while Snyder couches the aspirations of the oppressed at its center.

the latter's injustice against Naboth (1 Kgs 21) and Nathan convicting David of sin when the king took Bathsheba unto himself and caused her husband's death (2 Sam 12) are standard practice in Scripture. They provide Christians with a mandate and paradigm. Jesus Himself worked to alleviate the suffering of the poor. His religion was not an opiate for them.¹ The marching orders for Christians come from Scripture and from Christ, not from human rulers, or any political ideology.² Like the Messiah, Christians are called to care for the downtrodden. In the power of the Holy Spirit the church must be ready to counter society's half-truths and untruths while being compassionate and caring.³

Albert Nolan approvingly notes that Archbishop Tutu has been hailed throughout the world as a modern-day prophet. He underlines that prophetic theology is *time bound*. All prophecy and prophetic theology speak of and to a particular time in a particular context about a particular situation.⁴ Western theology has often become unprophetic when it understood truth to be timeless and universal. The prophets did not have a timeless and universal message.⁵

As Nolan explains it, the biblical prophet was one who could discern crises and determine how to address them appropriately. Such crises were God's choice opportunities to communicate His will to His people. These times of activity alone were real history, the *kairos* within which God encountered the prophets, for "history is the succession of God-inspiring

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 29, 30; 150-151.

²Ibid., 150.

³Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 68.

⁴Albert Nolan, "Theology in a Prophetic Mode," in *Hammering Swords into Ploughshares*, 131.

⁵Ibid., 132.

events, moments of truth, challenges, opportunities, times of decision and action.” South Africa is passing through such a *kairos*.¹

Tutu subscribes to this view and further explains it, averring that the Scriptures are granted to address particular circumstances. They do not originate in a vacuum nor is their message revealed to anyone confined to an ivory tower of isolation and detachment. The Bible, whose message is prophetic, is the most occasional literature. Its theology is an engaged theology, involved in the existential issues facing a particular group of believers. Hence it contains theologies that exist in tension, complementing each other, although they may, at times, seem incompatible. These theologies were written as prophetic pronouncements at particular times of need and, to nobody’s surprise, some parts of the Scriptures are more readily helpful than others. The measure of the authenticity of a true religion is how it affects the daily lives of people, especially how the rich and privileged treat the underprivileged, the hungry, the poor, the oppressed, the widow, the orphan, and the alien.²

Prophetic Journalism?

Interestingly enough, Tutu views the role of journalism as closely paralleling the prophetic function of the church. Journalism is a high calling; it pursues truth which needs to be disseminated far and wide. Journalists are the nation’s watchdogs, called to protect the inconsequential men and women who are always wont to be manipulated and harassed by those in power. Their work is not without risk, for few powerful people appreciate truth.

¹Ibid., 134.

²Tutu, “Theology of Liberation in Africa,” 164-165. Tutu’s emphasis on the particularity of the witness of the Bible has influenced his use of Scripture, as noticed by Albert Nolan.

Journalists are the eyes of a society easily lulled into complacency, a voice of the voiceless, speaking against the misuse of power, standing up against victimization, oppression, exploitation and injustice. They are the ears of a society that has grown dull of hearing. They provide the only reading for certain people. Black journalists need to apply themselves to truth from a Black perspective. They must remind their people of their heritage as children of God rather than faint carbon copies of others, a glorious original, of immense and infinite value to God.¹

The Consequences of a Prophetic Ministry

Tutu warns that although God-ordained and necessary, whether performed by the church or by the media, the prophetic function of the church will evoke a stern reaction from unjust states. Many church leaders will disappear as was the case in Communist Russia, Nazi Germany, and Amin's Uganda. But that is what it means to participate in Jesus' mission to the world. The church works on the basis of a "thus saith the Lord," whatever the cost. Her encouragement in suffering stems from the understanding that she is sealed to Christ and nothing can change what He thinks of her. Her security in His love helps her understand that life comes through dying (Mark 9:32-33; Matt 10:37ff). Greatness comes through service, and the increase of the harvest comes when seed dies in the sod. Standing up for the powerless, in solidarity with the poor, the oppressed, and marginalized, she will often suffer.²

"Beware when all men speak well of you" (Luke 6:26). The test of the authenticity of Christian witness is suffering because they bear Christian witness. Christians are not masochists. However, "a church that does not suffer for the right reasons cannot be the church

¹Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 81, 82.

²Ibid., 118; idem, "Barmen and Apartheid," 77.

of Jesus Christ."¹ In this statement Tutu balances his call for the church to resolutely accept suffering with a caution that this suffering should be occasioned by righteous living. He might have referred to such instances as the Bullhoek massacre of 1922 in which more than a hundred people were killed needlessly in a standoff with the hostile government and the rest of the community due to the sectarian extremism of Enoch Mgijima's followers. Such might not be suffering "for the right reasons."

A balance must be maintained between good judgment and extremism, the heavenly vision and its earthly application, recklessness and godly courage. As Gene Tucker describes it, the prophetic role entails a moral decisiveness which is both specific and courageous. Prophets have the courage of their convictions. For the love of God and of the world they must obey God rather than human beings, for His word—even beyond judgement—is good news.²

If her mission remains clear, the church will not give up her work. The love of God produces a fellow feeling for those His compassionate Son lived to bless, labored to uplift, and died to save. This relationship with those whom Jesus loves prompts the Christian to be compassionate toward them. To the practical manifestation of this compassion we now turn.

The Compassionate Ministry of the Church

Concern for the everyday pain suffered by people does not emanate from the pursuit of power. Rather, it is compassion that arises from genuine Christianity. Christian concern makes it imperative for Christians to feel with the oppressed and seek righteousness, love,

¹Tutu, *Church and Prophecy*, 28.

²Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 33; Tucker, 21.

peace, and reconciliation on their behalf.¹ Far from paternalistic, this compassion is born of a genuine caring for people who recognize their own brokenness and are driven by God's love to bring reconciliation to fellow human beings who hurt. If the church takes the incarnation seriously, she will be concerned with where people live, how they live, whether they receive justice, whether they are moved at the whims of governments, whether they are accorded the right to a decent education, for these people are the brothers and sisters of Jesus.²

Violence, the Antithesis of Compassion

Engaging in violence is the very opposite activity to acts of compassion. In apartheid, one sees a form of violence which breeds all sorts of resultant violence. It is antithetical to Christian reconciliation and compassion.³ If for no other reason than this, apartheid must be opposed. Oppression is both a source and a form of violence and Christians should reject it.

Tutu is not alone in recognizing the seminal role apartheid has played in the violence in South Africa. Schreiter maintains that this violence was not an accidental phenomenon, but a deliberate decision to achieve specific goals. It is a destructive pattern of behavior for both individuals and communities. Its corrosive effects on the fabric of meaning that we weave about ourselves lead one to think of violence as irrational. But violence is not irrational. It has a rationality that is counterrational to those ordinary rationalities that create and sustain meaning in our lives. It is deliberately calculated to assault the very components that make us human and keep us from sliding into oblivion.⁴

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 54-55, 117-18.

²Ibid., 11.

³Tutu, "Freedom Fighters or Terrorists?" 72.

⁴Schreiter, 30.

Violence is an attack on our sense of safety and selfhood. The degradation that ensues goes beyond the physical pain of the assault. It reminds us of how vulnerable we are. If unrelenting, this assault may cause us to doubt, if not to abandon, the cherished beliefs that encode our senses of safety and selfhood, since they do not seem to offer the assurance we seek in the midst of these onslaughts.¹

Tlhagale also sees the violent Black response to White violence in South Africa as a logical development, as deliberate as White violence. As the dialectical relationship between the enforcers of the unjust laws and those who resist intensifies, the situation ceases to be simply a situation of “unrest” but becomes a violent struggle between oppressor and oppressed. The violent upheaval is not an accidental event or an expression of hostility; it is calculated to precipitate an abrupt end to racism and political domination. It is violence to end violence.²

Chronicling the various forms of violence done to the non-White people of South Africa by the apartheid machine, Tutu mentions among other things: the use of such insulting signs as “Blacks and dogs not allowed,” calling Black people names such as “Darkies,” “Hotnots,” “Coolies,” “Kaffirs,” “and Natives,”³ stripping people down to their underclothing in order to search them, showing more concern for one White child in danger than for thousands of children in Soweto, destroying the shacks that Black women use as shelters, alleging that these women were foreigners who were squatting illegally whereas they were

¹Ibid., 32.

²Buti Tlhagale, “On Violence: A Township Perspective,” in *The Unquestionable Right to Be Free: Black Theology from South Africa*, ed. Buti Tlhagale and Itumeleng Jerry Mosala (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 138.

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 122; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 44-45; 91-92. On the importance of nicknames in situations of oppression, see Snyder, 17.

trying to survive on their fatherland,¹ dismissing Black pensioners as “superfluous appendages” because they can no longer work for their former White employers,² giving Black children inferior education, using Blacks in general as cheap labor, destroying their family structures through the migratory labor system,³ subjecting them to forced population removals, and allowing them to perform only certain types of jobs because of the color of their skin.⁴

Apartheid to Be Opposed for Its Violence

In apartheid South Africa, destructive violence, such as the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960 and the Murder of the Soweto children in 1976, was sparked by non-violent demonstrations. The silence of White Christians toward the violence of the police was deafening.⁵ State violence was characteristically legalized, as in the case of Ahab and Jezebel's treatment of Naboth. Unfortunately, South Africa had no Elijah, cries Tutu.⁶

The archbishop was far from alone in his condemnation of government violence. His position was similar to Boesak's who, while denouncing violence, protests against the pietistic exegesis of some, which prescribed nonviolence for the oppressed and allowed the oppressors a greater measure of freedom to brutalize their victims. Rev 13:13 was perceived as suggesting

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 123.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., 126-127.

⁴Ibid., 163; cf. Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 45.

⁵Tutu, "God Intervening in Human Affairs," 116.

⁶Tutu, *On Trial*, 25.

to him that there may be such people as "avengers from among God's servants," a concept that Calvin also propounds.¹

Tutu has insisted that westerners should use a consistent approach when referring to violence in South Africa rather than condemn it when espoused by people from the so-called Third World and support it as legitimate when westerners need to act in their own interest. Before condemning South Africans who want their freedom "by any means possible," westerners should consider first that if judged by the practice of western Christians in their struggle against Nazism, the church was hardly pacifistic. Only a minority could have been steadfastly pacifist in those days.² Likewise, it seems inconsistent to consider Bonhoeffer a martyr and to commend resistance movements in Europe while at the same time condemning Black South African resistance movements that sought to achieve similar goals of freedom, self-determination, and justice in their own country against an enemy bent on decimating them.³

Tlhagale concurs that there is duplicity in the way the West views violence. In his view, western Christian thought on violence has tended to regard the struggle of the oppressed against their oppressors as immoral terrorism. It has tended to support the status quo and to uphold "non-violence" as a universal principle, while some within the same tradition call non-violence a strategy rather than a principle. As a strategy, it is said to be in line with the injunction not to retaliate (Matt 5:38-39). Martin Luther King, Jr., supported the "peace at all costs" stance of non-violence, holding out the hope that the opponent would finally be

¹Calvin, cited in Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 102. For this theme within the context of Nah 3:1-5, see p. 118.

²Tutu, "Freedom Fighters or Terrorists?" 26.

³Tutu, "God Intervening in Human Affairs," 117.

persuaded to pursue peace. The South African experience is perceived by many Blacks as negating this hope.¹

Black violence, opined Tlhagale, can be justified for at least three reasons. It is a just response to a more violent system. It is also the desperate reaction of a people for whom the world will not raise its voice, a people who have learned that they must achieve their freedom themselves; no one else can help them. Black violence has become a necessary evil and is likely to bring the emancipation sought.²

Tutu was more reserved in his approach to the use of violence. He feared that violent measures may have to be taken if the government continues to be intransigent. Yet he still saw sufficient good will in the international community to be appealed to in order to avoid a bloodbath in South Africa. Tutu did not call for a peaceful settlement because he was a pacifist if this term is used to denote a stance that disallows violence under any and all circumstances. He believed that beyond a certain point, when all reasonable measures had been exhausted, freedom must be secured through violence.³

A Peaceful Alternative to Violence in South Africa

Archbishop Tutu is willing to try an alternative method before he reluctantly gives up speaking against both primary and secondary violence. As we noted, in his view, violence is evil and must not be used against anybody unless it becomes necessary to oust a greater evil

¹Tlhagale, "On Violence: A Township Perspective," 139.

²Ibid., 143-146.

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 43-44; idem, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 55-57.

through the use of a lesser one.¹ What one needs in the fight against apartheid is to call on sanctions that are essentially non-violent. However, if because of their vested interests in South Africa, Westerners will refuse to impose sanctions against the oppressive system, Black insurgents are left with little choice but to resort to violence.²

He has advocated the imposition of economic sanctions against South Africa's apartheid government because it would save human lives and is consistent with his own view on the value of human life. Still, it is up to the world community to enforce the sanctions or risk a blood bath in South Africa. In compassion for the disadvantaged population of South Africa, both the local and the international church too must consider using punitive sanctions. This approach is opposed to violence, which is the direct antithesis of compassion.³

Toward Reconciliation: Practical Reflections

The posture the church is called to adopt in view of apartheid in South Africa and what duties she should carry out have been discussed thus far in this chapter. It remains to see which practical steps may be included in the process of bringing peace and reconciliation to the country. Although these steps are neither sequential nor exhaustive, they are representative of

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 20, 99-100. This stance is informed by the understanding that violence takes various forms. Most people understand direct physical violence which involves assault on an individual or a group. But there is indirect physical violence as well, which might involve withholding resources to the point of starvation. Economic oppression belongs to this kind of violence. There are psychic sorts of violence that wreak havoc on a person's self-concept and self-esteem. Racism is such a form that tells a group incessantly that they are inferior to some other group(s) (Schreier, 30).

²Desmond M. Tutu, *Nobel Prize Lecture* (New York: Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1986), 31-32; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 99-111.

³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 111; 126, 127.

what the archbishop has advocated over a period of some thirty years of preaching against apartheid.

Tutu holds that in South Africa the church must testify to God's presence in the world, although various factors might seem to point to an opposite conviction. The archbishop is certain of this proximity of God, for ours is a moral universe where right and wrong matter and when all affairs are under a God who will never abdicate His rule over the world. In the strife between the two, right will triumph thanks to the resurrection of Jesus which clearly proclaims that right will prevail. Love, justice, and peace are palpable and achievable realities whose domain has been set up as Jesus has inaugurated the kingdom of God, a kingdom characterized by justice, peace, abundant life, and God's siding with the disprivileged.¹

Christian Patience and Waiting

Patience is of utmost importance. Tutu links the patience of God with the necessity for patience on the part of the church. He holds that God is patient and self-giving, and shows a suffering love. He suffers human enmity to the point of bearing the disgrace of death on the cross. He is the *Three Mile an Hour God*² who walks at that speed with us all our lives and is patient with His people. Like God, the church must wait and educate patiently. Hence there should be no coercion of any sort to bring people to a knowledge of, or allegiance to, God. Yet God aches to be reconciled to all His creatures, yearns for their redemption and restitution.

¹Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 31-32; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 74.

²Borrowed from Kosuke Koyama's book *Three Mile an Hour God: Biblical Reflections* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1980), cited in Tutu, "The Process of Reconciliation and the Demand of Obedience," 6.

In view of these attributes of God, both coercion and indifference are rendered impossible for the church.¹

Tutu associates patience with an attitude of listening and waiting. He notes that the reconciling church is one that listens to the cries and laments of the oppressed. It is also a waiting church. The poor of the world have a lot of time. Besides, it is in waiting that people discern the difference between illusion and reality. It is in waiting that we begin to see God's reconciling grace in operation. It is in waiting that painful memories well up and reconciliation begins to seep in.² Tutu underscores the importance of listening from the point of view that it is only as the church listens that she knows where people hurt and can intelligently cooperate with them in the redress of their hurt.³

Living by Christian Hope

Waiting patiently implies the passage of time, which, extended too long, may erode expectancy. To be bearable, waiting must have an object large enough to offset the tedium of prolonged expectation. Tutu suggests that this object is hope. His anticipation of a free South Africa is relentless even when there seems to be no rational explanation for such hope. His is

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 170. Cf. Nürnberger, "Political and Religious Ideologies," 99.

²Cf. Schreiter, 71, 72.

³Tutu, "A Prisoner of Hope," 41. Schreiter adds the characteristics of attention and compassion to his spirituality profile. People lose their ability to attend in an effort to escape unpleasant situations. But as spirituality cannot grow without our turning our attention to God, so too attention to the healing of painful memories is of the essence in the ministry of reconciliation. Attention is the basis of compassion, the ability to wait and be with, to walk alongside a victim at his or her pace. Though we cannot enter another person's suffering, we can re-enter our own suffering which may parallel that of another. What we may lack in empathy and parallel experience may be made up in the kind of attention that creates an environment of trust and safety (Schreiter, 72, 73).

an outlook based on faith, the conviction that wrong will not always triumph as long as God is in charge of the world. He does not preach a “feel good” Christianity but a faith embedded in what God has done for the world through Jesus Christ. In his eyes, the Christian is a prisoner of hope.

Schreiter sees the need for hope in Christian living but warns that often where people need hope there is the danger of settling for fatalism. When adversity has defeated their most gallant efforts, human beings tend to feel overwhelmed, convinced of the futility of their efforts. Fatalism involves a sense of inevitability and impotence to change things. Found in most realms of human life today, it spreads a sense that things are fixed, determined by some higher principle, by some external force that inevitably leads to a predictable end.¹

Clearly, Tutu does not espouse fatalism when he calls people to hope. His position is predicated upon the conviction that God believes in human beings.² The grace of God sustains His people in all manner of adversity and never gives up on their plight. Therefore, while looking forward to reconciliation in the country, Tutu does not dismiss the possibility of violence when he says that if peaceful means will not bring relief to Black South Africans, war might just be the way. There will be need for a violent solution--“the ghastly alternative.”³ Still, the church must exude hope among those who are tempted to become weary of fighting for peace and reconciliation.

¹Schreiter, 33, 34.

²Tutu, “The Processes of Reconciliation and the Demand of Obedience,” 7.

³Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 101.

Taking Practical Steps against the Government

The government should be confronted with legitimate demands.¹ This implies sending deputations to the authorities to stop removals of people or forced migrations. If this fails, the church must be there to witness and care. She must use all the non-violent means to stop, for instance, the demolition of people's houses.²

The legitimacy of such demands made upon the state stems from Tutu's conception of the proper function of the state: the latter is God's servant if it, like the church, serves its subjects and provides certain basic needs.³ It is sinful for a government not to be compassionate.⁴ Furthermore, it is proper for the church in South Africa to confront the government because the latter is as irreformable as was Hitler's Third Reich. She has every right to exert pressure on the government to change if this is still possible or to seek its overthrow when the government is deemed as being beyond transformation. The church's right to protest has a theological foundation. It is legitimate to practice civil disobedience, for Jesus Himself resisted Pilate by not answering him in a farcical trial (John 18), Tutu argues. Similarly, His apostles resisted the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem when the latter obstructed the preaching of the gospel (Acts 4 and 5).⁵

The church must also call on the government to lift banning orders on people or else have to face a massive campaign of "non-cooperation with the implementation of immoral,

¹Tutu, "The Processes of Reconciliation and the Demand of Obedience," 7.

²Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 100.

³Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 108, 110, 112.

⁴Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 151-152.

⁵*Ibid.*, 170.

unchristian and unjust laws."¹ In opposing apartheid, she is fighting against a blasphemous system. It is her religious duty to condemn the state's abuse of power, and it is conceivable that she might commend the government if it should ever act according to Christian principle. At the same time, she must condemn any "legislation which is abhorrent to the Christian conscience, and which represents an abrogation of the rule of law." She stands for the equitable administration of justice. She is an agent of justice, peace, love, and reconciliation and to engage the government in battle is to fight alongside Jesus Christ.²

In this work against government abuse, people should be loved, across the color-bar, as one's own siblings, no matter where they live. The reconciling community must be there at resettlement camps to supply blankets, and food and to address other needs. The church should provide a community spirit to help the distressed persons and help them to help others. The whole community should be involved. Both the urban and the rural churches must act in concert to forestall the breakdown of community. They must act as a body.³

¹Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 48.

²Ibid., 48, 50, 52.

³Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 101. The actions of the church outlined in this section remind one of what Snyder calls parabolic action. Parabolic action has as its goal the bringing to light of a better and truer way of approaching life. It is the use of parables in action form. It cannot tell the whole truth, nor can it lead to total change. But it is a stage toward the new. Beyond parabolic action Snyder describes at least two other stages, namely revolution and institutionalization. Those engaging in parabolic actions believe that they are called to faithfulness, not to success. They do not feel called upon to bring about God's glorious future, but to point to it. There are times when nothing more is possible and there are moments in the lives of both groups and individuals when parabolic actions have the power to impact in ways that bring about transformation. This approach emphasizes consistency between the personal lifestyle and the vision within the constraints of the present. With others it has the symbolic power of pointing the way toward the new and standing in judgment upon an alienating present. See Snyder, 112-114, 116-118.

Tutu shows no hesitation in exhorting the church to neutralize the effects of government violence. In this way she witnesses to a better way of living which is in keeping with God's will for the universe. He remains, however, definitely opposed to acting in line with what Snyder characterizes as the sectarian model.

According to Snyder, sects are groups of people who feel disinherited and consequently withdraw from their communities. They visualize a better future in a different place or time, but they have virtually given up on the present. For Tutu, this is like preaching a disembodied gospel as if Jesus were never incarnated, crucified, and resurrected. The church has a practical role to play in bringing about reconciliation where there is strife. She is an instrument of the kingdom of God set in the world to help in the realization of the reign of God. Beyond proclaiming personal salvation and carrying a recommitment to worship and patiently waiting on God, she is called to continue to educate people in the ways of peace and reconciliation, infusing hope in all, that, under God, the worst will give way to the bliss of the kingdom. She must stand with the brutalized and confront the government with legitimate demands, as well as commend it where it does well.

Renewal of Worship

To be able to sustain the church in her drive toward liberation, the hope that Tutu proposes must be grounded in a solidly Christian milieu and possess a religious ethos. The church exists primarily to worship God. If she is to realistically lead out in reconciliation in South Africa, she must first experience renewal in worship. Her resources are ultimately spiritual and are to be shared with the world. Christian strength comes from daily Eucharist,

prayer, mediation, and Bible study.¹ Several times Tutu refers to the essential nature of all four. He holds the Eucharist in the highest regard,² reminding one, once more, of William Temple's remark that the Eucharist is the culmination of Christian worship. For these Anglican churchmen, the communion symbolizes the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all humans. Each Christian is a loaf from the same dough with other Christians. In the Eucharist is where Christians find their unity in Christ and with one another in Him. There they kneel side by side in virtue of a common discipleship. All manner of rank and position disappears. "We being many, are one bread." The food we eat builds us up into His body, into one body so that as different limbs of one body we may be obedient to execute His purpose. The Lord's Table is not part of a mystery cult. It is the family meal where the children gather around the table to receive what the Father wants to give them. They become like Him, loving. The body and blood of Christ are human nature perfected in love by utmost sacrifice. If we enjoy fellowship with God we are thereby in fellowship with one another. If we are not in mutual fellowship among ourselves, we share no fellowship with God.³

Snyder warns, however, that the Lord's Supper functions in many churches as a magical unifier. Deep divisions are glossed over, bitter fights are arbitrarily covered up, and racial antagonisms excused in a pretense of unity. It is used as a placebo as long as people do not sit down and go through their alienations candidly and pay the price.⁴ Aware of this

¹Christians do not need to go to Marxist manifestos. All power is vested in the Bible (Tutu, *Church and Prophecy*, 22).

²See Tutu, "Liberation Theology in Africa," 168; idem, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 30; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 72-73; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 30-31; 118.

³Temple, *Personal Religion*, 49.

⁴Snyder, 52. In prayer we ask what we want, argues Snyder, hoping that only our sincerity, repetition, and the use of proper formulas will yield the desired outcome. We often

pitfall, Tutu has confronted many a proponent of apartheid without hiding behind the Lord's Supper.

He has also contended that through prayer the church is in touch with invincible power. She is an intercessory body where saints support each other with prayers, love, and caring concern.¹ Through this medium, the world is put in touch with God.² But prayer is not the Christian's only duty. Action too is required. Christian life is not *either* prayer *or* action. It requires *both and*. Christian activity is shot through with prayer, personal and intercessory. Action stems precisely from an encounter with God in the quiet moments of the Eucharist, prayer, and Bible study.³

Bible reading is part of our encounter with God, Tutu explains. The Bible is the most revolutionary force against evil and oppression.⁴ It makes the imperatives of the gospel clear. It was written for people in crisis situations.⁵ An encounter with Jesus takes the incarnation seriously. Jesus became human, flesh and blood because humanity matters to God.⁶ This is

do it without reference to God's will. Unity through Eucharist and answer to prayer are not the results of our successful manipulation of forms and rituals.

¹Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 156; idem, *Church and Prophecy*, 22; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 134.

²Tutu, *Church and Prophecy*, 11-14. Intercessory prayer is so efficient that when someone in California prays for another, things happen although that other person may be as far away as Cape Town.

³Ibid., 16.

⁴Tutu, "Barmen and Apartheid," 77; idem, *Church and Prophecy*, 13.

⁵Tutu, *Church and Prophecy*, 17.

⁶Ibid., 17. The incarnation is important to Tutu, for the human Jesus is the standard for Christians to emulate and to measure their humanity by, not such criteria as skin color and social rank.

not using religion as a form of escapism, skulking behind prayer, which is not authentic Christianity.¹ Worldly “busyness and activism” will not solve the problems.²

In other words, because she worships God, the church must take seriously the world for which God's Son died.³ True worship does not allow her to remain in spiritual ghettos. It sends her out against the devil and his cohorts, bringing reconciliation to people, among other things.⁴ On this basis, Tutu denies that he is a political peace negotiator.⁵ He finds himself constrained to be a peacemaker by the gospel of Jesus Christ.⁶

¹Tutu, “A Prisoner of Hope,” 40. This position is informed by the conviction that God created the world “very good” (Gen 1:31). Even after it was corrupted by sin He loved it (John 3:16). It remained His and He did not abandon it to sin. It is not unredeemably bad, and the things God created for human enjoyment must be received with thanksgiving (1 Tim 4:3, 5) (Coetsee, “The World of God—A Challenge to the Church,” 119).

The suffering of the world should not be accepted as a matter of course (John 10:10). Violence and hatred will not have the last word in our world (Isa 9:6). The powers of evil that seek to rule the world have no sway over us (Matt 28:18). There are no specially gifted people who should achieve God's purpose in some distant future (Joel 2:28-32). Liberation is not reserved only for the future (John 4:24) (Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 154).

²Tutu, “A Prisoner of Hope,” 40. Keeping busy is no solution to our alienation. It may provide us a momentary sense of accomplishment, but when the dust settles, we discover that things remain as before (Snyder, 51).

³Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 84. Cf. Roberts, 17.

⁴Tutu, “The Process of Reconciliation and the Demand of Obedience,” 6.

⁵He says of himself, “I stand in the mainline tradition. . . . My theological position derives from the Bible and from the teaching of the church” (Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 147).

⁶*Ibid.*, 134.

Summary

The task of this chapter has been to describe how Archbishop Tutu perceives the church's facilitative role in the work of reconciliation in a setting characterized by oppression, exploitation, hatred, and suspicion. His emphasis suggests a philosophy for the church: rather than consider the work of reconciliation an optional extra, to be tackled only as she feels so inclined, the church must regard her irenic task as essential to her very nature. Her first duty is to recognize that she is called by God to carry out the work of reconciliation.

Once aware of her cardinal task of reconciling the world to God, the church ought to set about her task in a Christian manner. This entails several activities which all are central to the business of restoring oneness to society. To begin with, the church needs to sensitize both the victims and the perpetrators of oppression to the reality of the suffering they have been a part of in their respective roles. The intention of this sensitization is to force either group to confront itself with the pain it has either suffered or caused, and to relate to the reaction of the opposite group, with the view to making amends, where possible, in order to pave the way for reconciliation.

Second, the church needs to always be aware of her role as the voice of the voiceless in society. With this awareness, she must address every appearance of injustice with a prophetic word. This implies that she should never be part of the government or become a secular movement. She must speak up against any injustice with a view to satisfying the demands of truth and justice. Guarding the interests of the poor and downtrodden of society ensures that the demands of justice will be met at every level, an important dimension of the Christian faith.

Finally, the church must practice the basics of the faith in order to maintain her focus as God's divine creation. These basics include prayer, the Lord's Table, Bible reading, and

worship. It is as she practices these that she senses God's present bidding for her and she perceives the most urgent needs of society today.

Several presuppositions form the bedrock of Archbishop Tutu's ecclesiology. To begin with, there is a God, Creator of heaven and earth. No attempt whatsoever is made to prove His existence. Tutu knows that He exists, as do South Africans who make up the majority of his target audience. This God may be known for He has revealed Himself. From this fundamental tenet Tutu concludes that the world we inhabit is destined to enjoy God's eternal *shalom* for which He created the universe. This is bound to happen since His plan cannot be thwarted. This is a position informed both by Christian faith and the African basic concept that the world was created by the One who created all people. It is from this point of view that our author acknowledges the purposiveness of the universe under God and the certainty of His intended goal for it. This faith is nurtured by a strong belief in the authority of the Scriptures and the conclusion therefrom that the omnipotent God will inevitably restore primordial peace to the cosmos. The ineluctability of this divinely conceived end has been guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, proof positive that the future is in God's hand.

The second fundamental and non-negotiable concept in Tutu's system is that ours is a moral universe. At the end, he holds, right will prevail over wrong. Tutu's faith in this divine calculus is amazingly strong. Through His whole ministry, he has stood unshaken in the conviction that right cannot fail, no matter what, a conviction based on faith in Jesus Christ. He cannot see how, being omnipotent and loving, God could allow suffering, pain, oppression, death, etc., to prevail *ad infinitum*. This victory of right over wrong precludes the possibility of any peaceful coexistence between the two. Before the consummation of God's kingdom, Christians must labor to uproot wrong, till right finally sits on the throne. His belief that peace cannot last in South Africa until justice prevails for all is patterned after this perception that

right and wrong cannot exist together. It is an all or nothing situation in which the winner takes all, and the winner in this duel between right and wrong is the former.

Finally, Tutu holds as fundamental the conviction that human beings are God's agents and have a decisive role to play in establishing right over wrong on earth. He does not expect God to bring the kingdom into the world without human participation. Human beings have been made in the image of God and therefore do not have to be hapless victims of their circumstances in this world. They can and should right wrongs in their world in order to bring into being the kingdom of God. They cannot merely pray for it. They must take practical steps to transform and transfigure their world until it conforms to the standards of the kingdom of God on earth.

Although humans may do their part to fulfill this mandate as individuals or in social groups, God has appointed the church to do this work corporately. Reconciliation can be facilitated by many individuals and social structures, but it is, in the last resort, the work of the church. This strong emphasis on the social engagement of the church may well be the product of two influences that have contributed in shaping Tutu's experience. First, as an Anglican, he has been exposed to the conviction that the distance between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of human beings should not be an unbridgeable gap. As an integral part of a Christian monarchy, the Anglican Church has never been apart from the influences of the politics of England. The second influence was the Black Consciousness Movement. Admitting to the influence of the Black Consciousness Movement, Tutu could hardly espouse a system of belief that denies citizens their right to participate in shaping their future. Black Consciousness was created to help people assert themselves and to bring their demands to the fore.

CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction and Thesis

The investigation of Archbishop Tutu's views of the church as God's agent of reconciliation set forth in the preceding chapters has provided sufficient basis for an evaluation of his conceptualization. The inquiry has paved the way for a clearer understanding of the assumptions at the foundation of his view on the church in this regard and on his methodology. This chapter is an effort to set forth and evaluate what I regard the strengths of Tutu's fundamental concept of the church and his understanding of this ecclesiastical body as an agent of reconciliation, her functional role in the world. I shall first briefly outline the biblical basis of Tutu's theological thought, then proceed to evaluate his view as to its inner consistency with regard to the use of the Bible, which is central to Tutu's stated methodological approach. The thesis of this dissertation is that while Tutu's theology has been the basis for powerful change in South Africa, it could have been more comprehensive and could have paid closer attention to the biblical text.

Personal Tribute

The Clarity of Tutu's Thought

Tutu deserves credit for writing and speaking communicatively. Whether he addresses the public at a funeral or university students in the halls of learning, the simplest person among his addressees has little difficulty understanding what Tutu presents. He consistently shows

clarity and smoothness of style that has impressed many and yet challenges the most sophisticated with its profundity.

Tutu's Personal Courage

Tutu has been particularly effective in South Africa. Though not a pacifist as such, he holds that violence can and must be avoided until all other alternatives to resolve conflicts have been exhausted.¹ This moderate stance differs significantly from that adopted by academicians, such as Charles Villa-Vicencio, who have claimed that violence may have been useful in South Africa, insisting that the church, which has not hesitated to condone apartheid in the past, may at last redeem herself by siding with the oppressed whom she has failed to hitherto.²

The archbishop's work has had few detractors among disinterested parties in and outside South Africa. Most people who have sought to understand what he stands for have appreciated his contribution. Most of those who have denounced his strategy had vested interests. By and large, he has received positive evaluative opinion from those scholars who have puzzled over the political embroglio of apartheid in South Africa.

The Usefulness of Tutu's Theology

Not only is Tutu a man of the Bible but his well-thought-out approach has had practical usefulness. He asked the oppressed people of South Africa to refrain from the use of force and to try as much as possible to resist apartheid firmly and peacefully. It would be difficult to deny that this approach saved thousands of lives even in the most volatile mid-1980s. Thousands died, but many more would have lost their lives if it had not been for Tutu's

¹See p. 161.

²Charles Villa-Vicencio, "Right-Wing Religion: Have the Chickens Come Home to Roost?" *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 69 (1989): 7-8.

unrelenting call for moderation on the part of both the oppressors and the oppressed. It is perhaps due to his ability to stand against prevailing opinion and to do what he perceives to be right according to Holy Writ that Archbishop Tutu has defused many potentially explosive situations on the rest of the continent of Africa in the past few years.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is in the process of concluding its findings. The basic idea of the Commission was none other than Tutu's and it brought heartfelt relief to many South Africans who at last sensed the qualified relief of knowing the circumstances under which the relatives they lost actually perished. Besides, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission gave opportunity for some people to express their hurts with the past system of government, and others to confess the wrongs they did. Burdens of guilt have been rolled away from many a shoulder.

Evaluation of Tutu's Theology of the Church

Creational Foundations of Ecclesiology

Tutu quite efficiently utilizes the narrative approach to argue that since God created a harmony-filled universe of *shalom*, He is working throughout history to bring back the primordial oneness that was present at creation. God has already decisively guaranteed the unity of all creation in the eschaton through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is a plan to history which moves from creation at the beginning to consummation in the eschaton, because God, the Creator of the universe, wants to reconcile it to Himself. He has chosen the church to effect this reconciliation.

Based on his interpretation of Gen 1 and 2, Tutu sees the universe as the work of God's creation. God is the ground of the existence of all that is in the cosmos. On the basis of these creation stories, he holds that the world was created "very good" (Gen 1:31), but was tarnished

by the entrance of sin through Adam and Eve (Gen 3). This made it impossible for it to relate to Him as He had originally intended. He created the world in order to relate to it as a fellow interlocutor. He still has that relationship in mind and has worked throughout history to restore it to its intended state. His plan for restoration will be fulfilled and He has engaged human beings to participate in the work of returning the world to its intended purpose. There are special reasons why God still wants to be associated with human beings, even though it is they who rebelled against Him.¹

God shows this continued interest in relating to and working with the world when He chooses Israel to be His nation on earth in order to reach other peoples. To show His interest in this people, He calls them out of Egyptian bondage and makes them a nation, a theme recounted in the Exodus account in the Old Testament.²

The Exodus Motif as a Foundation for Ecclesiology

The theme of the centrality of the exodus account to the Old Testament has been highlighted by various theologians. It gained currency in liberation theology, in part, via Jürgen Moltmann's *Theology of Hope*.³ Following Moltmann, Gustavo Gutierrez describes the exodus event as the "heart of the Old Testament,"⁴ the beginning of a just and fraternal society, the suppression of disorder and the creation of order.⁵ James Cone calls the exodus narrative the

¹Tutu, *On Trial*, 12.

²See pp. 65-66 above.

³Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967).

⁴Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973), 157.

⁵*Ibid.*, 157.

most significant act of divine revelation in the Old Testament.¹ Allan Boesak calls the exodus the act of liberation *par excellence*, the starting point of liberation theology. For him, it allows the gospel to be preached from the perspective of liberation.² Likewise, Tutu reasons that if God was interested in the political freedom of the Jews to the point of liberating them from Pharaoh's oppression, human freedom must be fundamental to any relationship between Himself and anyone who is dearly related to Him.³ Nor does Tutu see the biblical emphasis on the importance of human liberation in the exodus theme alone. The prophets pick up the theme and develop it.

Prophetic Religion Upholds Social Justice

Time and again, the message of the Old Testament prophets builds upon the exodus event of liberation. The prophets repeatedly reminded Israel to return to the God who had set them free from Egyptian bondage. A return to God often implied doing acts of justice for the benefit of the poor and oppressed in that God had been gracious to Israel in taking it out of slavery. He could not countenance the suffering of the oppressed, especially in the persons of the widow, orphan, and alien.⁴ This did not escape Tutu's attention. Thus he refers to Isa 1:10-17 and 58:1-6 to support his argument that a religion that does not offer a critique of the sociopolitical and economic trends in one's environment is unprophetic and unchristian. In both these passages the prophet addresses such phenomena in Judah as formal religion, the

¹James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), 74.

²Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence*, 17-18.

³Tutu, "God Intervening in Human Affairs," 113-114; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 170.

⁴See Isa 1:23; 3:14; 32:7; Mic 2:1f; 3:1-4; Jer 7:6; 22:3; 18:21; 49:11; 21:5.

oppression of the poor, and callousness toward and insensitivity to social injustice; he then proceeds to outline a solution that would bring his audience back to lasting favor with God, who cares for the disadvantaged.¹

These Isaianic texts lend strong support to Archbishop Tutu's thesis that religion is abominable unless it has both a vertical and a horizontal dimension. This message had immediate relevancy for the situation in South Africa where some Christian people needed to be convinced of the need to decry political abuses which they thought they had no need to address, due to the common belief that politics and religion do not mix. Tutu argues that close attention needs to be paid to Isaiah's message, because not to heed it would impoverish Christian faith and undermine both its credibility and veracity. The prophets functioned as a bridge between the exodus account and the Gospels' teaching of Jesus, who came to give final liberation to humanity.²

Jesus and Ecclesiastical Praxis

His Inaugural Address (Luke 4:16-31)

For Tutu, the ministry of Jesus follows naturally that of the Hebrew prophets. Like them, He is committed to the total welfare of the people He serves. It is no wonder that in His sermon at Nazareth, Jesus should draw His statement of mission from one of the prophets, Isaiah.³

¹Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 80-81; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 115-116. For similar views on these texts, see C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentaries on the Old Testament: Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1960), 89-97; cf. G. W. Gorgan, "Isaiah," *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), 30; G. Rowlinson, "Isaiah," *The Pulpit Commentary*, ed. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Excell (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 5.

²See pp. 69 and 80 above.

³Tutu, "Church and Nation," 8; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 150-151.

Along with other scholars Tutu holds the view that Luke 4:16-21 is the programmatic statement of Jesus' mission on earth. According to this view, Luke used the event recounted in the passage as a bold introductory statement on the inauguration of Jesus' mission. On close examination, Jesus' words in the passage are quoted from Isa 61:1-3 and 58:6.¹

The emphasis of Jesus' inaugural address is that His presence is ordained by the Holy Spirit to bring physical and emotional healing and comfort to His audience, a mission that corresponds to that of the ancient prophets. Tutu used this text to accent the view that it was part of the role of the church to seek political and social freedom because Jesus Himself did no less. The mission of Jesus also entails living at peace with all those He has liberated.²

Jesus Wills Church Unity

On this theme of peace, Tutu cites John 12:32 as Jesus' prediction that after His death His followers would be drawn closer to each other. Reflecting upon the visit by the Greek inquirers, Jesus declares to His disciples that when He is lifted up, all people will be drawn to Him. Tutu understands the verb translated "lifted up"—the aorist of *hypsōō* to signify that when the Son of Man would die, all people would be drawn to each other, effecting peace among them that approached the *shalom* which existed before sin.³

Tutu also explains Jesus' work of reconciliation by reference to some of Paul's arguments on the salvific work of Christ. These constitute part of the grounding for the church

¹Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 169-170.

²See pp. 77 and 80 above.

³Tutu, *On Trial*, 14; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 163; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 62. John uses *hypsōō* exclusively to refer to Jesus' death (3:14; 8:28; 12:32-34), while elsewhere in the New Testament it means to "exalt." In the usage here, Jesus has in mind His being raised on the cross as the precondition of His exalted Messiahship (Merrill Chapin Tenney, *John: The Gospel of Belief: An Analytic Study of the Text* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948], 131). See pp. 89-90 and 125 above.

as an agent of God's work of at-one-ment.

The Soteriological Grounds for the Church's Work of Reconciliation

Jesus did not only pray for the unity of the church. He laid down His life to effect reconciliation between humanity and God. The Gospels construe His death as effecting the remission of sin, thus bringing forgiveness to those estranged from God. Of all the New Testament passages dealing with reconciliation, Tutu uses 2 Cor 5:18-20 and Eph 2:16 to discuss what he sees as the foundation of interhuman reconciliation, regardless of what divisive factors could be used to keep human beings apart.

For Tutu, 2 Cor 5:10-21 means that God has brought humanity into a new status, freely, unto freedom. Human beings are restored to the relationship with God for which they were created. This is reconciliation on the vertical axis. Where this relationship exists, there must also be horizontal reconciliation.¹

Interhuman at-one-ment, according to which the church is called to order her ministry, is portrayed in Eph 2:11-22. Here the members of the church are called to oneness in Jesus Christ. This oneness drives them to regard each other firmly as belonging to one family, devoid of all petty differences, for the force that cements them together is stronger than any earthly force. All who believe in Jesus are not only to help in the destruction of the wall by fighting apartheid, but, consequently also by living in peace with each other; they are exhorted to appropriate to themselves the reconciliation that God has wrought.²

While Eph 2:11-22 clearly emphasizes the unity that Jesus' death has brought to those who believe in Him, the 2 Cor 5 statement builds a strong case for the church to be involved in

¹See pp. 89 and 125 above.

²Tutu, *On Trial*, 16; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 61, 62.

proclaiming human reconciliation to which God, brought at-one-ment between a rebellious race and Himself.

Clearly, for Tutu, justice for all is important to all divine-human dealings. There can be no proper interhuman relationship that excludes this ideal because God prizes fair dealings among His people. It is not surprising that equity plays such an important role in Tutu's view of the final judgment, as well.¹

The Eschaton and Social Justice (Matt 25:31-46)

Jesus' teaching about the final judgment (Matt 25:31-46) is regarded by many as part of His answer to the question His disciples asked as to when the kingdom of God would come to the world (24:3). He does not answer their question directly. His reply suggests that, for Him, the time of His return is not as important as His disciples' ethical readiness for it.² The teaching about the judgment "offers the theme of vigilance its ethical concretion."³ In other words, Jesus "does not resolve the problem of waiting for the parousia by an exercise in the decoding of apocalyptic signs; He calls the church to the requirement of love."⁴

This passage is important to Tutu's theology. It states that on the day of judgment nobody is going to ask those standing before the eschatological tribunal whether they fasted or prayed, went to church, or practiced any of the ritual activities associated with worship. The

¹See pp. 87-88 and 145-147.

²Donald Hagner, *Matthew*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33b (Waco, TX: Word Publishers, 1995), 741.

³Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1990), 911-912.

⁴Daniel Marguerat, *Le Jugement dans l'Évangile de Matthieu* (Genève: Editions Labor and Fides, 1981), 501-502.

question will be what people did to help the least of Jesus' brothers and sisters.¹

This reading of the text has provided a necessary corrective to brands of Christian thought which used to consider heaven-worthiness mainly in terms of abstaining from crimes and vices such as murder, adultery, lying, blasphemy, idolatry, bad temper, etc. It makes clear that people will be excluded from Jesus' kingdom because of their omission of justice, among other causes. It helps the reader to focus on human beings, thus adding a horizontal dimension to religion which can too easily be an essentially vertical and privatized affair.

Summary

The biblical statements presented briefly in these pages provide a foundation for Tutu's argument for the need of the church to involve herself in social issues. Since God created the world for Himself (Gen 1 and 2), has shown continued concern for it in all time (Exodus account and the prophets), has redeemed it in Jesus Christ (the Gospels and Paul's writings), and will even judge the church on the basis of how she treats the world, she needs to watch her attitude toward the cosmos. She must show due interest in it as God's agent of reconciliation.

¹Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 80-81. Yet considering the passage, it is far from settled in New Testament scholarship whether the judgment portrayed in the pericope involves even Christians at all, or whether the main emphasis of the passage is either the glory of Jesus or the details of the judgment. Be that as it may, Tutu's position is shared by many other scholars. Filson attributes these words of Jesus to His sympathy and companionship with the suffering and needy. To help them is to serve Him since they are His siblings (Floyd Vivian Filson, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew* [London: A. & C. Black, 1960], 268). Bruner argues that the works of mercy enjoined in this discourse have to do with the lowest strata of Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. Jesus is calling for the consideration of those who lack social worth in the eyes of others (Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew, A Commentary* [Dallas: Word Publishers, 1987-90], 927, 928). Likewise, Agbanou understands Jesus as blessing people involved in social, economic, visitation, and other ministries whom other people have seen only as motivated by political considerations (Victor Kossi Agbanou, *Le discours eschatologique de Matthieu 24-25: tradition et rédaction* [Paris: Lecoffre, 1983], 202).

Evaluation of Tutu's Concept of the Church as an Agent of Reconciliation

Tutu shows strengths from two major vantage points. First, there are personal qualities that he brings to his work which make it persuasive. Second, the work itself is a craftsmanship that deserves special attention. This evaluation of the positive elements of his theology falls into personal and theological categories.

The High View of the Bible in Tutu's Thought

The reason why Tutu seems so clear to simple people may be because he reads the Bible as they do. He does not mystify it or treat it as an esoteric document for an initiated few. His treatment of the Bible tends to show that all that it says has a historical foundation and a functional value for the present time in South Africa.

Yet Tutu has not gone uncriticized for using the Scriptures as implicitly as he does. Nor was he alone to be thus opposed. Itumeleng Mosala criticizes Allan Boesak for holding that the message of liberation is the message of the age-old gospel, "liberated from the deadly hold of the mighty and powerful and made relevant to the situation of the oppressed and the poor."¹ Dr. Mosala's criticism of Boesak applies to Tutu who likewise attempts to apply the gospel message to the present situation in South Africa.² Mosala argues that liberation theology should be done without reference to the Bible. For him the social, cultural, political, and economic world of the Black working class and peasantry constitutes the only valid hermeneutical point of departure for Black theology. This theological starting point is not an option for Archbishop Tutu, who, unlike Dr. Mosala, is a practical theologian who ministers to

¹Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence*, 10; cf. Itumeleng J. Mosala, "The Use of the Bible in Black Theology," in *The Unquestionable Right to Be Free*, 179.

²For a comparison of Boesak and Tutu's liberation theologies, see Obijole, 203.

parishioners on a regular basis. Mosala, as an academic theologian, may be able to live with unresolved theological questions almost indefinitely, but Tutu feels a need to answer existential questions the Church of the Province of South Africa faces. Where there may be defects in Archbishop Tutu's theology, these do not arise from a low view of Scripture. He does not downplay the witness and normativity of the Bible. He conscientiously tries to listen to it, and attributes his whole *praxis* to the reading of the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

The Interpretation of the Exodus

With other liberation theologians, Tutu learns from the exodus account that history is God's arena of activity in the world. It is the place where God presents Himself. Israel's departure from Egypt was one salvific event in the tapestry of history which comprehends both secular and sacred history. It is on the basis of this unity of history that Tutu sees the church's mandate as more than a specialized spiritual one outside the temporal, mundane plane.¹ Since all history is one, the world cannot be perceived as a vale of soul-shaping in which the faithful prepare themselves for translation to heaven. All humans are under obligation to make this world all that it can be. That is where their salvation lies. Salvation is dependent on service to humankind in the context of this world.²

The Influence of Liberation Theology

In the eyes of liberation theologians, the exodus is the political act *par excellence* of the Old Testament. In leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, Moses was an authentic politician, leading his people to a better society than they knew hitherto. The exodus informs

¹Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 79; idem, *The Rainbow People of God*, 78.

²Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 116; cf. Gutierrez, 151.

and inspires current struggles. In liberating Israel, God revealed Himself as the God of the oppressed. He also intended to banish all slavery as Mosaic religion shows in its emphasis on human dignity. Israel's liberation was the result of a violent class struggle between the powerful Egyptians and the feeble Israelites. It was the legitimate continuation of the work of creation, a liberation which humans are invited to carry on throughout the world. It was the interaction between God and human beings who exercised their resourcefulness in bringing their freedom to pass. Tutu shares in this conviction.¹

Economic, social, and political liberation is part of the process of emancipating people so that they may become fulfilled. Since the gospel as such does not generally transform social reality, human struggle against alienation is essential to alter the dismal reality.

The motivation for God's assistance of Israel was His justice. Liberation theology has awakened theological consciousness to this and other emphases that often have been sadly neglected by most traditional theologies. All Christians need to gratefully acknowledge their debt to liberation theologians for pointing out the human side of the exodus story, among others. In Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, Israel experienced God as a Liberator.² The exodus event was an act of justice, in which the oppressed were freed and the oppressor punished.³ Throughout the exodus account and the process of the exodus, God showed Himself a just Liberator of the oppressed and punished of the oppressor. It is believed that He continues to do so in subsequent history working in the interests of the disenfranchised,

¹Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, 55-57.

²Gerhard E. Sauter, "'Exodus' and 'Liberation' as Theological Metaphors: A Critical Case-Study of the Use of Allegory and Misunderstood Analogies in Ethics," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 34 (1981): 493.

³Atilio Rene Dupertuis, "Liberation theology's Use of the Exodus as a Soteriological Model" (Ph.D. dissertation Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1982), 231.

destitute, disabled, widowed, orphaned, and those dispossessed of land. This is a theology that Tutu has championed in South Africa.

The Relevancy of the Church to the World

Tutu's theology of the church places her in the midst of human need as the agent of reconciliation between alienated races. It is a rejection of the privatization of the biblical message which has often tended to make Christianity irrelevant when in reality people most needed its witness. Tutu's ecclesiology has clearly underlined that those who are saved by grace have no right to live by race. But rather than present this as a message for private consideration, he has proclaimed it from the rooftops so that even the public sphere is reminded that it cannot practice racism with impunity, or fail to expect a reaction from the church. According to the Bible, our author has preached, racism and oppression are sinful because they are set at odds with God's plan for human happiness. They must be fought publicly. Christians, he has averred, must declare their stand against the dehumanization of the underclass, no matter what.

Tutu holds that the church's anticipation of a better world, to be realized in the eschaton, empowers her to work towards changing today's social structures so that they approximate as much as possible the eschatological goal. In other words, eschatological consciousness is no substitute for social responsibility in the present.

Theological Balance

Given the particularity of the situation with which Tutu was faced in South Africa, he could have overlooked the world church in order to help the oppressed of South Africa create meaning out of their disordered lives in their country. But as his fame grew at home, he became better known in other parts of the world. This was not due so much to his global

travels as it was to his emphasis on worthy and weighty theological themes, such as reconciliation, church unity, and the social aspects of the gospel, which forced many to recognize, among other things, the ecumenical value of his work both in South Africa and outside.

Some Reservations

There is no question but that Archbishop Tutu's ecclesiology has been in the making for a long time, and, consequently, it has been well reasoned out and articulated. However, some questions leap at his admiring reader as he or she reviews this most remarkable theological structure.

One may, for instance, wonder if Archbishop Tutu's argument might have been more persuasive if he had avoided such pitfalls as seeking to justify his involvement in the liberation movement on the basis of biblical instances without giving sufficient weight to the spirit of post-biblical times leaving insufficiently defined the concept of the kingdom of God in his system, and associating liberation with election. To explicate this is my concern in the following pages.

Using the Bible to Legitimate the Liberation Movement

There are ideas that Christians embrace and live by although one may not find their origin in the Scriptures. While such concepts might not be called biblical, they may still stand the scrutiny of a Christian critique. Thus, many Christians subscribe to egalitarian democratic principles though it might be difficult to trace these ideals back, as such, to the Bible. Such views have been developed through sociological progress and human thought processes without explicit support from the Scriptures.

As Allister Sparks has observed, morality develops in spasms by a chemistry which reaches a consensus on some major moral issue. Slavery, for instance, was practiced for

millennia and no religion or philosophy denounced it either comprehensively or systematically. Slaves were property to be disposed of as their masters wished. Neither Jesus nor Muhammad, Augustine nor Aquinas, Luther nor Calvin denounced it. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, however, moral concern on the issue began to rise in Europe. Slave owners used every biblical argument they could adduce to defend it. But the time for slavery was over. Though in many societies it was replaced by a combination of segregation and exploitation, slavery itself was condemned as morally reprehensible, and anyone who upheld it was considered reprobate.¹ Similar conscientization took place with regard to child labor in the nineteenth century and the political liberation of the former European colonies, especially after World War II. Christians played some part in securing the rights of these oppressed groups, but they may barely claim exclusive credit. Many other groups did their part based on their non-biblically construed value for humanity.

In appealing to the Bible against the apartheid system, does Tutu force biblical support by approaching this from a biblical perspective? The answer to this question is both yes and no. He uses instances in the Old and New Testaments to support his argument.² He cites events in Jesus' and the apostles' lives to support his views on civil disobedience, which South Africa seems to owe more to Mahatma Gandhi than to Christ. His pleading might have

¹Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa*, 185-186.

²Tutu argues that the liberation of the Israelites as a royal priesthood was a political event, showing consistency between religion and socio-praxis. While it is true that there are socio-practical implications to it, the liberation of Israel says more to the effect that God kept His promises to Abraham and His progeny than prove a political point (*Hope and Suffering*, 80-81). Further, he uses Jesus' silence before Pilate as support for civil disobedience (*The Rainbow People of God*, 170, 171). It seems plausible enough that Jesus kept quiet because He knew His reply would make no difference to a Pilate who was not about to be convinced by any answer. It does not seem persuasive that we can argue that we should build our views of civil disobedience on that act of silence.

benefitted by appealing to principles that sustain his argumentation rather than by relying merely on instances. The method of proof by instantiation rather than arguing from principle leaves questions lingering with reference to the theology of liberation and its relationship to the Bible. One could ask of Tutu as of most liberation theologians: How foundational is the use of the Bible to liberation theology? Is it used as legitimation for a cause which could succeed as well if the right to liberation alone were cited as the reason for seeking the freedom of the oppressed? While this may not be *eisegesis*, it is likely to strike one as an over-accommodation to ideas that hold out promise to bring freedom, peace, and reconciliation to South Africa at the time of Tutu's writings.

Similar questions arise with reference to the usage of the exodus motif. The exodus was primarily intended to demonstrate God's uniqueness. The Book of Exodus is concerned with both human need and God's glory. Both the Egyptians and the Israelites were supposed to come to the recognition that Yahweh was above all deities and that His name was glorious. The event was evidence of His divine judgment against the gods of the Egyptians.¹ Israel also needed to turn to God and see Him in His glory (Exod 8:22; 10:2).

Finally, the purpose of the exodus entailed bringing Israel to a renewal of the covenant at Sinai. Its liberation was going to be successful only insofar as it led the nation to serve God (Exod 4:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3).² Understanding this aspect of the purpose of the exodus

¹Dupertuis, 256-257; Bernard Ramm, "The Theology of the Book of Exodus: A Reflection on Exodus 12:12," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 20 (1977): 59-68; Lyle Eslinger, "Freedom or Knowledge? Perspective and Purpose in the Exodus Narrative (Exodus 1-15)," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 52 (1991): 54-55.

²Deryck Sheriffs, "Moving on with God: Key Motifs in Exodus 13-20," *Themelios* 15 (1990): 54.

serves to highlight the significance of Exod 19:2-4.¹ Israel was God's possession, His holy "nation," dedicated to His service, a priestly commonwealth whose life together was to be characterized by mutual love, demonstrated for them by the covenant-keeping God.²

J. A. Loader seems to correctly observe that the particularity of Tutu's situation may have tended to restrict the scope of his appeal to those who believe that theology's point of departure must be the Bible. Loader represents many when he argues that Tutu advocates social, political, and economic liberation without an in-depth use of the Bible, while craving its support. His foundation is "Scripture" and "context." Thus, he appropriates the exodus theme but has little use for the Book of Joshua, which completes the exodus narrative and is part of the Hexateuch, nor ever allows the Canaanites to become God's favorites. He oscillates between the authoritative backing of the Bible and the authority of the contextual experience from which he approaches the Bible. This is understandable, explains Loader, since to begin with, in the choice of the exodus motive as the liberative kerygma, the proof-texting function is already under way before the Bible starts speaking its word. This may have been done in other theologies, but Black theology is none the better for adopting the strategy.³

One could also ask if there is any significance to the fact that while Moses fled Pharaoh's oppression, the liberation theologians never advocate fleeing their oppressors? They

¹See Roy Lee Honeycutt, "Exodus," *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, 12 vols. (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press), 1:405; Umberto Cassuto, *Commentary of Exodus*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967), 223.

²Dupertuis, 265-266; George A. F. Knight, *Law and Grace* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 25. See Moshe Greenberg, "Hebrew *Sequllah*: Akkadian *Silkitu*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 71 (1951): 171-174; Jacob Martin Myers, *Grace and Torah* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 16; Walter Eichrodt, *The Theology of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 1:292.

³J. A. Loader, "Exodus, Liberation, Theology, and Theological Argument," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 59 (1987): 8-10.

would rather encourage people to fight the situation out. Is this because our world has become so small that people cannot be fleeing their oppressors to establish their independence. This may well be one reason why the exodus model is not always as suitable as some think when talking about liberation.

It seems that there is need for a model that allows for “liberation-with-reconciliation.” The stories of fraternal conflict in Genesis suggest such a model. In each of these the more dominant individual is in conflict with the less dominant one who wishes to earn the right to self-determination. In these accounts the weaker is finally allowed scope to wield more power while the power of the stronger is curbed to allow for peaceful coexistence in a climate of proximate equality.¹ Tutu’s theology of liberation might have gained from paying closer attention to the theme of equalization in Genesis.² Admittedly, his emphasis on creation is based on the creation accounts of Gen 1 and 2. Still, from the perspective of the Scriptures, a doctrine of reconciliation that seeks support from the Book of Exodus may not be as well grounded as one that explores such incidents as those recorded in Genesis.

The Meaning of *Aphêsis* in Luke 4:16-31

While it is probable that the full meaning of the mission of Jesus as announced in His inaugural statement in Luke 4 was that He had come to bring physical liberation from blindness and other forms of oppression, and symbolic freedom from mental servitude of every sort,

¹This motif seems to feature several times in Genesis. The first instance occurs outside Eden when Abel, not Cain, is blessed. Then follow the stories of Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Leah and Rachel, Joseph and his brothers, Manasseh and Ephraim. The solution to the conflict invariably comes when the younger and the weaker is awarded power to wield wider authority. Even after the the conflict has been resolved, it must be kept in memory lest people restore the first born to power again (Arthur Waskow, “Exodus Is Not Enough,” *Cross Currents* [1990]: 516-519).

²Ibid., 517, 518.

liberation theologians have tried to make it clear that Jesus came to effect physical freedom by liberating people from disease and the Roman yoke. There does seem to be room in His statement, however, for conceptual freedom as part of the focus of Jesus' announcement.

The Work of Reconciliation

After examining Tutu's treatment of 2 Cor 5 and Eph 2:11-22, there is little doubt that he is aware of the specific emphasis of each text in its respective context. Yet due to his burden for interracial reconciliation and harmony in South Africa, he broadens the thrust of both statements to address his concern. While he is clear about the need to be reconciled to God, the archbishop turns the Pauline call into a plea for cosmic unity, which tangentially caters to his concern for oneness of the alienated races in South Africa. The focus of Eph 2:11-22 is expanded to promote interracial unity in society at large rather than within the context of the church, which Paul primarily has in mind. This tendency on Tutu's part can be explained by the functional emphasis he lends to his theology. Understandably, to him, theology is useful only as it solves the problem at hand.¹

As far as Tutu is concerned, the presence of racial prejudice, discrimination, and segregation is evidence that the faith of his fellow believers is not yet fully formed. The basic problem is racism and the oppression it brings about. As a result of his sharp focus on human imperfectibility and peoples' need for forgiveness, the archbishop also tends to downplay the cost of this sinfulness. While he clearly sketches the damage caused by apartheid, the oppressed seem to bear only the responsibilities of forgiving the oppressors, and thinking positively of themselves. Generally, they receive few words of reprimand from the archbishop. Reference is made to them almost exclusively as the beneficiaries of God's beneficence and the

¹Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 147-148; idem, *Hope and Suffering*, 163, 166.

kindness of those who appreciate the place of social justice as an integral part of the gospel, and as those who should be encouraged to stand up for their *rights*.

The Final Judgment

The exclusive force that Tutu gives to the text of Matt 25:31-46 suits his application of it to his Black theology. For him, the statement means that the final judgment of the world will concern itself only with how people have related to those in need in the world they shared. Yet it remains possible that in spite of strengths involved with this comprehension of the pericope, one might neglect to call people to faith. With particular reference to his interpretation of this parable, Tutu tends to soft-pedal the non-negotiability of the gospel. He is not clearly heard to say that, to begin with, salvation comes through faith in Jesus, as he would be wont to make clear.

His treatment of this passage may well justify the caution: "Liberation theology needs christocentric voices, evangelical depth, and a little humility and self-criticism; but christocentric evangelical Christianity needs precisely the Christ's poor-centeredness."¹

Preferential Option for the Poor

There seems to be a uniform approach to the scriptural texts we considered. While Tutu clearly makes a compelling point with each of them, he tends to make an exclusive claim. Might it not be more rewarding to view the texts from a more inclusive vantage point? He seems less persuasive by excluding what he disallows than by declaring what he states. Presenting both sides of the argument in each case would tend to strengthen it by lending it balance.

¹Bruner, 929.

The Uniqueness of Black Theology

According to Tutu's model, the church is not the only prophetic voice that speaks for human liberation. Black theology and black journalism are prophetic as well. But can Black theology's kind of prophetic theology foster unity and reconciliation? The question seems relevant since Tutu's theology of the church seeks to unite the people of South Africa. Yet it carries a disjunctive tone when it is termed a Black theology of liberation, and seems to threaten its very goal. Thus, its deliberate distancing from White theology surfaced in 1977 when Tutu blankly told a White audience that he would beg no White person's permission to do Black theology because he does so for Black people.¹ In spite of all its disclaimers, how distinct is Black theology from White theology?

T. Howland Sanks argues that "no theology and no social context is so unique, so particular, that it has nothing in common with any other theology or any other experience of the Christian community through the ages."² This rings true for Tutu's theology in relation to earlier theologies. More than a century ago, Albrecht Ritschl, who saw theology as a combination of "spiritual freedom and dominion over the world as well as labor for the kingdom of God,"³ called Christians to conduct their lives in the best human interest.⁴ He held that Christian perfection could only be achieved in obedience to a worldly vocation—the

¹Tutu, "God Intervening in Human Affairs," 115.

²T. Howland Sanks, "Liberation Theology and the Social Gospel: Variation on a Theme," *Theological Studies* 41 (1980): 668.

³Albrecht Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation: The Positive Development of the Doctrine*, trans H. R. Macintosh and A. B. Macaulay, Clifton, NJ: Reference Book Publishers, 1966), 1:168.

⁴*Ibid.*, 1:184.

expression of the fact that Christianity is not world-denying but world-fulfilling and world-affirming. The faith leads to reconciliation between God and the world, and human beings among themselves.¹

Ritschl's views came to the United States via the work of Walter Rauschenbusch who expressed his debt to Schleiermacher, Rothe, Herman, Troeltsch, and Ritschl in Germany, and to F. D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley in Great Britain.² Tutu probably shares these views due to the influence of Martin Luther King, Jr., who read and admired Rauschenbusch,³ or it may have come from Tutu's Anglican connection with such leaders as Maurice, Kingsley, and William Temple, the last of whom, we noticed, he refers to frequently.

At least one clear difference exists between the social gospel and liberation theologies, a difference which is relevant to this discussion. While the former would have been open to all who were interested in the uplifting of the disadvantaged, the latter harbors ethnic overtones. Despite all protestations to the contrary, a Caucasian theologian who does Black theology has a threshold to cross before gaining full acceptance as a bona fide theologian of liberation. The ethnic hurdle recalls South Africa's racial past which liberation theologians are trying to lay to rest.

For this reason the concept of Black theology could easily degenerate to a color-coded theology, which, in light of what Tutu's efforts are fighting, is rather self-defeating. This theology speaks too easily of the merits of Black theology and seems to deny the possibility of

¹Ibid., 3:12ff.

²Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York: Abingdon, 1917), 27-29.

³See John Ansbro, *Martin Luther King: The Making of a Mind* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1967), 91.

such benefits where White theology is concerned. In other words, it tends to be partisan.

A Proclivity to Partisanism

British imperialism, Afrikaner nationalism, and the Black South African liberation movement have all declared God to be “our” God. With Him on their respective sides, victory was certain and each of the groups was assured that it would build South Africa’s future.¹

Rhodes based his actions on a 50 percent chance that there was a God. He believed that the chief purpose of human existence was to achieve the end proposed by God. As far as he was concerned, God was trying to produce a type of humanity most fitted to bring peace, liberty, and justice to the world, and to make that type dominant. In his view, only one race approached God’s ideal type: his own Anglo-Saxon race. God’s purpose was to make the Anglo-Saxon race predominant so as to bring nearer the reign of justice, liberty, and peace.²

The Afrikaners showed deeper convictions about the existence of God, but their God was no less of a domesticated deity. They appropriated the Book of Exodus anew through cultic enactment of the Great Trek on its centenary in 1938. The community saw itself as the chosen people whose election was sealed on December 16, 1836, the Day of the Covenant, when the Zulu were vanquished at Ncome River.³ In 1954, in a letter to John E. Piersma, D. F. Malan, the first apartheid Prime Minister of South Africa, indicated that he regarded it as providential that the Afrikaner, the most zealously evangelistic and most profoundly religious people of Europe, should be placed among the heathen of Africa. He perceived Dutch

¹de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 201-201; cf. Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa*, 278.

²Basil Williams, *Cecil Rhodes* (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1968), 50; cf. Felix Gross, *Rhodes of Africa* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957), 61-63.

³Sheriffs, 49.

interaction with the Africans of Southern Africa as a blessing God intended for these disadvantaged Black peoples since they would be brought to light through the interface.¹

At least one thing the Dutch and the Blacks have held in common is their chosenness, instantiated through the use of the exodus account. They are both the people of God, moving on with Him to receive the promise of freedom and *shalom*. Black theologians also see themselves and the people they lead as the prophetic people of God to lead South Africa to freedom. God is on their side, and to be opposed to them is coterminous with being at variance with Him.

So far, history has for at least a while validated all these claims for God siding with the respective claimants. For a few short years, the British ruled throughout South Africa under Lord Alfred Milner. Next, the Dutch ruled the whole country for eighty years. Today, Black leaders, who enjoyed the support of the Black theologians during the years of the anti-apartheid struggle, have a dominant part in the majority government. It would be questionable to many whether God really endorsed the rule of the British in South Africa with its racism and oppression that dehumanized both Africans and Dutch. Likewise, it has been argued that the whole rule of the Dutch, from 1910 to 1990, was bitter to the Blacks, and that it could not have come from divine providence. The story of a Black-dominated majority rule has yet to be told. So far it is hoped that since the approach of the new government is democratic, non-racial, and seeks to protect the rights of all South Africans, it will differ significantly from the two earlier epochs in that part of the world.

The ambiguity associated with identifying civil rule with God's will has been

¹D. F. Malan, *Apartheid: South Africa's Answer to a Major Problem* (Pretoria: State Information Office, 1954), quoted in David Mermelstein, ed., *The Anti-Apartheid Reader: The Struggle Against White Racist Rule in South Africa* (New York: Grove Press, 1987), 95-97.

underlined by several South African theologians. Sheriffs asserts that Israel was God's people due to the covenant, not vice versa. National identity and covenant were never equated.¹ Bosch argues that nowhere in the Old and New Testaments is God's liberation linked to a people as an ethnic unit.²

Conclusion and Further Considerations

Liberation for Coexistence: A Complementary Proposal

Creation, redemption, and eschatology loom large in Tutu's theology. For this reason, it seems appropriate to wonder why a theme such as Sabbath rest, which commemorates the first two motifs and prefigures the last, has not been given some attention in Tutu's ecclesiology. The OT Scriptures provide two archetypes of liberation: the Sabbath and the exodus. The latter speaks to the external—efficacious and operative. The former points to inner liberty. The two are indivisible. Freedom from oppression and quietude before God go hand in hand.³ The concept of the Sabbath rest—*menuhah*—stands for happiness, stillness, peace, and harmony. It surfaces in the Old Testament to describe both the Sabbath rest experience and the national aspiration for a peaceful life in the promised land (Deut 12:9; 25:15; Isa 14:3), where the sovereign could afford the people respite from their enemies

¹Sheriffs, 56.

²See Bosch, "The Church and the Liberation of Peoples,"; cf. D. J. Bosch, "The Roots and Fruits of Afrikaner Civil Religion," in *New Faces of Africa*, ed. J. H. Hofmeyr and W. S. Vorster (Pretoria: The University of South Africa, 1984), 14-31; T. L. Thompson, *The Political Mythology of Apartheid* (London: Yale University Press, 1975); Deist, "The Exodus Motif in the Old Testament and the Theology of Liberation," 60; Johannes Degenaar, "The Church and Nationalism in South Africa" in *Church and Nationalism*, ed. T. Sundemeier (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1975), 24-27.

³Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation* (London: SCM Press, 1985), 287.

(2 Sam 7:1; cf. 1 Kgs 8:5), and where God would dwell among His people in the sanctuary at Zion (2 Chr 6:41; 1 Chr 23:25; Pss 132:8, 13, 14; Isa 66:1).¹ The Sabbath should be rest-relevant for our contemporaries for it unfolds the biblical conception of creation as a setting for the covenant history of the Old Testament and the New Testament fulfillment of the divine purpose of redemption in Christ, to be completed and perfected in the “rest that remaineth to the people of God” (Heb 4:9).² From the Sabbath commandment one can develop a doctrine of God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Redeemer Jesus Christ with the context of reconciliation that Christians anticipate in the eschaton when everything is subjected under Christ’s feet.³

The concept of the Sabbath seems to be heuristic in an examination of liberation theology in general as well as to the theology of Archbishop Tutu since he focuses on the need for reconciliation from creation through to the eschaton. The institution of the Sabbath in Scripture is clearly related to God’s creatorship of the world, interhuman relationships, and human stewardship over the earth, and anticipates the eschaton where God’s reconciliation with the world will be complete. It is also very closely related to human liberation.

The concept of the Sabbath is not a panacea for theological or social problems. No concept on its own is. This needs to be stated because the history of Christianity is one of atomistic disjunctions. Perhaps the preaching of a down-to-earth gospel demands a more

¹Bacchiocchi, *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness: A Theological Study of the Good News of the Sabbath Today* (Berrien Springs: Biblical Perspectives, 1988), 137; cf. Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Young, 1952), 23; Cain Hope Felder, *Troubling Biblical Waters: Race, Class, and Family* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990), 168; Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 277.

²James Brown, “Karl Barth’s Doctrine of the Sabbath,” *The Scottish Journal of Theology* 19 (1966): 409.

³Ibid., 409-410.

inclusive, though soundly reasoned, synthesis of biblical principles. Christ-centered evangelicalism may learn what it means to add the dimension of people-orientedness from theologians of liberation, while Sabbatarians learn from both groups the joy of faith as reliance on the merits of the resurrected Christ, lived out in the company of other believers, for the sake of the world.

Concluding Summary Statement

The purpose of this dissertation has been to set forth Desmond Tutu's concept of the church as God's agent of reconciliation in the context of a world in political and other types of turmoil, and to critique this concept in terms of inner consistency and its faithfulness to Scripture.

Tutu holds that the church is founded by God for the purpose of continuing the work of reconciliation that Jesus Christ began during His ministry on earth. Being God's own creation, the church operates on His dictates. This implies that she seeks to determine what God's will is in the world and carry it out. God desires that all His creation enjoy shalom in His eschatological kingdom. But this shalom must begin in the present world. He demonstrated this intention by liberating Israel from Egyptian bondage. The said process of reconciliation goes on independent of the wishes of any person or organization on earth. Governments, among other organizations, have no right to dictate what the church ought, or ought not, do.

With unquestionable eloquence, Tutu insists that the church must stand with and for the oppressed. He develops a persuasive model that is likely to be attractive both during times of peace and unrest. He eloquently exhorts the church to work as a united body out of concern for her own credibility in the world.

Moreover, he sees the church as one by baptism to her Creator. She is a family,

defying all sorts of borders that militate against her unity. She is holy. This means that she is set apart for God's holy purpose. This purpose is to herald the news of reconciliation that God has made available between the estranged human race and Himself. She is God's sacrament in the world, pointing humanity to a nobler reality than any that exists in our current world. She approximates in the present order what God's kingdom is going to be when it is finally consummated. In this sense, the church keeps on pointing the world to God, her Founder, and she is not satisfied with the current world order. Consequently, she keeps challenging the world to set up all its business in light of God's envisaged kingdom.

Furthermore, the church continues the work of reconciliation initiated by God in Jesus Christ. This means that she intentionally seeks to bring peace between humanity and God through a holistic preaching of the gospel. People need to come to peace with God, through the forgiveness of their sin, which has made them enemies to God. But human beings also need to find peace among themselves. The preaching of the gospel is not complete until the individual is at peace with both God and other human beings.

Lastly and quite persuasively, Tutu depicts the church as reflecting the human reality out of which she is constituted. She consists of young people and old, people of different pigments and backgrounds, people from different geographical settings and walks of life. This being so, she is a human organization, serving human needs. She seeks to meet such human needs as love, human interdependence, freedom, and peace and unity. All her functions seek to foster happiness and community among people. When these are absent, she seeks to create a climate that promotes their existence. When they are barely existent, she tries to maximize them. In this sense, as Tutu understands her, the church is an advocate for peace and freedom in the world, a reconciler between humans and God, and among human beings who suffer the consequences of estrangement from, and oppression under, each other.

Tutu's theology of the church is a theology of praxis, seeking to persuade his audience to involve themselves in the work of reconciliation in the immediate context, i.e. apartheid South Africa. As a result, there is a striking absence of speculative ideas that would characterize a work that attempts to define the church or set forth her major function in the world. For instance, he does not commit much time to explaining such terms as the unity and the holiness of the church. His case for the involvement of the church in social matters is well nigh persuasive. However, it seems that it still might have gained if he had sought a more comprehensive biblical theme as the basis of his theology of the church's social involvement.

For Further Consideration

Given its crucial importance, Tutu's conception of the church as an agent of reconciliation is bound to be revisited many times as long as conflicts rage and the church takes herself and society seriously. One cannot but commend our author for a carefully developed perception of the function of the church in this regard. He is further to be thanked for emphasizing the need for unity in the church. As this dissertation has intimated, upcoming studies on this or related subjects would benefit from further investigation of issues which the limitations of the present work did not allow. The following seem to be of particular significance:

1. Given the importance attributed to it by Tutu, what is the kingdom of God and what specific relation does it hold to the church?
2. How may the fundamental unity, so intensely advocated by Tutu, be realized?
3. To what point was Israel, set forth as liberated by God, free from social, political, economic, and religious bondage, even in the days of Moses?
4. How much influence did Karl Barth exercise on Tutu's ecclesiology?

5. Is the liberation motif utilized in the liberation struggle a provisional theme to be replaced by other appropriate themes during the time of peace?

6. What role does Tutu's Anglican context play in making him liberation conscious?

7. Could Tutu's emphasis on Christ as a pillar of liberation tend to alienate the Jews and Muslims in South Africa? The implications of these issues are as important as the answers one might find in Tutu's program.

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