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Practical Theology in Diverse Cultural Contexts: Wisdom as a new Paradigm for Practical Theology in a Post-Apartheid Theology

The aim of my paper is to reflect on the question: what is meant by theology in a Southern African context, bearing in mind the fact that our region is exposed to radical processes of cultural, economic and political change. The latter implies a philosophical paradigm shift and a process of conceptual reframing with radical social, political and economical consequences. It also implies a total restructuring of our society. Besides vital political steps which had to be taken, the country is desperately in need of concrete modes of actions which have to be taken. If practical theology is going to take the issue of *doing theology* seriously, the following question is at stake: what sort of action? What is meant by actions which on the one hand could still be called theological but at the other hand are practical and contextual?

The current situation in Southern Africa forces theology to operate on the boundary between church and social environment. According to D. W. Augsburger a theology that functions on the boundary requires a commitment to presence, to dialogue, to crossing over and coming back between worlds (1986:36). He argues: this is the reason why pastoral counselling across cultures is rooted in an incarnational theology that is truly present to some and a dialogical theology that is open to others in *agape* (1986:36).

Theology between boundaries in Southern Africa cannot avoid the issue of cross-cultural pastoral care. At stake then is the challenge to appreciate cultural differences instead of being disturbed by them. This lies at the heart of effective cross-cultural pastoral care (R. C. Leslie 1990:251). Thus one of the main goals of cross-cultural pastoral care is to give attention to ethnic factors and finding ways of bridging cultural differences in order to be effective and practical. Although South Africa is moving very rapidly away from racism, pastoral care would be unrealistic if it assumed that ethnic considerations, which are usually related to factors of race, social class, religion and gender, could be ignored. P. Way is convinced that cultural issues are indissolubly related to ethnic factors. He views ethnicity as a primary bonding, an identification and context of belonging, shared by groups with common language, behaviours, histories, lifestyles, values and norms (1990:253). For theology, ethnicity implies a theology of culture. "Such theologizing must be open to a broadened historical past that includes

all human history, to a broadened human experience that embraces all cultures, to a broadened future that opens theological thought to the ongoing work of God among the nations of the world" (D. W. Augsburger 1986:72).

Sub-Saharan Africa has taken to Christianity in an astounding way. While Europe and North America are struggling with secularisation as part of the problems of the church in an affluent society, Africa is becoming the centre of gravity of Christianity. Although the claim may be exaggerated, the point then to be made is that only in Africa does Christianity really face the issue of inculturation (J. Kinghorn 1991:96). This is the reason why the church cannot bypass the issue of cultural theology. In the past African culture and religion have been utterly ignored by the colonizing powers which used the African as an object of no value and for which any substitute could be found. The effect of such an attitude was not only a material poverty but a spiritual poverty which is deeply rooted in anthropological pauperization. Therefore B Bujo is convinced that true African liberation is not possible without rediscovering deeply rooted cultural values (1992: 10).

Pastoral care in Southern Africa is confronted with the challenge to deal with the real issue in cultural theology: humanity and human dignity (see D. W. Augsburger 1986:77). Should this be true, I want to pose the important question: if practical theology pretends to be doing theology, is it possible to deal properly with the issue of humanity if practical theology only makes use of liberation theology to promote the issue of humanity? The hypothesis of this paper is that doing theology should be aware of the one-sidedness of liberation theology. The liberation issue is important for the struggle against apartheid. It is true, the process of freedom cannot avoid the issue of liberation in our country. However in a new South Africa we need more than liberation theology. We actually need a theology of justice and wisdom.

I am going to toy with the idea and assumption that liberation theology is alien to the African way of thinking and doing. This could be one of the possible reasons why many African states, after independence, could not develop freedom in a peaceful and democratic way. The underlying reason for this is the fact that liberation theology is rooted in the neo-Marxistic way of thinking. The philosophy of the neo-Marxists goes via Marx right back to German idealism. The dialectical model stems from the philosophy of Hegel. Through Hegel dialectics is rooted in the Hellenistic way of thinking, that is to analyse, to find answers to all questions and to solve all problems.

In order to turn to real cultural issues in Africa, theology should try to get rid of biased Hellenistic and Western paradigms which do not fit in

with the actual African philosophy of man and life. It could be of paramount importance to explore the value of the following statement of Kenneth Kaunda: "Let the West have its Technology and Asia its Mysticism! Africa's gift to world culture must be in the realm of Human Relationships" (1967² :22).

Our task is to determine whether a sound Biblical approach could provide practical theology with new paradigms which could serve as vehicles and instruments, even as guidelines, to facilitate the cultural and political process of change in South Africa. The hypothesis is that Scriptural issues of justice and wisdom could provide practical theology of the required paradigm for social change and peaceful solutions. During the struggle, liberation *from* is important. When the struggle moves into the agreement stage of conflict management, the dominant issue becomes: liberation *for*. In this stage it is important that liberation theology should develop into justice and wisdom theology. Accordingly restitution becomes an integral part of reconciliation. To my mind wisdom, justice and restitution are nearer to the issue of humanity, and even to the African philosophy of life, than the aggressive approach of the Western analytical problem solving attitude.

In order to investigate the value and truth of the above mentioned hypotheses, the paper is divided into three sections. In the first part I shall give attention to the question: What is African Christian theology? Secondly, I shall deal with the myth of the so called "post-apartheid society." The last part will deal with the issue of restitution in practical theology.

1. Outline of a Christian theology in Africa

The issue of Christian theology in Africa is the attempt to delineate some of the features of that real world of Africa in which theologizing takes place. It is the attempt to discover an African context for theologizing. One of the main driving forces behind this attempt is the struggle in Africa to be free of some kind of North Atlantic captivity. "There is a need for a new *skenos* (Greek: tent) which is African, and communicates to *homo africanus* and theology like theological education becomes an instrument of *skenosis*, a tabernacling of the eternal word of God in Africa too (cf John 1:14)" (J. S. Pobee 1989:3). This is the reason why B. Bujo advocates for a genuinely African ecclesiology which will produce a different model of the church from that which is currently dominant (1992:73).

Practical theology in Africa should address the matter of its North Atlantic captivity and free itself to be authentic in Southern Africa. To my mind practical theology should thus be aware of some characteristics of this captivity:

(a) **The rationalistic and analytical approach to life issues and problems.** The European mind wants to solve problems and tries to manage all life issues. Thorough analysis therefore should inevitably lead to rational answers.

(b) **The denominationalistic approach of the mother churches in Southern Africa.** The church should recognise the importance of ecclesiological pluralism. A good example of this is the multiplicity of independent churches in Southern Africa. In Africa the church exists in a plural society. African Christian Independency represents among other things a cultural renaissance, a protest against the North Atlantic captivity. In the past the church placed more emphasis on the institutional framework, than on people and relations.

(c) **The individualistic view of life** which distinguishes between the individual's faith and the life of the people. This leads very easily to a sharp distinction and even separation between private life and public interests, church and state. These go against the grain of Africa's holistic view of life. In Africa religion cannot be relegated to limbo as the business of the clergy, and in that context, the separation between faith and life, individual conscience and social process are false distinctions.

(d) **The obsession of the church with achievement.** The church became an important ally of Western society's achievement ethics. What you know and what you can do is of more importance than who you are. Doing functions and knowing functions surpass being functions.

(e) **The abstract and ideological feature of Western thought.** Liberation became one of the major issues in Africa. The reason for this is that liberation theology deals directly with existential problems such as injustice and abuse of human dignity. However liberation theology cannot separate itself from its essential philosophical feature: dialectic materialism. It is too abstract and mechanistic. It allows too little space for the human person and relies too much upon the intrinsic momentum of inevitable historic processes. Most remarkable is the statement of J. N. K. Mugambi: "Hegel's idealistic philosophy which has influenced many modern western thinkers (both positively and negatively) would make no sense in the context of traditional African thought. Nor would the doctrinal debate on whether Jesus is 'of one substance' with God the father" (1989:137).

The question: What is African theology? is very difficult to answer. The concept, Christian African theology, is even more complex.

Among theologians in Africa little consensus exists about the meaning of the concept: African theology. One thing is clear, Africans do not experience God theoretically. Africans in their religious heritage express their experience of God practically, without much theoretical exposition. "They live rather than verbalize their theology" (J. N. K. Mugambi 1989:9).

In the light of the current situation in Southern Africa the main issue in theology is liberation. Liberation is the objective task of contemporary African Christian theology. It is not one of the issues, but rather, all issues aimed at liberating the African from all forces that hinder him from living fully as a human being. If the church is not an island unto itself, and if it is inextricably bound up with the society and world, it is quite understandable that contemporary issues of society should engage theological reflection. Therefore liberation theology is linked up with the context of poverty with its diverse indices leading to a sense of hopelessness in people. Liberation theology reflects the situations of political instability marked by injustice and abuse of human dignity.

It becomes clear that the theological issue for the churches in South Africa is: social transformation/liberation. "This implies a process of transforming the church to enable it, in turn, to be a transforming community, but also a prophetic ministry directed at society as a contribution to the flourishing of justice. We seek a transformation of unjust social structures and of the attitudes and policies which perpetuate and reinforce them" (J. R. Cochrane *et al* 1991:10). In order to reach this goal, a social-ecclesial analysis becomes an important task of the church in its attempt to understand its immediate context. This critical discernment presupposes a hermeneutics of suspicion. In the end it should develop into a spirituality which enables the Christian community to exercise the gift of discernment ("seeing clearly") and to discover the resources of empowerment (becoming the human being God intended in the *imago dei* — one who has full dignity among others, and a share in the dominion or stewardship of the world and its resources) (J. R. Cochrane *et al* 1991:23).

The transformation of human society becomes the predominant issue. In practical theology and pastoral care the relationship between liberation and salvation becomes vital because of the political aspiration of the people towards self-realization and self-fulfilment. J. N. K. Mugambi makes the following distinction: "Liberation may be defined as the *penultimate process* of eliminating dependence (which is dehumanizing) and enhancing integrity and independence (which are hu-

manizing) in every aspect of socio-political life both for individuals and for society as a whole"; "Salvation may be defined as the *ultimate hope* of realizing or attaining total self-realization and self-fulfilment, which transcends the finitude of natural and historical processes" (1989:x). Salvation functions then as a corrective check to remind mortal men and women that total liberation is not attainable in the historical dimension of human existence. Hence the eschatological emphasis in any theological discussion of salvation.

In the South African context it is very difficult to maintain a balance between liberation and salvation. Especially in black theology. This is most evident in, for example, the Kairos Document. The power of liberation for many people in Southern Africa is illustrated by the following prayer published in Kairos Liturgies: "All-powerful God, raise us all up from this death. Give new life to these dry bones and may the uprising of your people in South Africa today take us forward to the new society, the new humanity and the new world that is promised by the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1986:23).

F. Chikane is convinced of the fact that *doing theology* is emerging as a dominant methodology in the Third World. "Doing theology therefore means action and reflection on one's activity and involvement with the people, and participation in their struggles. The theologian must be involved with the people in the activity of God, and 'do theology' in action" (1985:100). The implication of his point of view is that theology not grounded in liberating praxis is not liberating theology. J. W. de Gruchy is convinced that Christians in Southern Africa must participate in the creation of a just society. He therefore regards the liberation issue as inevitable for doing theology (1985:94-95). In the words of Philip Potter doing theology means becoming the messengers of the gospel of the good news to the poor and liberation for the oppressed (1985:13). Theology becomes the love of God in action; theologians in Africa do not do theology *for* the people but *with* the people. This is the reason why B. Goba makes it very clear that for them theology is not an academic exercise, but a struggle against the demon of white racism (1985:58). Because of this struggle reconciliation is built on liberation (J D Roberts 1983:67).

In conclusion, we can say that African Christian theology is doing theology in a cultural and political environment. The main objective is liberation and contextualization. Change and transformation are therefore important ingredients of doing theology. The theological basic theory behind this model is the incarnation motive. Because of the incarnation of Christ the actions in doing theology are transparent for the identification of God with the struggle of the people, it becomes

Christian love in action. "From a theological perspective black adults in Southern Africa could be viewed as experiencing a deep yearning for a pastoral care and a love that will open up God's hope, healing, and saving power and illuminating revelation to them" (H. H. Eybers 1991:3).

The previous exposition highlights one dimension of theology which pretends to be truly African. It touches the dimension of contextualization. What about the other dimension: the dimension of humanity and ethics. Doing theology could never be a neutral matter. To go deeper into this, it is important to try to understand African philosophy of man. In doing this, one must be aware of the danger of romanticising Africa. In South Africa the process of urbanization has influenced people to such a degree that it is very difficult to describe African culture and lifestyles. Nevertheless I will try to highlight a few outstanding features.

Outstanding features of African theology in its social context:

(a) **Humility.** African people experience life in close connection with nature. The hardships of nature teaches you that it is impossible to manipulate life for your own benefit. Instead of an aggressive approach, our being dependent on nature creates a cautious attitude to life. In Africa one has to exercise patience and tolerance. "To be exposed to Nature and to have to live your life at its rhythm develops humility as a human characteristic rather than arrogance" (K Kaunda 1967²:24).

(b) **Relational.** The second feature stems from the structure of the traditional African society. Societies in Africa were, in fact, highly organised and delicately balanced in the network of relationships which held their members together. African people do not have relations, they are relations.

(c) **Cooperation and mutuality within an holistic approach.** The tribal community was a mutual society. It was organised to satisfy and safeguard the basic human needs of all its members and, therefore, individualism was discouraged. The land was communally owned and administered by chiefs and village headmen for the benefit of all.

It is debatable whether an holistic concept is unique to Africa. Such an holistic outlook is found in other Third World cultures, indeed even in bygone European times (J Kinghorn 1991:95). This however does not diminish the importance of the insistence by African theology on a view of the world which stresses the comprehensive interrelatedness

of all of life. The African holistic view and integrational approach serve as an antidote to the individualism which has been responsible for so much of the paralysis of modern theology.

(d) **The sacredness of life.** Life is viewed with respect and carefully dealt with. In Africa you don't exploit life and other people for your own benefit but you live through other people in order to serve. Life and nature are sacred and should be handled with care. You don't live to earn and to make a profit but to look after the basic needs of your people.

(e) **Acceptiveness.** The tribal community was an accepting community. "In the best tribal society people were valued not for what they could achieve but because they were *there*. Their contribution, however limited to the material welfare of the village was acceptable, but it was their *presence* not their *achievement* which was appreciated" (K. Kaunda 1967²:26).

(f) **Inclusiveness.** African society is man-centred. T. Adeyemo refers to Africa's philosophy of people-centredness (1991:90). Africans believe that things (including time) are made for the benefit of man. J. Müller speaks of the anthropocentric nature traditional African ontology (1991:78).

The extended family system constitutes a social security scheme which has the advantage of following the natural pattern of personal relationships. African psychology must be understood against this background. The system approach is predominantly inclusive. By this is meant a web of relationships which involve some degree of mutual responsibility.

(g) **Dialogical structures.** Africans love conversation. They will talk for hours with any stranger who crosses their path, and by the time they part there will be little they do not know about each other.

(h) **African spirituality.** Enjoyment of life and a patient optimism are characteristic of an African approach to life. They have a sunny outlook and hate gloom and pessimism (K. Kaunda 1967²:36). The reason for this is Africa's love for rhythm. Rhythm is the very expression of the life-force within African people. Laughter, music and dancing reflect the spirit of their culture.

The important question at stake is whether the changes in South Africa take African spirituality seriously. Blacks in South Africa are in transition, they are moving from a rural society to an urban society. urbanization and industrialization become important forces to reckon with. In the meantime they have to move from oppression to libera-

tion. The challenge in a new South Africa is how to create a stable society and maintain political structures which safeguard human rights and promote humanity. I want to argue that liberation theology cannot provide the framework for this. Liberation theology is intrinsically alien to African spirituality. It is actually only a vehicle voicing the frustration of blacks. But contextualization implies more than freedom *from*; contextualization is in desperate need of a new ethics: freedom *for* to do this, Africa should not copy the Western model of democracy with its accent on individualism. It should rather try to inculturate modern trends into traditional African wisdom which at one time was such a successful forum for communal democracy (B. Bujo 1992:7).

The liberation paradigm was efficient during the struggle of blacks in the townships of South Africa. If this is going to be the only paradigm for a future South Africa we are going to run into serious trouble. C. H. Pinnock in a book review: *Liberation theology at the crossroads: democracy or revolution?*, refers to the important choice that needs to be made between liberal democracy and revolutionary rhetoric (1991:474). The current trend is away from Marxism which characterized the liberal movement in its early stages, toward more of a grassroots populism as typified by the Christian base communities (C. H. Pinnock 1991:474). C. H. Pinnock is convinced of the fact that liberation theology has made terrible mistakes. These include a betrayal of the poor, aligning theology with a disastrous modern ideology, dividing Christians from each other, and selling out believers under communism (1991:475).

The shortcoming of liberation theology is that it creates an aggressive approach to life problems. It does not succeed to develop the potential of African spirituality. Theology in South Africa has to adapt to the changing political climate. If it is going to persist in the liberation paradigm, it will not succeed to prepare South Africans for the new dispensation which is based upon the philosophy of negotiation, dialogue and constructive conflict management. To succeed liberation theology makes use of people's frustrations and cooperates with a rather violent environment. It operates with a psychology of anger which neglects African spirituality. The latter is more right brain oriented. Africa is in need of a real African Christian theology which can succeed to utilise African spirituality and view of life. To my mind wisdom theology is equipped to achieve such an objective.

In a new South Africa the struggle will have to move from the transformation of structures to the transformation of hearts. For this we need wisdom.

Liberation theology is in essence incarnational. However it remains a question whether it is possible to move directly from salvation/ Christology to anthropology and the actions of man. If practical theology really wants to be theology in action and if it wants to succeed in being cultural and contextual, it should discover the necessity of a pneumatology.

D. P. McCann sets the agenda for practical theology and develops a model for social action: orthopraxis. "This concept — literally, 'the right sort of praxis' — refers to the concrete struggles of basic 'communities' seeking to give Christian witness in a revolutionary situation" (1983:111). The danger of orthopraxis is that it can become easily a new ideology justified by the struggle of the people. The right sort of praxis is in a desperate need for the right sort of action. The latter brings practical theology back to its ethical basis. D. Tracy regards ethics as the foundation of practical theology. "I believe that the principal praxis criteria for practical theology are criteria of transformation and the principle theoretical criteria are those of a theological ethics related to that praxis" (1983:72). Tracy is convinced that without explicit ethical reflection, a practical theology could be left with a purely dispositional ethics, modelled on possibilities of human transformation (see 1983:79). A purely dispositional ethics is especially insufficient in the current situation of political transformation in Southern Africa. A new South Africa needs ethical guidelines to prevent chaos and destructive violence. Without mature people and a positive and constructive approach to situational problems, our region will be destroyed. South Africa will then be another Lebanon or Angola. To prevent liberation theology from such a destructive undertaking, wisdom theology could operate as an important alternative.

Doing theology becomes theological ethics when it is founded by pneumatology. Works of love then become the characteristics of a Christian ethics. 1 John 3:16 says: "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers." To put this love into practice, practical theology should represent the fruit of the Spirit (Galations 5:22). To keep in step with the Spirit practical theology should operate by the principle of wisdom. An excellent example of this is Proverbs 16:6: "Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil."

The profit of wisdom theology for an African context is that it makes an appeal upon African spirituality. It has the potential to unfold and reveal the inner strength of a truly African approach to life. Wisdom theology has the advantage that it reflects the actual spirit of African

culture and religion. Because of this benefit practical theology in South Africa should adapt to this theological paradigm in order to meet with existential needs in a new South Africa.

The advantage of wisdom theology is that it appeals to the constructive dimension of human conduct. It actualizes human potential while it concentrates on the essential being functions of man. In order to do this properly, wisdom needs ethics. And to prevent wisdom from being purely dispositional, a new code of conduct should be founded upon theological ethics. Doing theology is truly *practical* and *theological* when actions and conduct are guided by the fruit of the Spirit. It is through a pneumatology that wisdom becomes operational. The quest for justice and peace needs the guidance of wisdom: But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness" (James 4:18-19)

2. The myth of a post apartheid society

The main purpose of liberation theology in South Africa is to create a just and democratic society. At the beginning of this paper I mentioned the importance of a cultural approach. In a cross-cultural model it is of paramount importance to appreciate ethnic differences instead of being disturbed by them. Moreover, the appreciation of distinctive differences opens the way to understanding rather than judgement, and so makes communication, dialogue and negotiation in South Africa more possible.

In principle apartheid has been dismantled. The challenge for a future dispensation is to dismantle apartheid in government institutions, and the allocation of resources and privileges based on race. In order to achieve these objectives a purely democratic society has to be created. Politically speaking a new government will try to establish a just society, freed from the wrongdoings of the past. For this people must change their attitude.

It is an existential fact that ethnicity creates prejudices which in their turn lead easily to racism. To eradicate racism practical theology will have to move beyond the revolutionary restructuring programme of liberation theology. Racism is an attitudinal problem. Unless theology is willing to address the attitudes of people in the light of sound theological ethics, we will not solve the problem of racism. Apartheid has codified racism as a means to preserve its owner power. The task for

doing theology based on pneumathology is to decodify racism. Unless we start doing this, a post apartheid society will remain a myth.

To boil down to the actual problem, practical theology will have to address people's fears and prejudices. For one reason or another, there will always be people who are driven by fear. In an interview with *Time Magazine*, the South African-born Mark Mathabane mentioned the fact that when he came to the U.S. in 1978 he believed that America had long since resolved its racial problems, that blacks were equal citizens. "Then I discovered, to my horror, that not much had changed in people's hearts. White people's attitudes towards blacks have changed very little since the days of lynchings. Without that change, laws are relatively impotent" (1990:16).

Change in South Africa must be genuine in order to create a new society. To do this theology has to change not only attitudes but perceptions as well. Stereotyping could be abolished if the church operates as the koinonic body of Christ. The unity in the body of Christ cuts through all cultural differences and racist prejudices (Ephesians 2:14-18). He destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility. By proclaiming the gospel of reconciliation it is possible to reveal their sinful attitude to people to and bring about change on a cognitive level. People have to realise that their hostility has been put to death by the cross of Christ.

Practical theology should launch a special programme of reconciliation in South Africa. The fundamental question at stake is whether such a programme will succeed without giving attention to the problem of justice, compensation and restitution.

3. Restitution as a pastoral option in practical theology

We are in a transitional period, not just in the negotiations, but between the phasing out of the past and creating the new. This period is most delicate, because it requires the negotiators to obtain the acquiescence of the most recalcitrant defenders of the status quo. At either end of the political spectrum are those who do not really believe in democracy. At present it is very difficult for the church to side with one group only. At the same time it is impossible to stay neutral. An absolute neutral position would actually be immoral. What then is the task of the church in a situation of change and transition?

One of the most burning issues is how to deal theologically with the wrongdoings of the past: justice versus reconciliation. Those arguing for justice will say that, if one can grant amnesty for past acts now, the

next government can do the same after committing similar crimes. Moreover, it is argued that without justice, the passage from apartheid will not be complete, psychologically or politically. Therefore justice requires-restitution and retriution. On the other hand there is the argument that retribution will only tear the country apart, and the veiled threat that the whole transition will be derailed by those most threatened. It is in such an impasse that reconciliation becomes an option in order to move the country forward rather than keep it mired in the past.

As each of the problems is faced, a catharsis will be needed as the full implications of each change are realized. The issue of bitterness and apology will keep coming back, at each new phase of change and possible sacrifice. In South Africa we shall face the issue of guilt and forgiveness, retribution and reconciliation time and again.

Reconciliation means the restoration of a good relationship between enemies. In order to achieve this good relationship in the confrontation of God and man, it is necessary that the factors which produce the enmity be removed (H.-G. Link 1978:145). In South Africa one of the main factors is apartheid. Therefore the demand for confession. To be genuine and to confess, it is important to view apartheid as sin. This can only happen when Christians become aware of the reality of God in the midst of injustice and inhumanity. Confession becomes cheap when it is merely an effort to exonerate oneself. When confession is the result of a sound knowledge of God and guilt is sincere, the quest for restitution will automatically be part of reconciliation.

Since the Rustenburg declaration the demand for confession of guilt crops up time and again. However, when a confession has been made, the important issue becomes forgiveness. The latter means that the past is totally wiped out and cancelled. Otherwise guilt and confession becomes a meaningless game.

In order to safeguard reconciliation against superficiality, it is important to understand the relationship between reconciliation and restitution. Restitution is justice being made concrete and practical. Reconciliation is restitution portrayed within the framework of a theological understanding of salvation. Justice/restitution versus reconciliation is theologically spoken a false contrast and opposition. Justice is the doing part of reconciliation, while reconciliation is the ground motivation for doing justice.

If we take into account so many abominable crimes committed against black South Africans, it is understandable that Africans today raise their voices and claim compensations for the wrongs committed

against them during the time of apartheid. The point I wish to make is that restitution should not be forced. It should be an obligation which stems from a theological understanding of reconciliation. Restitution is actually an ethical issue which proves the validity of a profound ethics of love.

In the Old Testament it was clear that in a case of offence, restitution had to be paid. Numbers 5:6-7: "When a man or woman wrongs another in any way and so is unfaithful to the Lord, that person is guilty and must confess the sin he has committed. He must make full restitution for his wrong, add one fifth to it and give it all to the person he has wronged." Therefore it could be argued that reconciliation without restitution is meaningless. This is true, but restitution without the ethics of love, becomes harsh demands without necessarily restoring peace. Without an ethics of love and a theology of wisdom, the processes of change could run out of control. For example, the current violence in South Africa could become uncontrollable, unless the political parties succeed to reach and accommodate the needs and demands of the so called "lost generation" amongst the black youth. During the stage of negotiations a liberal theological approach is a negative one, because it carries the possibility to generate only the aggressive emotions of people. Contrary to this approach, wisdom theology tries to emphasise empathy and understanding, based upon an ethics of love.

Linking up with the African view of life, J. Kinghorn advocates for a sophisticated theology of *shalom* (1991:94-95). According to him, a theology which stresses the interrelatedness of being, can probably best formulated as a theology of *shalom*. *Shalom* is a structural concept which becomes visible through deeds of love, justice and reconciliation. *Shalom* is theology's answer to the aggressiveness of liberation ideology. *Shalom* aims at an holistic and systemic understanding of freedom as a social and structural phenomenon. However, the content of *shalom* is not peace as a result of revolutionary deeds, but peace as a result of an ethics of love.

The latter is being generated by the spirit of God and exercised by the koinonic functions of the body of Christ. An ethics of love is the real and actual practice of theology which pretends to be doing theology and practical theology. This kind of practice is in a desperate need for wisdom as the guiding principle for doing theology. Wisdom is theology in operation, it is the practice of love which has the potential, not only to transform the hearts and minds of people, but to transform society at large. The challenge of love to the practice of theology implies the following: sacrifice without compensation; acceptance without any

conditions; service without a hidden agenda; sharing without any profit and forgiveness without account-keeping.

Conclusion

In South Africa practical theology will have to deal with the issues of reclaiming of land and affirmative actions. These cannot be ignored by theology. To deal with it in a proper and just manner, concrete actions of reconciliation are needed. In order to achieve peace and reconciliation in South Africa it will be necessary that the factors which produce the enmity be removed. A removal of all the scars of apartheid will stir up a lot of resistance and even lead to more violence. To prevent that a new dispensation creates more violence, the church has to play a decisive role. In order to fulfil this task practical theology will have to undergo a paradigm switch. The liberation theme must be supplemented by the wisdom theme. Wisdom theology is intrinsically linked up with an ethics of love. If theology is going to take the principle of contextualization seriously and try to be of cultural value in Africa, it will have to move away from a rather aggressive approach to a much more constructive approach. It will have to utilise African spirituality as an important partner in the effort to create peace. The future of Africa lies not in Marx and Hegel but in Africa's enjoyment of people and in Christ's offering and servanthood. For doing theology the agenda of the future must be set by an ethics of love. Doing theology is not a revolutionary strategy in a new South Africa, but love in operation. Love creates humanity: "Africa's gift to world culture must be in the realm of Human Relationships" (K. Kaunda 1967²).

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