ORIENTATION

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CONTENTS

9. CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO THE DIVERSITY IN POLITICAL VIEWPOINTS, RELIGIONS AND CULTURES

Illustrated by way of a case study of South Africa[1]

B.J. van der Walt[*]

CONTENTS

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There is practically no country in the world today where people are not looking for a new, peaceful societal order. In many countries people are faced with the problem of conflict between different social systems, religions, ethnic groups and cultures. This diversity can no longer - as was done earlier in South Africa - be ignored or even suppressed, but has to be accommodated in one way or the other. The important question is how this could be done - *peacefully* - in *one* country under *one* government.

1. INTRODUCTION: THE SETUP

The intention of this paper is twofold:

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[*] Prof. B.J. van der Walt, Director of the Institute for Reformational Studies and Professor in the Department of Philosophy, PU for CHE, Potchefstroom 2520 South Africa.

In the first place it seeks to provide a more *principial reflection* on the causes for the conflicts and the quests for solutions. In conjunction with that, it will be indicated how a Christian perspective on the different issues can possibly bring us closer to a solution and a more peaceful society.

In the second place, at the request of the organizers of this Conference, it offers a *practical application* to the South African situation. From that it will clearly emerge that the policy of apartheid instituted by the Afrikaners in South Africa failed because it could not deal with the conflict between different socio-political systems, religions and cultures in terms of Biblical injunctions.

The first part therefore has a more *universal character,* which might possibly also be of interest to multireligious and multicultural countries elsewhere in the world. The second main part of the paper (about South Africa) has the character of a *warning or an enjoining case study* - about how the matter should not be approached.

2. CAUSES FOR CONFLICT AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

There are more reasons, but I would like to underline three important ones. They are: (1) Different views of society, (2) religious diversity, and (3) cultural diversity (including ethnic diversity.)

Various viewpoints on how the broad society should be structured can lead to diverging and even conflicting views of authority and human rights. Religious diversity leads to the struggle to achieve equal rights for the own religion and freedom to be practised also in public. Culturo-ethnic diversity leads to the struggle of especially minority groups to maintain their own language, customs and traditions as against other, especially dominant, groups.

Subsequently each of these three factors (politics, faith and culture) will be considered. The first (a diversity of views of society) will be discussed briefly. The emphasis will fall more on the second and third issues, viz. religious and cultural diversity.

2.1. A variety of views of society

There are many ways to classify views of society. An example would be (1) traditional views (as we find them in Africa and other developing countries), (2) modern Western views (such as individualism and socialism), and (3) the global, international world order which is revealing its influence everywhere. Naturally no single classification is watertight. In the world we live in these three "models" are seldom encountered in a pure form.

For the purposes of this paper I would very briefly like to contrast the individualist, communalist/socialist and pluralist visions in the following diagram.

A COMPARISON OF THREE MODELS FOR SOCIETY

	Individualism	Communalism	Pluralism
Aim	First liberty then equality	First equality (unity, solidarity brotherhood) then liberation	Freedom (individually and socially) to serve God
Philosophy 1	Parts (individuals) more important than the whole (society)	Whole (society) more important than the parts (individuals)	False dilemma solved by the principle of unity in diversity or diversity in unity
2	Higher ontic status for the individual	Higher ontic status for social collectivity	Individual's existence interwoven with a variety of social relationships
3	Societal relationships are artificial and contractual collecttion of individuals	Individuals find meaning and fulfilment by belonging to the larger group	Pluralism does not over emphasize the individual OR community
4	Overestimates individual and underestimates associatve nature of human	Overestimates community and underestimates individuals	Balance (not a compromise) between individual and society

5	Human (individual) autonomy (one's own boss)	Obedience to collective will of "people"	Obedience to God's will (in his creational ordinances and in Scripture
Practice 1	All activities towards enhancement of individual (e.g. primarily individual rights)	All activities only a means to serve the purposes of the community at lage (social rights)	All human activities in the service of the kingdom of God
2	Atomistic relationships - also between societal relationships	One over-arching social institution (e.g. church, state business as megastructure	Societal relationships exist alongside/next to each other in mutual service
3	Totalitarian via an indirect route - because human beings cannot live without societal relationships	Totalitarian simply by being consistent in applying its basic philosophy	Anti-totalitarian (only kingdom of God all-encompassing).Each societal relationship has (limited) authority in its own sphere
4	Destroys unity of mankind	Destroys plurality and diversity in human life	Enhances both unity and diversity
Result	Libertinism (but finally also tyranny)	Tyranny	Real freedom - for individual and society

The Christian pluralist view of society can be summarized in the following seven points:

*   In an open, plural society a great variety of relationships in which people live and work are acknowledged and respected, and not only one encompassing societal relationship which dominates society (for example, the state, family, clan or tribe) as in a closed society.

*   Societal relationships can be institutional relationships, that is, instituted by God, such as marriage, family, church and state. We are born into most of these relationships. There are all sorts of relationships, however, which come into being through human initiative and endeavour, and of which man becomes a member voluntarily (and from which one can withdraw again), such as a sports club, a trade union, etc. Such kinds of societal relationships are, however, also subject to God's creational norms.

*   A societal relationship binds people according to a specific yet limited purpose, and under specific conditions. Each relationship therefore has its own norms to give direction to it.

*   Each societal relationship has its own nature, and therefore differs from all others as regards objectives and the way in which authority is maintained.

*   Not all societal relationships are equally important (for example, a state as compared to a soccer club), but they are still equal.

*   Because each societal relationship is equal it is also sovereign in its own sphere. Other relationships may not interfere in its sphere without fundamentally good reasons.

*   This competence in their own sphere does not mean that societal relationships are divided from each other in watertight compartments. They should not compete or be threatened by each other. One also cannot expect everything from one societal relationship (such as the state, family or marriage). The wealth and diversity of being human will only emerge when the various relationships come to full deployment.

In recapitulation, we could compare the three visions of society discussed above with the following images: that of a collection of atoms, that of an orange and that of a clock. According to the individualist model, society resembles a cluster of atoms - there is no social reality apart from the individual identity. According to collectivist communalism the segments of the orange have no separate identity apart from the whole orange, which is then of course more real and more important than the segments. Pluralism teaches that, as every cog in a clock has its own place, and simultaneously all interlock so that the clock can run, in the same way each societal relationship is a reality and has its own place and right to existence - in harmony with all the other societal relationships or structures.

Visualised in a diagram:
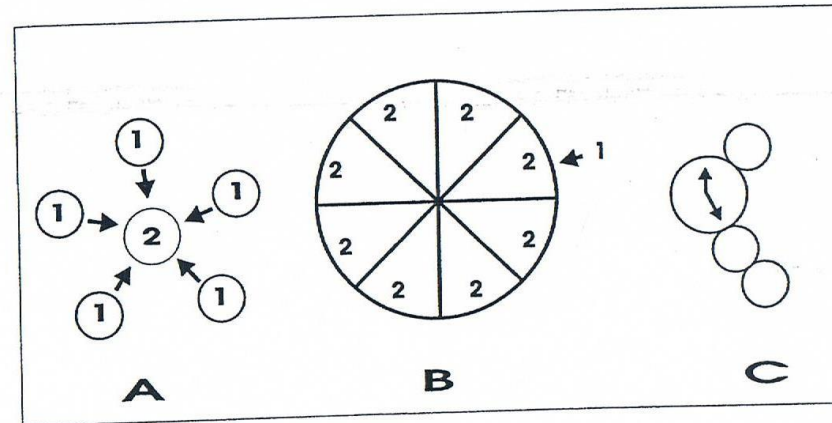
Explanation:

A =   *Individualism*: individuals, (1) loosely connected in a societal structure (2)

B =   *Communalism*: individuals and societal structures (2) merely part of the greater, more important whole (1)

C = *Pluralism*: societal structures closely related but also independent.

There are, of course, many variations of these three models, as well as many combinations which occur in practice, but they are the basic ones, and nobody has as yet brought forward a fourth model.

From the comparison of the three societal views above, it has emerged that the aim of all three is the freedom of man. Although communalism considers equality most highly, it also strives for the liberation of society. The table has indicated, however, that the end result of both individualism and communalism is tyranny and totalitarianism. They therefore do not succeed in realizing the freedom of the individual and the societal relationships and to exclude conflict. As against that, the application of a reformational (pluralist) societal vision can lead to true freedom and equality for the individuals and the various societal relationships in a country.

This has not yet, however, addressed the issue of religious diversity, which will be our next main point.

2.2 A diversity of religions

The basic issue here is freedom of religion. Seeing that many people think, however, that freedom of religion is only possible if all religions are considered to be equal, the issue of equality of religion will first be discussed.

2.2.1 Are all religions equal?

There are many statements in the Bible which indicate Christ's uniqueness, such as, for example, his "I am" statements: "I am the truth and the way and the life" (John 14:6); "I am the true vine" (John 15:1); "I am the bread of life"; "I am the light of the world". In Acts 4:12 we read that "Salvation is in no one else, for there is no other Name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved". In 1 Timothy 2:5 it is said: "For there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus ...".

W. Visser 't Hooft wrote a book called *No other name* about 30 years ago. Eight years ago (1986) Paul Knitter, however, put a question mark when writing a book with a similar title: *No other name*? Within Roman Catholic thinking about this topic we also see a clear shift from salvation through the church alone (ecclesiocentrism) to salvation in Christ alone (Christocentrism), to salvation through faith in God but not limited to Christ (theocentrism).

The questions which will be addressed here are: (1) Is only Christianity true and all other religions false? or (2) are all religions at least partly (or wholly) true? or (3) are they all possibly untrue?

Four possible views

If we say that the Christian faith is the only true one, we have to remember that it is not other faiths which say this of Christianity, but Christians themselves - and the testimony which one gives about oneself is normally not impartial.

The simplistic view that all other religions are the work of Satan is definitely not Biblical. Scripture clearly teaches that God, through his creational revelation, also talks to the pagans. On the other hand, it is also unbiblical to deny the work of Satan in non-Christian religions - Satan even works within the Christian religion.

What is really the difference between Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and traditional African religion? What is the difference between the Bible, the Quran, the Bhagavad Gita and African religious myths? Is it not so that if you were to be born in India, the chances really are that you would be a Hindu; in Egypt you would probably be a Muslim; in Sri Lanka there would be quite a probability of your being a Buddhist, and in Africa you would probably be a Christian or a supporter of traditional African religion?

Are all forms of religious worship not probably true in the sense that they travel by different routes, but in the end they reach the same destination - various routes to the same mountain peak? Are they not simply different expressions, in terms of different cultures, human types, temperaments and intellectual predilections? Do the different religious trends not represent the different experiences and perceptions

of and responses to the same unlimited "transcendent, divine reality"? (The differences are then merely superficial as a result of the differences in mentality and cultural background.) Or does such a viewpoint bring us perilously close to the quicksands of relativism or even scepticism?

The third possibility: If all religions could not be true - even if everybody thought that his were true - it is of course also possible that none of them is true.

Or are we on a wrong tack by trying to make the question of truth applicable to religions? We do not, after all, ask this question when it comes to cultures, and do not, for example, ask the question as to whether American culture is less true or more true than, for example, Japanese culture. We do not say, either, that Japanese culture is totally untrue.

A survey of the different viewpoints

M.S. Heim, in his book *Christ the only way*? (1985) divides the different viewpoints into two main groups (pluralism and particularism), which are then sub-divided into three groups each.

Pluralism

*   *Parallel pluralism*

Christ is the only mediator *for Christians*. Other faiths, however, can yield much the same results as Christianity. (For example, Ernst Troeltsch: *The absoluteness of Christianity and the history of religions*.)

*   *Jigsaw puzzle pluralism*

Each religion contains a fragment of the full and final truth. It is our task to link up the pieces. There is no communal core in all religions, but they should all flow together ultimately. The strong point(s) of each religion should be brought together in a mansion of faith for all nations. (E.g. John Hick: *God and the universe of faith* and *God has many faces*.)

*   *Gradual pluralism*

Some religions bring the final truth to stronger expression than others. The Christian faith is true in the sense that it is the best, because Christ towers above other religious leaders. He is, in a sense then, the highest peak in the mountain range! (For example, Shubert M. Agden: *The reality of God*.)

Particularism

As opposed to this, the particularists teach that God works in a determining way for the whole world through the person of Christ. They therefore reject - to a greater or lesser extent - the relativism to which pluralism gives rise.

*   *Magnetic particularism*

This movement views Christ as a magnet which attracts all other religions and fills them with his magnetic power. Nobody is saved without Christ, but they can be saved as Muslims, Buddhists or Hindus. Salvational knowledge of God is therefore possible without the revelation of the Bible. The grace which flows from Christ orients man - even unknowingly - towards God. This power flows through all religions and turns them into instruments of salvation when their adherents respond in a believing manner. (For example, Karl Rahner: *Foundations of Christian faith*.)

*   *Healing particularism*

The image here is of a life-saving vaccine which could heal anybody - even those who have died. (It is often asked what happens to people who never had the chance to hear about Christ, or those who died very young.) This view is almost the same as the old "second-chance-theory" after death. It differs from the preceding vision (which teaches that the meaning of Christ can be channeled through other faiths) in the sense that its full effect is dependent on direct and personal knowledge of God. (For example, Karl Barth: *Church Dogmatics*.)

Christ is the only source of our salvation, and conscious confession of Christ in this life is the only way along which we can hope for salvation. (For example, Leslie Newbigin: *The finality of Christ*.)

Heim's overview is of course a simplification and cannot possibly do justice to the many and growing visions on the issue of Christ's relationship with other "saviours". He also does not treat clearly enough the question as to what will happen to those who never heard the Name Jesus Christ. Not that I think that this is a question which can be answered. (Will we be able to give a Biblical answer to this while it is a question about which the writers of the Bible had little or no interest?) Shall we let it suffice that God is a just and impartial Judge and will therefore judge everyone in accordance with the light that he/she had? Might we say that for children who die young God's love in Christ is full and completely applicable? Or are we going too far in saying even this?

Imperialist arrogance?

The particularists regard the pluralists as relativists, and finally as sceptics. (It is a small step from "All religions are true" to "No religion is true").

The pluralists in their turn regard the particularists as exclusivists. They would be arrogant, intolerant, imperialist and even fanatic.

I do not, however, regard a person who believes that his faith is the true one as of necessity arrogant. He can, without relinquishing his convictions, acknowledge his own fallibility, as well as appreciate the perspectives of others. Especially if he is a Christian, he should not be arrogant at all, because then he should acknowledge that the knowledge which he has of God and Christ is not the result of his own cleverness or piety, but has come about precisely because of his own weakness. It is a result of the grace of God. And if a Christian feels impelled to share his faith with others, this need not be a sign of arrogance or religious imperialism, but it can also be viewed as a sign of a humble desire that others should also share in the saving Truth.

This brings us back to the big question:

Are all religions equal?

We would now like to answer this question by briefly comparing two world religions (as examples) with Christianity. These two are Islam and Buddhism.

We would like to compare their views on (1) God, (2) the world and (3) man. As regards man, we would like to indicate what, according to each of these, is (4) wrong with man, as well as what they suggest (5) by way of therapy. The therapy would be indicated in terms of what each views as the way to salvation.

The result is as follows:

	Buddhism	**Islam**	**Christianity**
1 God	The All, Absolute	Allah, Judge and Ruler	Father (the Compassionate), Son (the Saviour), Holy Spirit (the Comforter)
2 World	Maya (illusion	A determined universe	God's creation with history under his guidance
3 Man	A divine spark	A cog within the plan of Allah	A free and responsible person, created in God's image, in a religious relationship with the Creator
4 Diagnosis	Caught in matter and thus suffers	Lack of submission to Allah	Sin, rebellion, disobedience to God's laws

5 Therapy Road to salvation	Don't cling to the earthly, let go of the material, become ONE with the Absolute by way of the "eightfold route"	"Five duties" to come to submission	Accept Christ's offering in faith
6 Core Difference	Man "ascends" and disappears into the Absolute (mysticism)	Man "earns" salvation	God comes (in Christ) to man and offers salvation through grace

I would like to direct attention specifically to number 6 in the three columns (the core difference among the three religions). Although the differences emerge clearly at all the other points (1-5), the core difference has been summed up in number 6. All non-Biblical religions are dominated by the question: What should *I* do to gain salvation? Or: What should *I* do to find god (or the absolute, should the particular religion not accept a diety)? In Christian religion this is exactly the opposite: Salvation need not be earned by *me* in the first place - *God* gave it to us through grace in Christ.

From the simple diagram it emerges that the differences between religions are not simply *relative* but *essential*. Religions are therefore *not equal* (in the sense of *being the same*, of the *same value*), not even in their so-called core. The Christian faith, based on the Word of God, is a *unique* road to salvation not found in any other religion.

A comparison of religions from another angle

Because it is important to realize that not all religions are the same or amount to basically the same, another effort to indicate the differences among them will be made.

Each individual is in a special relationship of dependency towards that which he experiences as divine, that is, not dependent on anything else.

How do traditional Africa, the secular West, the mystic East and the Bible view this religious relationship?

It should be stated beforehand that all people and their cultures are religiously determined. The fact that modern Western scientists maintain that they are not religious should not deceive us. The fact that some people do not participate in religious ceremonies should likewise not deceive us. Even less the fact that certain Oriental religions do not (as Christianity does) acknowledge the existence of a separate deity.

*   *Three main types: traditional African, secular Western and pagan Eastern religion*

o   According to *traditional African religion*, there is only one continuing reality, of which a part is divine and the rest therefore dependent. (In diagrammatic form, a large circle with a smaller circle inside it.)

o   In the *secular West*, remarkably, we get something similar. Something in reality is regarded as self-sufficient, independent, absolute (thus deified), on which the rest is then dependent. A clear example of this would be the view of the so-called atheist, Karl Marx. He regarded matter as the basic reality, which would develop dialectically in accordance with certain inherent laws. He was therefore in no way a-religious. The same happens in the case of the other -isms. A mathematician absolutizing the mathematical aspect of reality regards numbers (or other aspects of maths) as in-themselves-sufficient realities on which all other things depend. The same can be said of economism, technologism, etc.

o   The *Eastern world* (Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism and Taoism) inverts the order: the non-divine is a division of the divine, because the divine is limitless and all-encompassing. (Diagrammatically: once again a large circle - the divine - and a smaller one inside - the non-divine or human.) Where in the case of traditional African religion, and also the secular West there is a clear distinction between the divine and that which is not divine, this is not the case with most Eastern religions (excluding Islam). Because: if the non-divine in its totality is part of the divine, there is not really anything

that is not divine! And if this is the case, it is not possible to distinguish between the two.

Eastern religions propose that although the divine is the essence of all things, the ordinary things do not appear divine and the divine cannot be discovered so easily in the ordinary things. The contrast is thus not that between a part of reality which is divine and a part which is not, but between the divine nature of all things and the illusion that there are things that are not divine. This is not meant to say that the everyday experiential world is real and only less important than the divine which it hides. No, everything around us is unreal, as only the divine exists. For Western logic this would seem to be a contradiction. Orientals regard Western logical thought as being part of the illusion, however! According to the Oriental that is precisely the greatest sin of mankind, viz. that he insists on clinging to the seeming world, which he can perceive with his senses. According to Eastern people it is wrong to give in to the temptation to see the everyday world as either real and partly divine (African religion) or as real but not divine (Christianity and Islam).

The only way in which to lift the veil of illusion and to discover the hidden divine reality is through a mystical experience. It is not the world that has to change - it rather has to be escaped from - but our perception of the world that has to change. The mystical experience is intensified to the point where the (illusory) self is destroyed when it is absorbed into the divine "as a drop of water disappears into the ocean". (In Hinduism the divine reality is therefore called Nirvana, the emptiness or nothingness.)
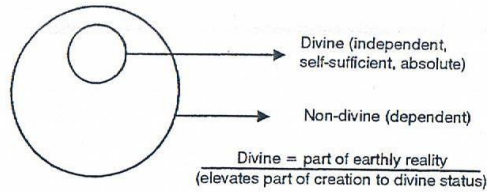
* *The Biblical view of religion*

According to the Biblical-Christian view there is not one continuing reality. The divine (God) is therefore not part of the (earthly) reality (Africa) and the (earthly) reality is also not part of the divine (the East). There is a clear distinction between Creator and creation. (In diagrammatic form, not one circle inside another, but two circles, the one beneath the other, with two-way arrows in between to indicate the relationship between God - the independent, the sovereign - and creation - the dependent, subject to the law.)

The Biblical vision therefore neither elevates a part of creation to divine status (Africa), nor does it feel contempt for creation as mere illusion (the East). Creation does exist in reality, and it is also important, because it is the sphere within which man is in communion with and of service to God.

The doctrine that God and the earthly reality, including man, should be clearly distinguished does not therefore mean that they should be separated. God is intimately connected with his creation, He reveals Himself and man can enter into communion with Him.

These then are the four basic types of religion: (1) traditional African and modern Western, (2) Eastern, and (2) real Biblical religion. Portrayed visually, the diagrams will look like the following:
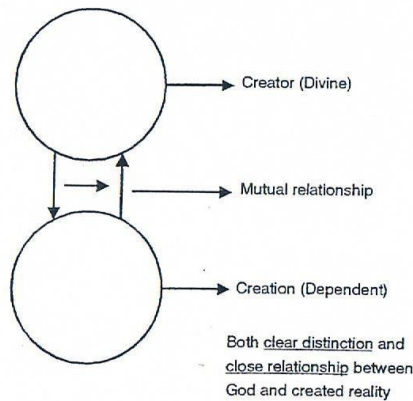
1. TRADITIONAL AFRICAN AND SECULAR WESTERN RELIGIONS

Divine (independent, self-sufficient, absolute)

Non-divine (dependent)

Divine = part of earthly reality
(elevates part of creation to divine status)

2. EASTERN RELIGIONS

Non-divine

Divine (limitless, all-encompassing)
= pantheism

Earthly reality (mere illusion)
= part of the divine

3. THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF RELIGION

Creator (Divine)

Mutual relationship

Creation (Dependent)

Both clear distinction and
close relationship between
God and created reality
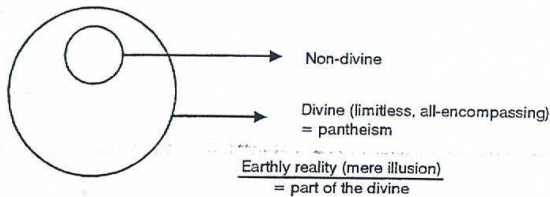
*   *Traditional African religion and secular Western religion - a comparison*

From the representation of the four main traits of the different types of religions it has still not emerged clearly enough that there are also great differences between traditional African religion and the contemporary Western. (Both regard something of reality as being divine.) There are radical differences, however, which will now receive attention.

In simple terms, we could regard modern Western culture as being *humanist* and traditional African religion as being *animist*. Western man, alienated from the Gospel, view *autonomous people themselves*, or their abilities, such as the intellectual, as absolute or divine, that is, dependent on nothing. The traditional African regards the *spirit world* as real and important. The Westerner would like to work out his own salvation through human *control* of nature. The African views his salvation as a *linking* in the right relationship with the spirit world, which controls all things. The means which the Westerner uses to attain his purposes is *scientific knowledge* (based on knowledge of natural laws), while the African strives to attain his end by means of *magical knowledge* (based on knowledge of the spirit world). Add to this that the happiness or salvation which is striven for in the case of the Westerner is ultimately aimed at the *individual*, while for the African the concern is always with the *community*.

It is obvious that the vision of life and the values of life which emanate from the two religions would be different. In the West the key values, for example, are power, change, progression and individual interests, while the core values in the case of Africa would be adjustment, interrelationship, tradition and group coherence.

2.2.2 *Religious freedom*

The fact that I do not wish to put Christianity on the same level with other religions (other religions also regard themselves as unique) does not mean that I reject freedom of religion and that I support the idea of Christian imperialism. The argument is often propounded that one can only support religious freedom if one accepts the idea of the equality of all religions. It is has already been stated, however, that there is a big difference between religious *equality* and religious *freedom*.

It is not necessary to remind you that lack of religious freedom and religious intolerance have in the course of history drenched the earth in suffering and blood. All religions have the tendency to regard their own forms of worship as the only true ones and the only way to salvation, and not to acknowledge other religions - to the point even of persecuting the adherents of the other religions.

* One could mention the religious wars between *Christians* themselves, and the crusades, during which the Christians wanted to overpower the Muslims by the power of the sword.

* The obverse would also be true: wherever *Islam* obtains the power of state, there is a trend to degrade Jews and Christians to the level of second-class citizens and only barely to tolerate their religions.

* Although *Hinduism* reveals a striking religious tolerance, there is a fierce intolerance when a Hindu converts to another religion, because in this way he/she affects the whole social fabric.

* *Buddhism* also reveals a willingness to listen to other convictions, but when Buddhism and nationalism are linked, a break with Buddhism is regarded as treason against the country.

* Well-known is the erstwhile intolerance of *Communism* - also a form of religion! - towards Christendom in Eastern Europe, Russia and other places where it had become the official state ideology.

From all these examples it clearly emerges that the danger of religious intolerance appears again and again when no clear distinction is made between religion and the state or politics, when an unholy alliance is entered into between them.

Motivation derived from the Bible

Religious freedom can be motivated or founded in different ways, for example:

* On the basis of religious *relativism*, already discussed above;

* *indifference* with regard to the demand for truth;

* even simply as the result of a *need for peace* among different religions.

Christians will want to know, however, whether the Bible supplies grounds for religious freedom, and what exactly these grounds are. This will be considered briefly.

* *The Bible reveals that each person has been created in the image of God* (cf. Genesis 1:27; 9:6 and James 3:9), and that God imparts to each individual certain rights and responsibilities (Genesis 1:28). God leaves room for people to seek Him out and to serve Him - He even allows people and nations to go their own way (Acts 14:16). He gives to each person freedom of conscience (Romans 2). We cannot therefore discriminate against anybody on the basis of his/her religious convictions.

* *The God of the Bible is a good, long-suffering God.* He lets his sun rise and set on good and evil alike; He lets his rain fall on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45). He is also patient and long-suffering and gives people an opportunity to come to conversion (John 4:2; Romans 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9 and Acts 14:17). God's patience does not mean that He will approve of any evil and inhumanity, but that He offers people the opportunity to come to conversion. The final judgement about what is true and what is false does not lie with man, the church or a government, but with God alone (Romans 12:19).

The most important ground or foundation for religious freedom, therefore, is not *man's* tolerance but *God's* tolerance or long-suffering. In this same way that God deals with man, people have to act towards each other (cf. Luke 9:52-56).

* *The Gospel is not disseminated through violence or force but through persuasion and conviction* (1 Corinthians 1:17 ff; cf. Zechariah 4:6). The battle is fought, not with weapons of the flesh, but of the Spirit (Matthew 26:52; 2 Corinthians 10:4). The Gospel comes in peace, not in force (John 18:36).

Although the church is represented as a militant church (Ephesians 6:12), and also as a persecuted church (John 15:20; 2 Timothy 3:12) and a pilgrim's church (Hebrews 11:13) which has no

special privileges, it is an institution which wages a *spiritual* struggle (Ephesians 6:12) and which does this with the weapons of the *Spirit* (2 Corinthians 10:4). It therefore cannot use political favouritism or even force to promote the kingdom of God.

*   *The Bible teaches that God's commandments hold true for all societal relationships and that each of these societal relationships should obey his law in its own unique way.* Each societal relationship has its own authority and responsibility, which differ from those of others. Marriage, family, school, church, business, state, etc., however, do not function in separation from each other, but with reciprocal links (cf. 2.1 above).

Although religious freedom is therefore not exclusively involved with two societal relationships (church and state), it is especially these two relationships that come into play. According to the Bible the state's task (Romans 13:1-7) is the promotion of impartial justice and freedom for all. Favouritism and discrimination should not be allowed. Although the state disposes of power, the concern in the first place is with justice, and its power should be used to effect this. The state's authority and power are, like those of other societal relationships, limited and should not dominate the other societal relationships, including the church (cf. again section 2.1 above).

According to the Bible Christians should pray for the government (1 Timothy 2:1-12). The other way round (according to the Belgic Confession of Faith, article 36) also applies: the government should allow Christians the opportunity to disseminate the Gospel and to let their influence work towards the good of society. Christians and the church have a prophetic calling to remind a government of its task (justice for all) and of the moral base on which a society should be built.

All this does not mean that the government should not listen to other religions or that the government should deny other religions their due place.

Although no religion should undermine the power of a government, conflict between religion (the church, in the case of

Christianity) and a government, which might be denying the principles of public justice, cannot be excluded.

Questions of Christians

Some of the questions - which mostly rest on misconceptions - which have been raised are the following:

*   *Does religious freedom not imply religious equality?*

This has already been denied. It should also be kept in mind that religious freedom is primarily a juridical concept, which indicates that the government in a religiously plural society should protect all religions and treat them equally. The right to free religious practice should be protected against possible contraventions by government.

*   *Does this not imply that the faithful (Christians) have to pull in the same yoke with unbelievers? (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).*

The concern in this text is with the church and not with the state. The prohibition therefore applies to the church, but not to the domain of the state.

It is important to remember that church and state each has its own God-given terrain and task. The church is a community of believers, and the state a public juridical community. Therefore the task of the state is not to promote one or the other form of religion, but to see to it that justice is done to all citizens in the country. In this sense the state is not "neutral" - it has received a specific task from God which should be executed.

This brings us to the next question, which is:

*   *Does religious freedom not imply state neutrality?*

Until the Sixteenth Century Reformation Christians still believed that the state had to be "Christian". This meant, *inter alia*, that the state actively had to promote the Christian religion and to persecute those who were not Christians. (The Old Testament idea of a Theocracy was made applicable to the state as well, instead of only to the church.)

The following four factors served as motivations why this viewpoint was later relinquished: (1) It led to violence and the persecution of non-Christians, because there was no freedom of conscience or of religion. (2) The realization dawned that man's ideas and the convictions of his heart could not be changed through force of government. (3) It also became clear that large-scale deformation and superficiality occurred when (as during the reign of Constantine and thereafter) Christianity became a state religion. (4) Christianity abused the state (politics) and, obversely, Christianity could easily be used by the state for its own purposes - even to justify repression (the phenomenon of "civil religion").

The correct interpretation

It is important to state clearly what exactly is meant by religious freedom. In the light of what has already been said in this paper, it could also be interpreted (wrongly) as meaning that the Christians' right to practise their own religion and to disseminate it is denied in the name of religious freedom.

Religious freedom for the Christians also does *not* (as has already emerged from the preceding, but which has to be reiterated to prevent misunderstanding) imply the following: neutralism; relativism; indifferentism or blanket tolerance.

It does not therefore imply that all values of society can simply be thrown overboard so that injustice, lies and evil can triumph. Satanists would, for example, as a result of the perversities of which they are guilty (including even murder) have difficulty to claim the Christian notion of freedom of religion.

2.2.3 *Confessional pluralism*

Up to now we have pleaded for *structural pluralism* or the freedom of different societal relationships (2.1 above). In each societal institution God calls us to a very specific task. Each one has its own sphere of authority. Each is equal in value to the other. Each has its own, inalienable, non-transferable or exchangeable rights and duties. No societal structure may dominate another, and/or use its authority or power to the detriment of another.

Then *confessional pluralism* (or freedom of religion) was advocated (2.2.2 above).

Freedom of religion does not only mean, however, the right one has as an individual to practise his/her religion. It also implies that one should be allowed to give expression to one's faith *in a structured manner in public*. Any faith can assume structural shape - examples of this would be a Hindu political party, a Muslim school, a Christian trade union or a Jewish Synagogue.

The standard response to this viewpoint that official recognition is given to the differences between religious groups in a society is usually that it is divisive, would affect unity and would therefore be a public threat. Because religion affects social harmony, it has to be kept out of the public sphere, and can only play a role within personal life (individualism!).

Confessional pluralism, however, does not advocate sectarianism or religious intolerance. The right that we would like to grant to Christians, for example, should also be extended to other faiths. The whole community's interests have to be served. This principle also objects to established groups and interests being privileged. Pluralism is more broad-minded than both individualism and collectivism, because it acknowledges both structural diversity and religious heterogeneity in society. It is also much better to acknowledge the diversity openly than to try and obscure it with the definite result that religious convictions and differences will be smuggled into the public arena in various disguises.

Seeing that many Christians in South Africa are still of the opinion that only the individual or the church should change society, I pleaded the case (1994:325-334) for Christian organizations. I also looked at the advantages and disadvantages of Christian organizations, and the different types of Christian organizations.

It is a pity, for example, that Christians in South Africa are still very poorly organized in political terms. I am only aware of three efforts, the Public Justice Movement, the Reformational Foundation for Public Peace and Justice and the United Christian Action, in this regard. The latter still seems to know very little about an integrally Christian

political philosophy. Apart from acknowledging God Trinitarian, and advocating a free market economy and parent-controlled (instead of merely state-controlled) education, it is more involved in moral issues such as anti-abortion, anti-homosexuality and anti-pornography.

2.3 A variety of cultures

Apart from social (structural) diversity and confessional (religious) diversity, there is the problem of cultural diversity. How should this be dealt with? As examples we can mention the following three types of multi-culturalism:

1. *Closed, forced institutional, regional multi-cultralism: a mono-colour culture.*
* *Example:* Apartheid South Africa.
* *Metaphor:* A plate of "Boerekos" (country fare) prepared and served separately.
* *Problem:* Diversity overemphasized and unity neglected.

2. *Closed, forced "melting pot" multi-culturalism: colourless culture.*
* *Example:* Canada - in name only, practically bi-cultural (English and French).
* *Metaphor:* A dish of soup - prepared from various substances, but finally impossible to recognize the ingredients.
* *Problem:* Unity overemphasized and diversity neglected.

3. *Open, free multi-culturalism: real multi-colour culture.*
* *Example:* Switzerland (German, French, Italian).
* *Metaphor:* Cheese, tomato and macaroni - one dish, but the ingredients still sivible.
* *Problem solved:* unity *in* diversity or diversity *in* unity.

Before attempting to deal with the question of multi-culturalism, a few remarks about culture in general and the contact between different cultures would be apposite.

2.3.1 Some important features of culture

Nobody changes the culture that he inherited easily

Seeing that culture teaches one how to behave, what to regard as valuable and what to believe, most people prefer to keep their culture intact. To change would mean a reorientation, and this brings uncertainty. In spite of this, culture is not like a spider's web or a bird's nest which is made in exactly the same way every time. Culture is man-made, and should therefore be amenable to change, for one should not be a slave or a prisoner to one's own culture.

The fact that another culture is different from yours, does not imply that it is inferior

Because one feels at home within one's own cultural "home", it is human to be suspicious and even hostile towards a strange culture. You easily draw a laager against the "threat" from outside. Contact between cultures - or at least initial contact - is therefore usually associated with conflict. One cultural group seldom spontaneously seeks contact with another, because it cannot really believe that the experience will be enriching. The enrichment of intercultural contact is usually a later result of the initial conflict!

No culture is wholly static

Change in a culture, apart from contact with people from other cultures, also occur because of changes in social, political, economic and other conditions. This change can be of a more superficial nature or have a more radical character. Usually the more visible "outside" of a culture changes more rapidly and more easily, as emerges, for example, from the assumption of Western clothing and customs by non-Western cultural groups. The deeper cultural layers, however, change more slowly and with more difficulty: the old values and norms, the worldview and religion can remain practically untouched even though the outside might have changed. It is only when this "inside" of a culture is affected that one can speak of a cultural crisis and cultural alienation, because it is this inner, more invisible layers of a culture which guide and determine the whole culture. The specific way in which one, for example, organizes one's marriage, school or university

cannot be understood without an understanding of one's guiding norms. In their turn norms depend on a specific worldview and one's worldview again is determined most fundamentally by one's religion.

No culture is totally homogeneous

In spite of the fact that one cannot easily be separated from the specific culture in which he grew up and in which he finds himself daily, all people belonging to a specific cultural group do not always act in exactly the same way. Influences from outside, sub-cultures within the own culture, as well as individual differences, will always play a role.

No culture is utterly unique

Because cultures - especially in our contemporary world - cannot exist in isolation, they are not totally closed and wholly unique. Cultures, therefore, do not only divide people, but they can also have shared traits - all of us are, after all, human beings with certain basic human needs and ideals. For that reason it is possible for people with divergent cultures and totally different backgrounds and experiences to find each other and to co-operate.

There is no wholly perfect or totally bad culture

The wealth of all the cultures together implies, at the same time, the finiteness, the limitation, of each separate culture. There is no such thing as a model culture - no culture is sacred or sacrosanct. There is also no such thing as a totally corrupt or evil human culture without any good in it. The presence of the Holy Spirit keeps the good intact throughout the length and breadth of creation. Obversely, there never has been, and in this dispensation there will not be, a culture which is utterly good, without corruption. Each culture reveals the inescapable and unmistakeable traits of human rebellion against God. In each culture we should therefore distinguish the good and the bad which are inextricably linked.

This is also true of African culture and Western culture - the two dominant cultures in South Africa. We still tend too much to associate Western culture with Christianity. Naturally the Gospel has, over many centuries, had a strong impact on Western culture, but it is not at

all a culture which at any time in its existence has been formed in accordance with the Word of God. Only dangerous ignorance about the unbiblical spiritual trends and forces which went into the formation of Western culture could make one hold such a notion. On the other hand, whites too easily associate African culture with blind, barbaric paganism. They forget that God talks to mankind not only through his written Word (the Bible) but also through his creational revelation - and He has been doing this through all the ages in Africa too, long before Western missionaries brought the Bible to Africa.

Each culture is a rich and complex phenomenon

This point is of great importance for purposes of our investigation of the core of Afrikaner culture.

The image of an onion could be used to indicate that each culture consists of different "layers". From outside inwards the following eight layers can be distinguished: (1) customs; (2) behaviour; (3) habits; (4) material and spiritual artefacts (such as, for example, buildings, language, arts); (5) institutions (such as marriage, the state and the university); (6) values and norms; (7) a worldview; and (8) the religious convictions of a group of people. Diagrammatically it can be represented as follows:
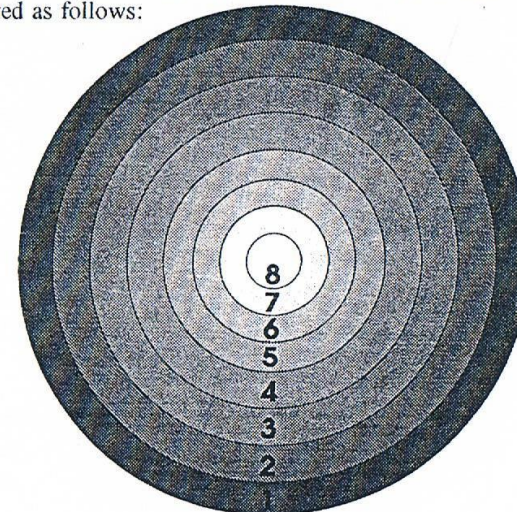
From this it emerges, for example, that language is culture, but that it is only one facet of culture, so that we should not narrow down culture to language. In the same way we should not put culture on the same level as ethnicity (a specific tribe or nation) - even though a certain group might subscribe to the same culture.

Religion and worldview

The most important, however, are the two innermost layers of a culture, viz. (7) religion and (8) worldview.

Religion is man's submission to a final certitude - the true God, or an idol. It therefore includes much more than prayer, reading holy writ or cultic rites. It is *total* (it encompasses the whole of man's life), *radical* (it determines and guides one's life from the root outward) and *integral* (it binds one's whole life into a unity).

In a worldview, as the word indicates, one's basic religious convictions are broadened. Although we are mostly unaware of the fact that we act in accordance with a worldview, and either articulate or question it (unless it is being contested), it is still present in all human beings. It is essential, moreover. It is a *window* which open on to the world for us. It is *glasses* which give our myopic eyes a wider view. It is a *map* which helps to orientate us in often confusing circumstances. It is a *compass* which helps us keep direction so that we do not get lost. It is a *sieve* which helps us to divide the wheat from the chaff, so that we can know what is important and what is not. It is a *measuring rod* or a normative criterion which helps us to be critical. It is a *key* to help us interpret events and phenomena. It is a *dynamo* which gives us the strength and motivates us in our calling, responsibilities and service. In the final analysis it is a *bastion* which offers stability, a sense of security, inner peace and joy. (For more details about a worldview, see Van der Walt, 1994:39-55).

A worldview determines and comes to concrete shape in all the other facets (1-6 above) of a specific culture.

2.3.2 *Cultural diversity and cultural unity*

We today encounter two extremes. On the one hand, right across the world, there are ethnic groups, often minorities, who put great stress on their own cultural identity. They are the proponents of a "monocolour" culture. On the other hand there are those groups who, because emphasis on cultural identity causes such disunity, propose a general or encompassing culture. People should take over as much as possible from each other's cultural values, so that a sort of communal culture can emerge from the melting pot. I call these people the proponents of a "colourless" culture. My own vision involves neither a monocolour nor a colourless culture, but rather a multicolour situation. Apart from *structural pluralism* and *confessional pluralism* also *cultural pluralism* should be acknowledged.

Cultural diversity *as such* is not wrong. Unity between cultures *as such* is also not wrong, but it should be positioned in the right place and be in balance with the diversity.

Instead of either *unity* or *diversity*, the principle should be that of diversity *in* unity, or unity *in* diversity.

What this viewpoint concretely implies can best be explained when it is applied to the South African situation. In this, as in the foregoing, I present my personal viewpoint as a Christian.

Cultural diversity according to the Bible

Cultural diversity comes into being because different people deal differently with creation. Also because creation offers such a wide diversity of ways for its cultivation: All people do not walk the same route from the Garden of Eden to the New Jerusalem! Otherness as such is therefore not sinful. The question is rather how we should experience these differences: as an *embarrassment* or as an *opportunity*?

An important prerequisite is that each cultural group should approach its calling not in arrogance or with an attitude of superiority, but in all humility, always aware of the limitations and deficiencies of one's own culture. No culture is *sacred* - all have to be *sanctified*.

This does not mean that cultures cannot be judged. When we judge, however, the first question should not be what is wrong with a culture according to *my own* (Western, Eastern or African) viewpoint, but what about the particular culture may be wrong in the eyes of *God*. Further: Let God first be the Judge of your own culture, before you use the criterion of his Word for judging other cultures. Should we stop playing God ourselves, we can immediately be released from unnecessary stereotyping, suspicion, arrogance and even fear.

Apart from God's Word, other cultures can also offer the opportunity to evaluate one's own culture critically. In this way one's own culture can of course be immeasurably enriched. Locking oneself up in one's own culture always leads to impoverishment. An Indian proverb says that "When you build walls around yourself or your own culture, you exclude far more than you include".

An example by way of illustration: African people attach great importance to personal relationships and are therefore very sensitive to interpersonal relations. They are community people. The Westerner is an individualistic activist. On the other hand, he is technologically creative. There is the danger, however, that he can become addicted to technology and increase his tempo of life even further. Can't we use the same technological aids (such as the telephone) to slow down the tempo and to create warmer, closer human relationships? Then reciprocal enrichment of two cultures will already have taken place!

In South Africa - today still - we often find the idea that human diversity is the cause of division among people. This is not the real reason, however - the reason is to be sought in the *sinfulness* of all people. To attribute the fault to cultural diversity is to accuse God of having willed the diversity -and so to hide one's own sinfulness!

Seen in a Biblical perspective, diversity is the true condition for human unity. (Unity is always the unity of a diversity!) An example from the Bible is Paul's metaphor of the church as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:14-31). For a body to form a unity and to function as one, it cannot consist of only one limb, but should have a variety of limbs. More: Precisely because each limb retains its own character (a foot remains a foot, an eye an eye), they can contribute to the unity. The eye cannot tell the foot that it is not needed. A body which is only

368

eye is not a body! The church is therefore a unity on the basis of the diversity of its members or limbs - thus an integrated diversity.

According to the Bible people and cultures differ not so that they can *oppose* each other, but exactly the opposite: so that they can *serve* each other, each using his or her character, gifts and talents. This is the way to create true communion.

And because diversity as such is not sinful, we also find it on the new earth. Just think of the thronging multitude before the throne of the Lamb - consisting of each nation, tribe and language (Revelation 7:4). Or of the kings and their nations who carry their (cultural?) treasures into the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:24-26). This is an open city (verse 25) - the good out of the cultural labour of nations over thousands of years is welcomed.

For South Africans it is important to realize that in spite of our cultural differences we are all just people, deeper than our differences is our shared humanity. Each person is not only *different from* but also *similar to* all others! The most important of all the things which we can share as people is our Christian faith. This then brings us to the second point, which is cultural *unity*.

But before this is dealt with, first a résumé of what has been said so far: Diversity *enriches* unity rather than *eliminates* it. And the obverse also holds: Unity *emphasizes* the diversity rather than *suspends* it.

Cultural unity according to the Bible

In spite of the efforts of apartheid theologians to indicate that the Bible places great stress on (culturo-ethnic) diversity, this is simply not true. It has been said above that the Bible does not deny diversity - it is a condition for unity to exist. But at the same time Scripture does not over-emphasize it. Does the Word of God not perhaps go out from the presupposition that man's sinful nature will inevitably see to diversity assuming its rightful place?

Where does one find the unity in the midst of all the diversity?

369

To my mind this unity can only be found in the core of each culture, viz. the religion espoused (the innermost circle in the above diagram). A large percentage (at least 75%) of all South Africans are Christians. Although people shape their Christian faith differently within their cultural milieu, their faith does remain the central core. (This will also apply to cultures where other religions predominate, such as, for example, Islam.)

It is on this deeper unity that the Bible places great emphasis. Just think of the passionate prayer of Christ (John 17:21-23) that his followers should become one - so that the world can believe that He is truly the Christ. Unity is therefore of the greatest importance for Him.

Paul the apostle had to struggle with the problem of cultural division. When the Judaists did not want to accept the converts from among the ranks of the heathens - unless they would first become "Jews" culturally - and threatened to create a schism in the church (Acts 15), Paul fought against this cultural chauvinism for the sake of the unity of the church. His statement in Galatians 3:28 is well-known: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" The same emerges from Colossians 3:11: "Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcized or uncircumcized, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all ...".

Paul does not only apply this to others. Listen to what he says about himself: " ... circumcized on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law a Pharisee ..." (Philippians 3:5). Applied to us, this could be: "I have been baptized, I am by birth a white, from the nation of Guise and Huguenot, a true Afrikaner, a Nationalist in my politics ...", OR "I am by birth a black man from the tribe of the Bahurutshi, a true Tswana, a supporter of the ANC ...".

But listen how Paul evaluates his impressive cultural genealogy in the light of his Christianity (verses 7-9): "But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I had lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is

370

through faith in Christ - the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith."

For that reason Paul did not stand on his own identity. For the sake of serving the kingdom of God, he was willing to "adopt" other cultural identities. For the Jews he became like a Jew and for the Greeks like a Greek (1 Corinthians 9:20).

Scripture does not therefore choose for one specific culture as the only valid criterion according to which cultures should be judged. It is the X-ray which is turned on all cultures. One should therefore not ask somebody to dump his culture - he should serve God *from within* and not *without* his culture.

Permit me one illustration, viz. the issue of language. There is no such thing as a sacred language - not even the Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek of the Bible. Language is simply a cultural means which should not stand in the way of effective and the widest possible service to the kingdom. Our vision of language reminds me more of the Old Testament model of Babel than of the New Testament model of the Pentecost. At Babel languages, because of sin, became a means of division. At Pentecost the linguistic variety (because of God's grace) is used to bring the same Gospel to all so that all can become one in Christ.

2.3.3 An example: My own cultural identity

In order to give more concrete substance to the above, it might be helpful to indicate how I view my own identity.

*   *I am an Afrikaner* who loves his language and writes, sings and prays in that language. I also know that apart from the standard Afrikaans (which I try to speak) other varieties of Afrikaans are also beautiful - such as Cape, Griqua, Namaqua and Hillbrow Afrikaans. I share my language with Eugene Terreblanche (a racist), Breyten Breytenbach (a Buddhist), Adam Small (a Christian), Achmat Davis (a Muslim) and Bram Fischer (a Communist).

*   *I am a South African*, who can watch a boxing match on TV and side with the South African of whatever race - fighting an American opponent. I like to cheer Ezekiel Sepeng and Elana Meyer

371

when they run for my country. I tell my students about the history of Paul Kruger, Hendrik Verwoerd, Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Luthuli, Nelson Mandela, F.W. de Klerk and many others who helped to shape our history and our country. I can do no other, because my life and the lives of my students are inextricably bound up in the stories of all these South Africans.

* *I am an African*, who can tell my students of my first meeting with Kenneth Kaunda in Lusaka in 1987, and of all my visits and lectures in other African countries. My heart breaks to think of the terrible genocide going on in Ruanda and the students there whom I still taught in April of this year. When books by Robert Mugabe, Samora Machel, Kwame Nkrumah, Oliver Tambo and Steve Biko were banned in South Africa, I collected and read them - because I like knowing how people think on the continent. I like Shona sculpture, the bright colours of African art and their rhythmical music. I feel much more at home among the tranquil, hospitable people of Africa than among tense individualized Westerners. I love the unspoilt beauty of this great continent.

* *I am also a citizen of the whole world*, who prizes a wide range of contacts with Christian scholars across the world, because my own mind would be so much poorer without it.

* Above all, *I am a Christian*, a child of God. My Christian identity is the most important to me.

As regards the other aspects of my identity, I would not like to set them up in rank order. At times I am first an Afrikaner, as for example when my grandmother told me about how the English herded them into a concentration camp in Potchefstroom like animals. At other times I am primarily a South African, proud of the fact that our country finally has a democratic government and no longer needs to be the polecat of the world. Then again I am an African, mad when I read about how the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank exploit Africa.

My story is inextricably interwoven with all these other stories. They all form part of our past and for that reason also an inherent part of our future.

Identity is not a static thing - it is dynamic. It should be a verb rather than a noun. Identity is that with which you can identify yourself. For that reason it changes all the time, as one's experiential world broadens and one comes into contact with other people, cultures, faiths, thoughts and ideals. Identity can either be very limiting - and impoverishing - or very wide-ranging - and enriching.

2.3.4 A few steps towards shared cultural values

The discussion group should consist of participants from a *variety of cultural* backgrounds, because: (1) it is more stimulating than mono- or bi-cultural groups, (2) provide a greater variety of perspectives, (3) the participants are challenged not to simply stick to their own standard reactions/viewpoints.

1. Conscientization: the participants became aware of the fact that their attitudes, behaviour etc. is motivated by differing values.

2. Formulation: the try to formulate what their values exactly entails.

3. Evaluation: by comparing them to the values of other participants, they start weighing their own values.

4. Transcending: they identify both weak and strong points in their own and the other cultures, and decide which elements of their own culture is to be recommended for exceptance by other cultures, which facets of another culture they are willing to except, and which cultural values from a foreign culture they will respect but cannot agree with.

5. Inspiration: the are encouraged to get involved and experiment with the new perspectives and possibilities.

6. Internalization: they accept the new values as their own.

7. Institutionalization: they apply the new, shared values concretely in various situations and societal relationships eg. and educational situation.

2.3.5 *The three basic principles*

The question posed right at the beginning of this paper was how a diversity of religions and cultures (in other words, a diversity of opinions and moral views) could be accommodated within one politico-social dispensation. I am convinced that it is possible, should the three principles which have been outlined in some detail above be accepted and applied.

Structural diversity means that human society is broader and more diversified than simply the political (the state). Other societal relationships may not be dominated or politicized by the state. They should have the necessary freedom to develop in accordance with their essential nature and so to enrich wider society.

Although everybody lives in the same country, and we are all citizens of the same state, *confessional diversity* should have its place. This means that different religious groups - if they should choose to - can organize their own religious institutions, schools, etc.

Cultural diversity also means that although one political nation is acknowledged, this does not mean that different ethnic nations do not have the right to protect and to promote their own cultures. (From the preceding it has also emerged that a close bond exists between culture and religion - a specific religion usually forms the core of a specific culture. This is true even of a so-called secular culture.)

From what has been said above, it has also become clear that acknowledgement of confessional and cultural diversity need not be to the disadvantage of political unity - the diversity can in fact promote the unity. The danger is rather inherent in the opposite, viz. a totalitarian political system which, for example, in the name of nation-building, wish to enforce total uniformity on the whole of society.

An impertinent commentator might at this stage be tempted to say snidely that "Van der Walt is in reality just preaching the old apartheid doctrine". Such a person would be wrong, because to my mind the apartheid ideology did not respect any of these principles. We will therefore use South Africa as a case study in order to support this statement.

3. THE AFRIKANER REGIME IN SOUTH AFRICA

Politico-social, religious and cultural factors together constituted the driving force behind the well-known - and hated - system of apartheid which dominated white Afrikaner thought for at least the past 50 years. We may well call it a powerful spiritual current. I would therefore like to use the image of a river and would like to test its waters in the following ways:

* the *colour* of the water, viz. its Calvinist character;

* the *taste* of the water - the Christian-National form which it assumed in South Africa;

* the *purity* of the water - in the light of the radical nature of the Gospel;

* its *healthy quality* - because it developed into a nationalist ideology;

* the *force* of the stream - the destructive effects of apartheid;

* finally the *clarity* of the stream - are we willing, in the light of the foregoing, to acknowledge and confess that we deviated from the Biblical way and that we are willing to listen to the Word of God anew?

3.1 The colour of the stream

The Afrikaners who ruled South Africa for the past fifty years and longer were Christians. More specifically, they were largely Protestant Christians. Even more closely: they were Calvinist-Protestant Christians.

There need be no doubts about the "colour" of the specific Christian worldview that the larger part of the population adhered to. The following few statements from Calvinist ranks and outside should serve to confirm a generally known fact:

* In a leading article in *Word and Action* (9[46]:1-3, April 1966), the mouthpiece of the Afrikaner Calvinist Movement, Calvinism is called the Samsonian secret of the Afrikaner, the powerline running through his history. Therefore: "Those who understand Calvinism will understand the Afrikaner and his history - the senseless and the wonderful both. He should also know that the Afrikaner who has relinquished Calvinism for another kind of faith or worldview need not be vanquished, because he has already, like Samson, lost his strength in his sleep".

* W.A. de Klerk (1975:xiv) says that "they key to the Afrikaner is Calvinism".

* Sheila Patterson (1957:177) is of the conviction that "It was the ... doctrines of Calvin that moulded the Boer into the Afrikaner of today ... ".

* Dunbar Moodie (1975:ix) states that " ... the Afrikaner ... grew out of Calvinism".

* Irving Hexham (1975) in his study of the Reformed Church in South Africa comes to the same conclusion.

Literally thousands of articles have in the course of the years been published about different aspects of this worldview. The range of this oeuvre is so huge that a four-part bibliography, *Die inslag van die Calvinisme in Suid-Afrika (The Impact of Calvinism in South Africa)* (1980) could only make a dent in the mass.

The unique nature of Calvinism

But how does this worldview differ from other Christian visions of life which have been and still are adhered to in South Africa? What is its distinguishing "colour"? Before we can supply an answer to this important question, we should make clear why there are different Christian visions of life. Christians, who all subscribe to the same revelation by God, should hold the same worldview - should they not?

Each human being is confronted by evil

Each human being - non-Christians too - is aware of the fact that the world we live in is not normal - something is wrong somewhere.

Those who do not believe in God, who do not know his revelation, are forced to localize this evil, and to look for it in an aspect of creation. This is then regarded as the root of all evil, while the rest of creation is seen as the source of hope and redemption.

An example of this is the vision of some people on the past and on the future. Some (traditionalists, conservatists and romanticists), for example, maintain that only the past is good. The future or anything new is regarded with grave suspicion. Others, again (progressivists, utopianists, existentialists) maintain that the good is always located in the future. The past can safely be ignored.

A subsequent example is the separation between the sexes. The one group (the chauvinists) idealize the male sex and do not have a very high opinion of women. Obversely, some feminists are very slighting about the male sex - the only saving grace for a man would be to reveal more feminine traits.

These examples could well be multiplied by the hundred. In the political arena too people tend to see a member of their own party as an angel spreading light, as against the other party, which is seen as the incarnation of the devil. Would it not be closer to the truth to state that both parties have their moments of truth and their blind spots?

The intention is to make the following clearer by way of these examples: Somebody who does not live in accordance with God's revelation depreciates something in creation, or even demonizes it, while at the same time elevating, even idolizing, something else. According to Scripture, however, no aspect of creation is either wholly good or wholly bad. Everything in creation shares in both the good and the bad. In the past and in the present, in man and woman, we encounter something of the good, but also the taint of sin and corruption.

Naturally there are also things of which we could say without fear of contradiction that they are evil. These are the things that God's commandments expressly warn us against, such as idolatry, whoring, thieving, murder and so forth. However, from the examples above, it is clear that life cannot so easily be divided into a black and white part. Our lives reveal a mixed character. (Cf. Christ's parable about the good and the bad seed in Matthew 13:24-30).

The dividing line between good and bad does not lie somewhere between specific aspects or concrete things in creation. The distinction between good and bad is not a *structural* but a *religious* distinction. It is a result of evil, which is an intruder, and which should in reality not be tolerated in creation.

It is also clear that the *alleged* source of evil can not be the *real* source of evil (Satan and man's propensity for sin). The same is true of the source of hope and redemption: it is something in creation, instead of redemption in Christ and through the Holy Spirit. Both the source of misery and the source of redemption are thus sought in the wrong places!

A final result of such viewpoints is that the guilt for the misery of the world is directly attributed to God Himself. He is, after all, the Creator of the world in which we live. If there is a part of creation that is evil, then this is his responsibility! This, of course, is not true. Scripture repeatedly states, in the first book already (Genesis) that what God made was good, very good. What we encounter here is an age-old strategy by man: Eve puts the blame on the snake, Adam puts the blame on Eve - and even God, who had given him this bad woman. Man today still refuses to acknowledge personal guilt.

Christians are also the victims of this vision

It is not only those who do not believe in God who tend to insert a good/bad dichotomy into the structure of creation. Unfortunately this kind of worldview has been part of Christian thought for 2 000 years.

This double focus worldview can assume different forms. One of the ways in which this has happened has been the two-spheres doctrine of nature and grace, or creation and redemption. We can distinguish four

kinds of such dualistic viewpoints: (1) redemption (a) as *against* creation (b); (2) redemption (a) *alongside* creation (b); (3) redemption (a) *above* creation (b); and (4) redemption (a) emanating *from* creation (b). We could typify the first three viewpoints as more orthodox-Christian and the fourth one as liberal-Christian. (5) Redemption (a) *of* creation (b) is the Biblically correct viewpoint, because it rejects the dualism of the preceding four viewpoints in favour of a total, radical, and integral Christian worldview. (For more details, see Van der Walt, 1994:90-122.)

Diagrammatically, one could represent these five worldviews as follows:
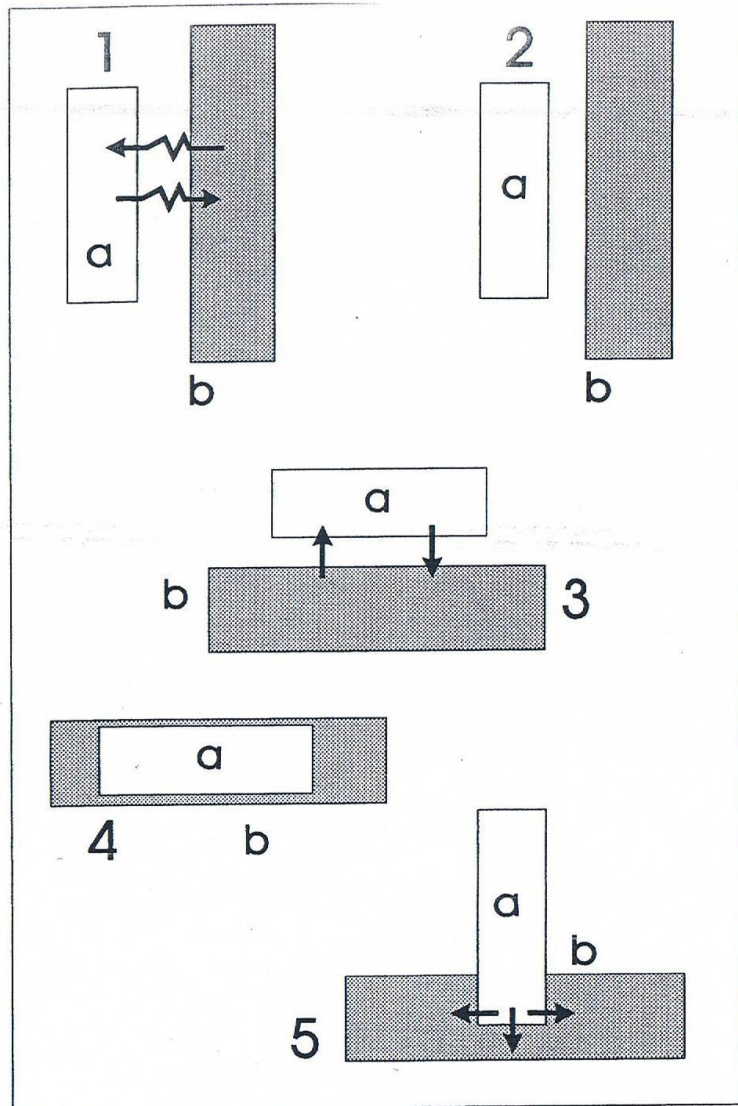
Representatives of the *first* worldview were, among others, the sixteenth-century Anabaptists, Karl Barth, the older forms of Pentecostalism and early Evangelical groups. The *second* worldview we find in Martin Luther and his followers, as well as in more recent Evangelical groups. The father of the *third* worldview was Thomas Aquinas (thirteenth century), and subsequent Roman Catholicism. The *fourth* (liberal) viewpoint we find, among others, during the Renaissance, in Immanuel Kant, as well as in deist Christian thinkers. The fathers of the *fifth* (reformational) worldview were sixteenth-century reformers such as John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli. This tradition runs through to Groen van Prinsterer, Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck and Christian philosophers such as Herman Dooyeweerd, Dirk Vollenhoven and South Africans such as Hendrik Stoker and Jan Taljaard.

Some illustrations

The relationship of the Christian to politics, technology and a rock concert will be discussed to illustrate these five different worldviews.

The relationship between a Christian and politics could be regarded in the following ways:

1. The Christian should take a stance *against* politics. He is not permitted any involvement in politics whatsoever, because political life as such is evil and a contradiction to the Christian faith.

2. The Christian should take up a position *alongside* politics. Being a Christian and practising politics are two totally different issues, in no way related to each other. A Christian may *also* be a politician, but his Christian faith could and should have no influence on his political activities because then he will confuse entities which should be clearly separated and kept apart.

3. According to this viewpoint the Christian regards himself as being *superior* to politics. Politics has to be guided and even dominated from "above", it has to be Christianized. It is impossible, however, to change political life in a fundamental way, because it is in fact an autonomous area. A political meeting may therefore be started with

Scripture reading and prayer, but the subsequent political debate itself will not necessarily testify to a Christian approach.

4. The liberal Christian will try to *baptize* political life (civil religion). According to this viewpoint, the Gospel is forced into giving religious support to a particular group or nation's political identity and ideals even to the extent of justifying its sinful actions. (My own country, during the apartheid regime, is an excellent example of this position.)

5. The reformational viewpoint differs from all the preceding ones in that it teaches that the Christian should be directly involved in politics to *transform and renew* it to serve God. Political life should be changed in order to respond obediently to God's norms for justice. A Christian politician should not, like a minister in the church, deliver a sermon in the political arena, but nevertheless accept the responsibility to witness *politically* about God's will for man's political conduct.

In the case of the relationship between the Christian and modern technology, proponents of the five worldviews take the following stances:

1. Technology is by nature something evil. The Christian should be against it and resist technological advancement.

2. Technology is technology and religion is religion. Technology may therefore develop as it pleases. Christian norms are not applicable and should not interfere.

3. Technology should be kept in check by the Christian, the church and theology. We need a "theological perspective" on contemporary technology. This, however, does not imply an integral change from *within*, but resembles a layer of varnish on the *outside*.

4. Productive technology, i.e. technology providing results, is good technology. Technological development heralds - in spite of some negative side effects at present - the liberation of mankind. There cannot be any radical difference between "ordinary" technology and a technology practised from a Christian perspective!

5. Technology is neither inherently bad (viewpoint 1) nor inherently good (viewpoint 4), but simultaneously reveals both positive and negative trends. Both should be recognized. Because negative elements are also a reality, the Christian has a reformational duty in this area.

Our last example addresses the question of whether a Christian should attend a rock concert. The advice of the Christians adhering to the five different worldviews would look like this:

1. Stay away - it is totally wrong!

2. Please go - but I want to see you in church on Sunday!

3. You may attend - but you have to pray before or afterwards!

4. If it is a good performance - no problem.

5. Ask yourself whether your attendance will be to the honour of God. Will it be possible to serve Him - not *before* the event or *afterwards* - but *in* your attendance?

It should be kept in mind that there are activities and their subsequent results which a Christian should *reject*. These are usually things which God explicitly forbids in his law, like stealing, fornication, murder, etc. In other instances, however, the existing could be *reformed*, and in the third place the relatively good should simply be *improved* to be able to answer more fully to the will of God.

The reformational approach to life, therefore, is not an easy, simplistic approach, simply accepting or rejecting the *status quo*. It can sometimes be very difficult, because such an approach requires careful discernment. It is also not without real dangers: we should not underestimate the power of secularism when involving ourselves in our environment to improve or reform it. But at the same time the reformational approach is the only really liberating approach. It does not flee the world in order to serve God, or betray God in order to be present in the world. Its aim is to serve God *in* his world!

Two final examples to illustrate this worldview. One does not have to choose between being a Christian or a sportsman/-woman. Neither do you have to strive to be both a Christian and a sportsman/-woman. (A prayer *before* a match or Christian witnessing *off* the sportsfield.) One should simply be a Christian sportsman. In the way one practises one's sport (in fairness, showing respect for one's opponents, obeying the rules of the game, not fighting, etc.) one should be salt and light. The same applies to scholarly work: not Christian *or* scholar, neither Christian *and* scholar, but simply a *Christian scholar* should be our ideal.

The reformational viewpoint therefore is clearly not an individualistic viewpoint only concerned about personal sins. Its intention is also to reform sinful or evil structures.

Combatting structural evil

In earlier times Christianity was exclusively concerned with personal vices, or the harm that one individual could cause another. Today there is a reverse obsession: an increasing preoccupation with institutional violence.

What is a Biblical reply? It is very clear that God condemns *all* sins: personal sins or vices (such as drunkenness, sexual vices, lying, deception, stealing, idolatry) as well as sins within the social system (oppression, violence, exploitation, social injustice). There are no *big* or *little* sins in his eyes. Were one to deprive one's labourers of a fair wage, one would be as guilty as a bank robber.

It is very important to be aware of structural evil for the following three reasons:

* In the first place, it is necessary because we have not yet been made conscious to a sufficient extent of this form of sin against God. This is probably because we still insist on interpreting the Gospel in an individualistic fashion. (Only my personal salvation is at stake.) We have to realize that sinful structures are just as abhorrent to God. Read Isaiah and Amos in this respect.

* In the second place, social evil concerns many people. Many suffer, for example, when the state does not fulfil its task of impartial justice for everybody.

* In the third place structural evil often operates very subtly. One's eyes have to be opened to recognize this, as it might seem natural by virtue of having been legalized. Often there is no sign of direct oppression - the wielders of power and the rich simply neglect their duty to do something about the plight of the poor.

It will therefore gain us nothing to have a pure doctrine regarding incarnation, resurrection, ascension and the advent of Christ while denying the other parts of the Bible where God does say that He wants nothing to do with our religion because we do not practise justice (cf. for example Amos 5:21-24). Such a one-sidedness in theology is just as heretical as having a wrong conception of the dual nature of Christ!

Meaning of the word "reformational"

I hope it is clear from the preceding in what sense we use the word *reformational*. It is not used in an *ecclesiastical* sense, referring to a group of (Reformed) churches. Nor is it used in a *confessional* sense, denoting adherence to a certain number of (Reformed) creeds which originated in the Sixteenth-Century Reformation. These two meanings of the concept reformational are not wholly excluded. My idea of reformational, however, points to a transformational *worldview* which stands for a perspective that calls for the renewal of individuals and the reformation of society according to God's revealed norms. This is the vision of not only the Reformed churches but also of Christians from other ecclesiastical traditions.

I prefer to use the word *reformational* rather than *reformed* to indicate this worldview, because it stresses the fact that this worldview is not static but dynamic. The reformational worldview was not given final shape in the sixteenth century, so that we need only conserve our "reformed heritage". Because reformation is an ongoing process, in which we always seek to bring every thought and action in agreement with God's will, it can never be completed.

Reformational or *reforming* (instead of *reformed*) also helps us to guard against complacency and smugness . Being truly reformed does not mean that we can sit back in smug satisfaction at "having arrived", but should rather remind us of the fact that our convictions, confessions, dogmas, worldviews - the whole of our lives - have only made some progress in the way that God truly wants.

To think and to act reformationally is therefore to think and do Biblically.

This, of course, does not imply that I am elevating the reformational worldview to the status of a final and only Biblical worldview. There is a difference in how people categorize others and how they categorize themselves! Most Christians will describe their position as "grace transforms nature", while they describe the other Christian viewpoints as grace against, above or alongside nature. We therefore have the tendency to describe what others do as a retreat from the world, and our own as an attempt to change it!

The reason is often that different Christian groups advocate different modes of changing society. Traditionally, the Evangelicals have viewed social transformation as coming about largely through individual action; the Anabaptists through the church as an alternative community; and the Reformed people have emphasized the fact that transformation will come about largely via Christian organizations. Each of these groups has the regrettable tendency to view the other's form of action as a kind of withdrawal from society, rather than another way to change it. Our strategy should rather be to recognize positive elements in all the different approaches and to make use of them in our efforts at reforming society.

3.2 The taste of the water from the stream

Generally known

There can be little doubt as well about the "taste" of the Reformational stream which ran through our history: this was in the shape of the Christian-National ideal. The article from *Word and Action* referred to above states very clearly that Calvinism in South Africa means Christian-National. The already mentioned bibliographies (*The Impact*

of *Calvinism in South Africa*, 1980) supply a wide range of material in hundreds of articles, in categories such as "Afrikanerdom and Afrikaner identity", "Christian-National", "Christian-National Education" and "Christian-National Higher Education". P.G. Schrotenboer (1968) says, for example, that "Peculiar to South Africa is its Christian-Nationalism. There is nothing quite like it today anywhere in the world ... Christian-Nationalism is a single word to express a unified cultural motive and policy. It is this both by intention and in fact".

Organizationally promoted

It was not only a matter of writing about Christian-National - it was actively promoted by a variety of organizations (cf. for example Van der Walt, 1978 and 1981, which discuss a range of these organizations).

One of the most important organizations (not discussed in the above article) is perhaps the Afrikaner Broederbond, established in 1918 and which has, since 1920 until very recently, been a secret society (cf. Pelser, 1979, Serfontein, 1979 and Wilkins & Strydom, 1978), as well as all the other public organizations which were created by it, such as the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Societies) established in 1929. The role of the three Afrikaans churches and the Afrikaans language universities should also not be under-estimated in the promotion of the Christian-National ideal.

It is not sufficient, however, just to confirm that Christian-National was the taste or the flavour which Calvinism assumed in South Africa. It is more important to know precisely what this involved (cf. Van der Walt, 1976 and 1986).

Proponents of the Christian-National worldview usually stressed the following:

The word-order

First "Christian" then "National". The "Christian" which comes first must qualify "national". The intention is good, but I wonder how strong the argument is. Does this qualification not work both ways? In

"Christian-Liberal", for example, the "liberal" clearly qualifies the "Christian" - it suggests a specific kind of Christianity!

Subtle argument, however, is not the point. What strikes one is the typical two-realm thinking which is also evident in Christian-National, viz. that the Christian must determine, Christianize, qualify, direct, guide, weave through, shine upon, even restrain the national. From the Christian there is a "tempering" influence upon the national. Reading various articles on the subject, one gets the impression that the national is something apart from the Christian. The assumption seems to be that national by nature has nothing to do with Christianity, or that the two are enemies locked in battle.

The question is whether it differs in any way from the classical two-realm doctrine. According to this doctrine the terrain of grace (the Christian) also is primary, and the natural secondary or sub-ordinate. According to the classical doctrine the nature-pole also has to be Christianized from the grace-pole. It has already been clearly stated that to "Christianize" is similar to varnish, chromium-plating, gilding; making something appear better than it really is.

Apart from the word-order the very fact that *two* concepts, two specific concepts, are combined in Christian-National, puts one on the alert. "Christian" is clearly a reminder of the grace-pole, and "national" of the nature pole. In the past the two most important concerns in the life of our nation were the Church and politics - just as the church and the state in the Middle Ages were the two most dominant societal relationships and were viewed through the bi-focal lense of the two-tier doctrine.

The hyphen

The supporters of Christian-National hold the view that the hyphen (an abbreviation for "and") serves to emphasize the fact that the two concepts, and the two worlds, should never be seen apart. Our thinking must not be merely Christian or merely national but Christian-National.

Furthermore, it is often pointed out that although a hyphen joins words, it does not put them on a par with one another. The "Christian" and

the "national" are not made to be of equal value by the hyphen. One of the writers on the subject of Christian-National has suggested that it would be better to use the term "Christian National" without the hyphen.

Again there arises the question: how does it differ from the dangerous grace-nature theme which also recognizes the priority of the supernatural or Christian?

The same writer mentioned above also suggested that in order to elevate the "Christian" still further, apart from the omission of the hyphen, the capital letter N should be replaced by a small n ("national").

The question in my mind is whether such linguistic manipulation is of any value *if the scheme itself is basically wrong.*

The difficult balance

The great emphasis on the right balance between Christian and National has already become clear in the preceding paragaph. It is a balance full of tension because "Christian" and "National" cannot be accorded the same evaluation - the national is subordinate to the Christian. At the same time Christian and National may also not be seen in contradistinction to each other - Christianity is not necessarily opposed to nationhood. Christianity and Afrikanerdom, however, may not be seen as equivalent concepts, as this could easily land us in a national(istic) Christianity.

On the one hand these two concerns, Christianity and the national feeling, should be kept together. Anti-national Christianity, like anti-Christian nationalism, is wrong. On the other hand, they should not come too closely together, because nationalistic Christianity, the same as Christian national*ism*, is also wrong.

The tension-laden dialectic is apparent: man as man, or man as Afrikaner over against man as Christian. If the tension becomes unbearable a choice will have to be made: some will choose for Afrikanerdom and some for Christianity.

In this type of thought it also becomes easy to avoid accusations of partiality or extremism. If you are accused of religious fanaticism, it is easy to plead an interest in matters of national and human interest. If you are accused of chauvinism, i.e. extreme nationalism, or even humanism, you can plead an interest in religious matters. When one is trapped in the upper storey (grace - the Christian), one quickly moves down the stairs (nature - the national). And when one is accused of permanently and solely inhabiting the ground-floor, one hastens to the first floor, peeping through an upper window to refute the accusation. Thus it is possible to play in-and-out the windows in this double-storeyed structure to suit your own convenience. Dualistic thinking is convenient and easy.

The Christian is not anti-national but also not nationalistic. Of necessity his thinking is concerned with the national, but not too much, otherwise he is not a true Christian any more. On the other hand Christianity can be emphasized in such a way that justice is not done to the national. It is clear that it is not easy to keep the balance. If there is, for specific reasons, too great an emphasis on the national, it should be diminished to do justice to Christianity. If there are circumstances in national life, for example low-level patriotism, which necessitate it, then the national should be placed above divisions among Christians and even differences of faith, e.g. between Christianity and Judaism.

At the end of the Middle Ages nature was emancipated from the sphere of grace and became independent. Not only did it become unfettered from the church but also from the divine. Nature was no longer under the whip of grace. So there is also the constant danger that in "Christian-National" the national could slip away from the domination of what is Christian, and become independent, e.g. secularized nationalism.

All this necessitates a deeper gauging of South African Calvinism, for we should not only determine the colour and the taste or flavour of it, but also its level of purity.

3.3 The purity of the stream

The problem

The central question is this: is the generally accepted view in South Africa, that Christian-National is an accurate reflection of the deepest purposes of Calvinism, correct? In other words: does Christian-National so clearly convey the central motif of Calvinism that it can not be misunderstood in the slightest? If this notion has something to do with the core, the essence of Calvinism, it is a prerequisite that it be stated with absolute clarity and with no ambiguity.

If, however, Calvinism in South Africa has veered somewhat away from the central ideas of Calvinism when it embarked on the Christian-National trail, we should not be afraid to admit this. Calvinism must advocate continuous reformation!

The point here is not merely criticism for the sake of criticism. This question is raised by someone of Calvinistic conviction, for whom it is of great importance.

The real solution

The writer has nothing against a sense of nationalism, nor against Christianity coming to fruition on the national level. He does, however, question the way it is done in the Christian-National point of view. From what has been said before, it appears that this whole issue is viewed too much in the light of a specified trend of thought, namely the two-realm doctrine. Christian and National are joined together along the lines of the nature-grace scheme. If this is done, then it is impossible to solve the problem on a Scriptural basis. The mere fact of the tension, and the stress on constant watchfulness against the inclination to one of two extremes, is already an indication of an error somewhere. It is futile constantly to be reminded to maintain the balance *in a scheme that is inherently wrong*. The correctness of the *scheme itself* must be examined.

What is pleaded for is therefore not an uncoupling of the Christian-National, so that you have an anti-national Christianity on the one hand, and an unchristian nationality on the other hand. Nor is the plea

for a closer connection between Christian and National. In the course of history there have been many writers who have emphasized either the tension or the close connection between nature and grace, without noticing that in so doing *they have not changed the basic line* of thought.

Historically speaking (in the struggle of the Afrikaner to keep his identity) it is understandable, but the fact that "Christian" is solely coupled with "national" is wrong, unnecessarily limiting. Not only his national life, but the whole of life should be Christian for the believer. To some extent this was the intention of Christian-National as it referred not only to politics, but also to culture and education. The fact, however, that the national features so prominently along with the Christian, to my mind, decidedly leaves it open to misunderstanding.

The whole of life, including the so-called national, should be renewed radically from the roots and not merely labelled Christian *from without*. What is Christian does not stand above or alongside our life in order to Christianize it, but it should work like a yeast through every aspect of life.

Some suggestions

The idea of Christian-Nationalism is crippled by two obvious theological defects. In the first place Christ is given pride of place and the Father and the Holy Spirit are only present by implication. But apart from this one-sided Christomonistic aspect which distorts the idea of the Trinity, Christology is also narrowed down. Jesus is approached one-sidedly as Christ (Messiah). But according to Scripture He is also the Lord, the *kurios*. The Messiah-motif stresses *liberation*, while the Lord-motif emphasizes *dominion*: He is Lord of all, holds sway over all things.

This brings us to the concept of the kingdom, so crucial in the entire Bible, far broader and more comprehensive than Christian-Nationalism. Personally I would rather choose "kingdom politics", i.e. a politics which serves the kingdom of God and his righteousness than Christian-National politics, and "kingdom education" rather than Christian-National education.

392

The Biblical kingdom perspective could remove the false emphasis of Christian-Nationalism, and the wrong interpretations which others might attach to it:

*   In the first place it would be difficult to over-emphasize the national.

*   In the second place, the individual would come into his own more adequately. In the language of the proponents of the Christian-National system, it is not only Christian-*national* but also Christian-*individual* which is important.

*   In the third place, South African Calvinism would gain a wider perspective: it should not merely be something *individual* and *national* but also *global*. The Christians among the Afrikaner nation should come to realize more and more that their Christianity binds them to other Christians on the same continent and, further afield, to believers across the whole world.

The individual, national and worldwide aspects are all equally vital. The Lord Jesus Christ lays claim to me, my nation and the whole earth, for his kingdom knows no boundaries.

The big danger

It was not easy to determine the specific colour of the Christian National worldview. Should it be indicated in terms of the diagram (see 3.1 above) as (2) C-N, (3) $\frac{c}{N}$, (4) C = N or (5) C > N? (2) Indicates the Christian as being located *next to* the National, (3) the Christian *above* the National, (4) the Christian as *equal to* the National, and (5) the Christian *reforms* the National. It is possible that there were different emphases at different stages in the history and development of the Afrikaners and their leaders. Further research will be necessary to determine this more accurately.

Two things are clear, however. (1) The first two viewpoints are dualistic and therefore an obstacle in the way to radical, total and integral Christian thought and action. (2) The fourth viewpoint remains a big temptation (also as a result of the inherent tension contained in the other two dualistic viewpoints): The Christian merely

393

sanctions the national. What is national is good, and therefore Christian. Unnoticed, an inversion occurs (C-N becomes N-C). Instead of religion determining culture, Afrikaner culture determines - and limits - Christian faith.

This brings us to the next important point - the gradual degeneration of the Christian National worldview into a nationalistic ideology. The process of testing therefore has to be focused more sharply ...

3.4 The healthiness of its water

Quite a number of tributaries

By way of introduction it should be mentioned that, as in the case of an ordinary river, the cultural stream of the Afrikaner cannot be gauged fundamentally without due consideration of the tributaries feeding into it. Other views of life, such as for example late feudalism, German romanticism, national-socialism ("volk" socialism), colonialism and racism at particular stages became part of the mainstream and made it murky and poisonous. Thus we find a strong national-socialist trend during the thirties to the forties (Van Heerden, 1972). In the fifties and sixties the socialist elements were replaced by capitalism, while the nationalist element remained. Seeing that different studies about this have been published (cf. the bibliography at the end) we will not go into this in more detail.

The most important aspect here is that the stream, as a result of all the impurities (which had been there, originally, and which were also added in time), had become a thick sludge which had lost its dynamism and began to suffocate everything. Stated differently: the Calvinist worldview solidified and changed into an ideology. Initially it had been immature and seemingly innocuous, but in time it became a mature, fully-fledged and dangerous ideology.

Ideology

What is an ideology? A worldview is situated between God's revelation and reality (cf. Van der Walt, 1994:44 for a diagram to explain this). It listens to both sides, so that it can indicate direction. An ideology, however, does not listen to God's revelation any more,

and also does not wish to let reality speak. It attempts to force God's revelation and the whole of reality and human society into a preconceived and constraining schema. It is therefore the idolization of a specific framework of thought, and it leads to fanaticism and a blinding of its adherents: they only see what their tunnel vision allows them. (For a detailed explanation of what an ideology is, cf. Goudzwaard, 1984; Nürnberger, 1979 and Van der Walt, 1984, 1992, 1994).

My own simplified definition reads as follows: Ideology, which usually comes into being in a threatening situation, is a substitute for true religion, which has as its highest ideal an all-encompassing purpose, to the attainment of which any (power) means may be used, norms adapted, sacrifices demanded, and a specific image of the enemy propagated.

In the light of this definition, the ideology which finally came to be dominant in South Africa can be typified as follows:

A Nationalist ideology

Nationalism had as aim breaking with the inequality of the feudal system and hierarchical view of authority on which it was built. The important question, however, is how the diversity among people should be understood should they all be equal. The solution proposed by nationalism has been that people do not stand *beneath* each other (as, for example, in the hierarchical feudal system), but in clearly distinguishable groups *next* to each other. In other words, there is not a vertical but a horizontal distinction between people. It is not a distinction of non-equals but of equals. (Cf. the well-known apartheid credo of "separate but equal".) This separateness would at the same time imply the freedom of a nation ("volk").

Afrikaner nationalism should be understood against the background of the threats to the Afrikaner nation: first by British colonialism and imperialism; later on black people were regarded as a danger because they outnumbered the whites. There is nothing wrong with being proud of one's national identity and to try to protect it and to maintain it. (All over the world we today experience a revival of ethnic nations.) What is wrong, however, is to absolutize national identity

and to uphold it to the detriment of other ethnic groups, as happened in the case of the apartheid ideology. National pride and identity are good, but nationa*lism* is wrong.

In the light of the penetrating analyses which philosophers like Degenaar (1975 and 1978), Goudzwaard (1984:39-48), Leatt (1986:64-104) and Wolterstorff (1983:99-123) have made of the South African nationalist ideology, this aspect need not be considered in detail.

A communialist or collectivist ideology

There are, according to apartheid, no ranks among human beings but rather categories, and each human being belongs to such a homogeneous category which encompasses the individuals. The individual is not, therefore, the basic building block of humanity. Individuality is totally subservient to collectivity. The group is a closed entity in itself. The diversity does not primarily lie in the individual, but in a number of homogeneous groups which exist *adjacent* to each other and which are called nations ("volke"). Each nation is unique, has a unique "national soul", its own language, culture and communal history.

The national group therefore demands primary ontological status, it exists prior to the individual. The nation does not come into being through free association - one cannot choose the group to which one wishes to belong, one cannot acquire the group character. One is born into it, inherits it.

Man can furthermore only live meaningfully if he has a place within the group. For this reason it is necessary for each group to have its own church, education, government, etc. In order to be fully human, each person has to be among his/her *own*. And in order to realize the *own* group, *others* have to be excluded. The group may never be a *mixture*.

For the sake of the complete development of man, humanity therefore has to be sorted into purified nations. This should be done not only biologically, but with regard to the entirety of existence: politically, ecclesiastically, educationally and even geographically. From this it clearly emerges that apartheid is not merely an innocent theory but a restrictive totalitarian ideology.

As soon as one has brought together "that which should be together" (D.F. Malan, first apartheid prime minister), with each nation having its own territory, without interference into each other's affairs, "separate equality", "peaceful co-existence" or "maintenance of diversity" has been achieved.

At first glance it seems to be eminently positive. The idea of the maintenance of diversity contains, however, something of a dialectic or tension. A nation can only exist if there are other nations from which it can be distinct! But at the same time these other nations constitute a threat to the own nation. (The existence of the own nation is therefore negatively bound to the other!) The own will therefore have to be defended continually. "Order" is in this framework essentially a concept of hostility. Inherent in the concept of apartheid is the possibility that violence can - must - be evoked.

A racist ideology

In the early phase of the development of the ideology of apartheid the concept of *race* was rejected as part of its viewpoint. The primary idea was diversity of *national* groups and not *racial* groups. For this reason proponents of apartheid indignantly rejected suggestions that apartheid might be no other than Nazi philosophy. Nationalism (which apartheid stood for), after all, acknowledges the equality of all nations: nationalist collectivism or communalism is not a suppressive but a liberating policy. A shared democracy would, in accordance with this view, however, lead to the suppression of one or more groups. Apartheid then seems to be the only way to effect real equality in a heterogeneous society.

Theologians and politicians advanced the idea that European cultural values in Africa should at all costs be protected, that the own cultures of Africa should not be destroyed and that gradual political and economic "enfranchisement" should be given to Black people to discourage them from entering into immediate competition with highly developed Europeans. In this way conflict would be avoided.

Proponents of apartheid did later acknowledge that racist elements intruded, but according to them it had not been the intention to discriminate (or, in their jargon, differentiate) on the basis of skin

colour. The *pure* theory of apartheid (nationalism) had to be distinguished from the *impure* (racism). In the eighties many of the measures of petty apartheid were repealed. (These were measures which determined ad hoc contact among people of different skin colour at the individual level, for example separate facilities, job reservation, marriages, etc.) In this way the perception has been created and disseminated that apartheid is dead. Racism, however, is not only a superior or hostile *attitude* towards somebody with a different skin colour. Such attitudes or prejudices are the *results* of racism. Racism is also an ideology of a totalitarian nature. It influences the structures and not only the individuals of a society. And for this reason one does not simply get rid of it by a change of heart.

Just like nationalism, racism also emanates from people's group allegiances. There is a twofold difference, however:

* Racism views the cohering factor of a group as being biological. What binds people together or, conversely, distinguishes them, is their genetic similarity. There is a biological determination (for example, skin colour) of who should be together. In this ideology therefore one has even less of a choice than in the case of nationalist communalism, which also considers among other things such issues as language, culture and religion.

* Racism does not accept the equality of people. The whole of mankind is seen to occupy different levels of development. Racism sees mankind as consisting of groups "by nature" higher and therefore better, and "by nature" lower and therefore inferior. In full-blown racism man is nothing more than manipulable matter. Those who are by nature "on top" have the right to subject those by nature "below".

Although the theory of apartheid concerned national groups, the practice never went further than division between black and white, that is, races. Racism was especially rampant and visible during the phase of petty apartheid (the fifties to the middle eighties) with all the infamous apartheid signs. Fortunately petty apartheid was abolished by law.

Racism, however, still emanated from the tricameral system of Parliament: Whites (first-class citizens) had the power and ruled with the "contribution" of Coloureds and Indians (second class citizens), while Blacks (third-class citizens) were excluded. This was far removed from a theory of equality of nations.

Racism is thus no coincidental adjunct to the apartheid ideology. It also does not only manifest itself in the form of petty apartheid. The foundation on which the whole of society has been organized is racist. Therefore it has to be changed radically and mere adjustments will not suffice.

The good intentions with which nationalism has been dished up have blinded us to the fact that racism has been the controlling order in South African society. It will then not help in the establishment of a new South Africa simply to choose between nationalism and racism. Nationalism and racism are twin brothers. A collectivist nationalism cannot function without racism. The vague group concept of nationalism did not enable apartheid ideologues to clearly divide people into nations, but the concept of race did offer the possibility of classifying people into groups, and was easier to administer.

A security ideology

Within the concept of diversity of the apartheid ideology there is a sense of insecurity locked into it, because the unity (the homogeneous nation) is continually threatened by the diversity of nations or races.

Maintenance of the own and defensibility (spiritual and physical) have become key concepts. Salvation is to be found in the own ideology. In a way that is typical of ideology, the image of the enemy (to which the own image is negatively linked) is blown up. The world outside the own nation is wrong and has to be recreated. Debate and compromise are also not possible.

Opposition only demands redoubled vigilance. Violence, however, is not viewed as violence as such, but is imply self-defence against the "criminals" who do not wish to comply with the reigning order.

What is also typical of an ideology is the fact that imaginary enemies are created. The slogan of the preservation of Christianity as against the totalitarian onslaught of godless communism or Marxism - or even

the Illuminati and the New Age - offered a well-known way of convincing people to accept the apartheid ideology. Anyone who does not tread the prescribed route is dismissed by way of a cheap epithet such as "traitor to the nation".

It is understandable that a growing resistance to this security ideology came into being. During the eighties naked violence became the main political power ploy of the state security ideology. This extended to not only the government but also the ANC and the PAC. State violence incited counter-violence and the violent spiral went out of control. This finally culminated in the announcement of a state of emergency. South Africa's violence and destabilization in even its neighbouring countries is well-known. I do not need to repeat that here.

What is clear is that a security ideology such as apartheid cannot be realized without violence. In order to reconstruct the whole of society, to make a success of social engineering, an enormous input, equal to a war effort, was needed. Apartheid has been a total onslaught on South Africa. Stopping violence in principle, then, means stopping apartheid.

An ideology of prosperity

The architect of hyper-apartheid, Hendrik Verwoerd, taught that apartheid was merely a political and not an economic issue. Apartheid is not economically neutral, however. In essence it is an economic policy. Why else does the present abyss between rich and poor coincide almost entirely with skin colour?

This began with the poor economic conditions whites found themselves in after the Anglo-Boer Wars and the Depression of the thirties. Even today some Whites allege that they will be robbed of their possessions because a new Black majority government has taken power. The mere thought of the division of wealth is enough to evoke hysterical reactions, while South Africa at present is one of the countries in the world with the biggest gulf between rich and poor.

Because the ideological propaganda positioned apartheid against Marxism, South Africa was regarded, in economic terms, as the model of a free-market economy. South Africa, however, was not at all an example of a free economy. Its economy was nearly as centrally planned, manipulated and orchestrated as that of any previously communist country. And how could this be otherwise? A programme of social engineering, as has been the case with apartheid, cannot allow a free-market economy to prescribe to it.

The South African economy has clearly been a kind of "affirmative action" in favour of Whites in general and the Afrikaner in particular. Prosperity has been channeled consciously to be concentrated in certain places and to the advantage of certain groups. Apartheid could therefore also be described as an oligarchy, a government for the rich.

Such a bureaucracy, however, does not *create* prosperity but simply *consumes* it. All the control measures prevent creativity and in the end strangle the economy of a country. For too long there was total dependence on the export of gold and minerals, and the private and industrial sectors have not been developed adequately. Large sums of money had to be borrowed from abroad. Add to this the astronomical defence expenditure incurred by the security ideology and inflation upon inflation and it becomes clear why consumption has fallen into its own sword.

The irony is that (grand) apartheid was seen as a policy of liberation. The separation of Whites from Blacks in the homelands was seen as liberation from the yoke of white exploitation. Separate equality, after all, means political sovereignty, independence and the opportunity to take decisions without outside interference. The creation of Black states was seen as monuments of equal rights and justice.

In practice, however, these states have become more and more dependent on economic aid from South Africa. In order to render these states viable, billions of rands were spent on the establishment of unproductive so-called border industries and the purchase of land. Today the inhabitants of these (now dissolved) states live in the most poverty-stricken circumstances in the whole of Africa - within the borders of one of the richest countries in Africa. This situation will take decades to resolve, even now that a political solution has been found.

Goudzwaard (1984:49-59) offers a penetrating analysis of ideologies of prosperity and Nürnberger (1979:10-73) and O'Meara (1983) of capitalism for those who wish to pursue this issue in more detail.

A revolutionary ideology

By calling the apartheid ideology a revolutionary one, I might well be causing the architects and administrators of grand apartheid to turn in their graves. They were, after all, used to calling people such as myself and others who could not go along with their policy revolutionary traitors.

I do think, however, that any totalitarian ideology (and most ideologies are probably totalitarian) does have a revolutionary character, because it strives to change a whole societal order against the wishes of most of the members of that society.

I intend "revolutionary" to carry an even deeper meaning. Should a government consistently for its own gain act only for a specific group of citizens and suppress and reject with contempt and even violence the rights of others, then it is rejecting the will of God for the state - which is general, impartial justice. Such a government has then become revolutionary in the most profound sense of the word: it commits revolution (resistance) against God. A citizen can in such a case no longer accept the exercise of power and authority of the state. This would be glorification of power (power for the sake of power) - while we are only called to glorify God. Citizens who come to oppose such a government cannot simply be branded revolutionaries, as they are in fact anti-revolutionary, that is, against the revolution of which the government is guilty in the face of God. And their positive intention is to bring the government back to its real vocation.

An unbiblical ideology

To make the apartheid theology acceptable to the Whites, of whom the majority were Christians, it had to be covered by the Gospel. From the Bible it was deduced that the nation, the "volk", was the divinely ordained way in which society had to be ordered. The split in languages at Babel, the nation or tribe of Israel in the Old Testament, the New Testament image of the church as the "nation" of God and the

group character of the covenant were all interpreted in such a way that apartheid could be justified. It is this effort to sugarcoat an essential unbiblical ideology in the Name of God and his Word, that caused the most vigorous indignation among Christians all over the world.

It is important to realize that Christians are not immune to ideological seduction. Wentz (1987) wrote a book about the whole issue of why people commit evil in the name of religion!

Any ideology, because it implies the worship of an idea or a system, is unbiblical and therefore un-Christian. I would like to direct attention to the fact that this is also true for the apartheid ideology.

The definition of an ideology given above makes it very clear why an ideology can never be Christian. It is a *substitution* of true religion. It therefore amounts to a self-invented religion taking the place of the Biblical one. Scripture is consequently read in the light of such an ideology. Apartheid ideology is a good example of how one's own political presuppositions are read *into* Scripture and then (with sanction from the Bible!) read *out* of it again. This means that the true message of the Bible does not come through any more - an ideology is blinding. For the sake of the overpowering purpose (the preservation of the nation and the promotion of its interests), the very clear Biblical norms of love and justice to *all* are reinterpreted and limited. While Scripture teaches very clearly that every means has to be tested against these norms, apartheid ideology in an obsession with its ends justified practically any means - even violence and war. Even human victims - on the side of the enemy and on one's own side - were sacrificed. Apart from loss of life, greater damage was done to people's essential humanity. Black people were simply regarded as labour units (a spade, a broom, a machine which consumes porridge), and some Whites openly propounded that they were not really human. It is not only, however, those regarded as inferior who suffered damage - those who set themselves up as superiors were also damaged inside.

In this religious legitimation the creation of bogus enemies also developed. Afrikaners were regularly confronted with new and frightening bogeymen: the British threat, the communist threat, the Black threat and even the American threat. In reality these were merely smokescreens which had to cover up the unbiblical apartheid ideals.

In brief: political loyalty rather than obedience to God was the final criterion. The Christian element was simply a decoration used to sanction a policy which was in its very nature un-Christian. For that reason redemption or liberation from this ideology was not possible any longer. This brings us to the next point.

3.5 The force or power of the stream

After 1910 there were still some critical voices. From 1948 onwards Afrikaners became less critical of themselves. 1960 and the years of isolation after that also excluded the new Republic from the essential criticism of the international community. The more rigorously people clung to the apartheid ideology, the more securely it caught them in its relentless grip. We were simply dragged along by the force of the stream, which became a destructive stream. It eventually became a swamp in which no life could be sustained any longer.

When we look back over the past century, we could distinguish the following five phases:

* *The first phase* covered the period from the discovery of gold (towards the end of the previous century), Union (1910) and the period after that until 1948. From 1910 all was set in motion to counter the process of social integration which could not be stopped any longer after the discovery of gold. During the first fifty years, however, the policy of political segregation was only applied by means of measures which would later be known as petty apartheid.

* *The second phase* began in 1948 (the accession to power of the National Party) when a fanatic process began not only to counter social integration, but also to stop it. The existing segregational measures were extended. But apart from that, grand apartheid was also instituted. In this way the reconstruction of the total societal structure began. Soon after 1948 legislation was promulgated which juridically fixed separation of people on the basis of colour. According to the population registration act, each individual had to be forced into one or another predetermined group and allocated (with the exception of whites) to a specific residential area in a city or homeland. This also meant geographic separation.

* The *third phase* was the period from about the middle sixties to the end of the seventies. The process of achieving ultimately separate, independent national states progressed with agonizing slowness. The government pretended, however, that it had already been realized. The millions of Blacks in the "townships" adjacent to the White cities were made citizens, overnight, of other "countries" - countries where most of them had never set foot. People who had lived in certain areas for generations were suddenly declared "temporary" inhabitants of their place of birth. Because Blacks from then on did not live "permanently" in townships any longer, the building of roads, houses, schools, shops, hospitals, etc. ceased, and the provision of infrastructure such as water supply, sewerage, electricity and telephones was not extended - because these amenities now had to be supplied in the homelands. People who did want to work in the cities had to apply for this privilege under a barrage of bureaucratic red tape, because they had become simple guest labourers. Where this process did not work of its own accord, it was helped along by forced removals. In this way an estimated four million people were forcibly uprooted.

* The *fourth period* lasted from the late seventies to the end of the eighties.

By the end of the seventies it has emerged that hyper-apartheid could not succeed and a number of reforms were instituted. Petty apartheid was suspended, the rigid application of the homelands policy was watered down by the abolition of the pass system and influx control, the permanence of Blacks in the cities was acknowledged and limited property rights were re-instituted, and - although totally inadequate in scope - the provision of infrastructure and houses in the Black townships was stepped up again. In 1989 job reservation was finally abolished and in 1990 also the law of separate amenities. This was a great relief to Blacks in urban areas, but not to the homelands, which were now neglected. Incredible conditions prevailed there due to over-population, unemployment, inadequate education and disintegrated social structures. The result was that millions of people flocked into the cities to find a livelihood. For many crime and theft, however, have proved to be the only recourse.

Apart from reforms in the socio-economic area, 1983 also saw an effort to achieve political reform through the creation of a tricameral

parliament. "Democracy" was extended by offering Coloureds and Indians their own Chamber in Parliament. This was merely a further cloak for White supremacy, however. The reaction from Black circles was predictably violent. A volcano of frustration and anger erupted from 1984 onwards as a result of this insult. The dam wall broke and the only way to curb it was to announce a state of emergency - in other words, more force and violence, and another indication of the essentially violent nature of apartheid.

By 1986 the efforts towards reform had again begun to slacken. Factors which contributed to this included the moral repugnance about violence in the townships, the declining economy (as a result of disinvestment and international sanctions) as well as increasing militancy (especially the war in Angola and the former Southwest Africa). By 1987 the apartheid ideology had shed its *élan* finally.

The damage done by it over three decades, however, was clearly visible: the destruction of social structures in large parts of the black communities, the establishment of a culture of fear, suspicion and violence, the violation of the human dignity of all in this country, the practically total isolation of South Africa in the international community and the wasting of billions of rands.

* *The fifth period* began in 1989. This might perhaps one day be regarded as the turning point in the history of South Africa. South African participation in the war in Angola ended, Namibia became independent, the anti-apartheid parties were unbanned and in February 1990 Nelson Mandela was released after 27 years in jail. The grip of the securocrats gradually eased and South Africa could begin to disarm.

All this cannot be viewed in isolation of world-shattering events elsewhere in the world. In a spiritual-historical sense the twentieth century culminated and ended in 1989. The time for ideological absolutist policies and styles of government and command economies had passed. The era of the cold war was something of the past. The world's economic problems had won the day! The wave of democratization which started in South America earlier and extended to Eastern Europe was now washing across the whole world. In one country after the other (in Africa too) all citizens were fighting for

equal rights. All this made the need for change in South Africa that much more urgent.

At the beginning of 1990 (cf. Mr. F.W. de Klerk's opening speech for Parliament on 2 February 1990) a new era dawned in the history of South Africa. In May 1994 this finally culminated in a new democratically elected government with a new state president, Mr. Nelson Mandela.

The *time* of apartheid is therefore past. The *results* have not been eliminated yet. Among other concrete results there are maldistribution of wealth and other backlogs, hatred, fear, suspicion, a decline in respect for judiciary order, a culture of violence and many more. These results will not be undone simply through the assumption of office of a new government. The apartheid flood may have washed past us, but the damage done will take a long time to clear ...

3.6 The final test: The clarity of the stream

Our investigation of the cultural stream of the Afrikaner has been completed. The big question remaining now is what we have to do with it. Many Afrikaners who used to *politicize* Christianity and burnt their fingers in the process are now *spiritualizing* it. They retreat pietistically into their churches and personal lives. This does not suit reformational Christians, however, for in future there will be an enormous need of committed and involved Christians in all areas of society. According to a true reformational philosophy of society we will have to structure society and renew it on an ongoing basis (see Van der Walt, 1994:259-335).

This is not our present theme, however.

In the preceding sections the cultural history of the Afrikaner was tested in many ways: colour, taste, purity, soundness and force. The final test still has to be done: Is the Afrikaner also willing to recognize himself in the foregoing? To acknowledge that his cultural, political and religious ideas went astray? Do we have the moral courage to humble ourselves and to confess our shared guilt for the apartheid ideology and its effects? This is the final hurdle that we have to get over before we can enter the new dispensation with a clean conscience.

The author is convinced that in the case of the Afrikaner in general, the different societal structures and each individual, a (individual and collective) humbling and confession of guilt is not only important in order to make possible a clean future, but it is also a clear Biblical injunction.

A very clear Biblical injunction

The Biblical message to those who have done wrong is crystal clear and simple: you can only be cleansed of the sin that you have committed if you: (1) are truly repentant; (2) confess it to God and to the people; (3) ask them for forgiveness; (4) make restitution or improvement your honest intention, so that (5) there can be true reconciliation between the parties.

Humbling oneself - confession - forgiveness (not witch-hunt or vengeance) - restitution - reconciliation - together form an unbroken chain. If humbling is not accompanied by what has to follow on it, it is mere hypocrisy. If confession does not culminate in restitution and improvement of your life, it is false.

Naturally it is not easy to confess guilt. Our first ancestors in Paradise already tried to dump the guilt on somebody else. Eve accused the serpent and Adam Eve - and even God! To confess means a humbling of the self, going on one's knees unreservedly. Confession of guilt is hard, but it is the only way to be released of the burden of guilt. There is no other way to be released and the possibility of breathing freely again.

Confession of guilt is also one of the features distinguishing Christianity from other religions. Idols - also in the shape of idolization of ideas (ideologies) - do not demand confession. They do not know guilt, but only demand mindless allegiance. Sinful man is also not so stupid to create for himself idols demanding of him to confess! Idolatry is a nice laidback religion.

Therefore one should not be surprised if a whole slew of arguments is presented against the idea that the Afrikaner in general and also the societal structures established by the Afrikaner such as, for example, churches and universities should confess their guilt about the evil that

apartheid was responsible for. Some of the arguments that I have heard and which I would like to respond to include the following:

We simply obeyed the laws of the land

Here we have to do with a clear indication of a negation of personal responsibility. The Bible nowhere teaches that a government has to be obeyed uncritically and at all costs. Rather, it demands that the subjects, and especially Christians, should be more obedient to God, who demands justice. It is therefore tragic that churches and other Christian institutions simply obediently toed the line. They should rather have been the conscience of the South African state.

Such a confession can seem opportunist and expedient

Should one wait too long - there is a time for everything, also for confession - the time can come, as has indeed happened, that a confession could be regarded with grave suspicion. People could well think that it is mere pretence in order to get the good opinion of, for example, the new government. This is, of course, the price one has to pay for procrastination.

According to Scripture, however, it is never too late for confession of guilt. The murderer on the cross is a clear example of this. Even when you have committed murder (as had most probably been the case with him), and therefore cannot any longer confess your guilt to the people whom you have harmed, you can still confess to God and ask for his forgiveness - as this murderer in actual fact did.

One cannot confess on behalf of one's ancestors

The argument here is usually that, to confess on their behalves, would mean that one is judging them - while in many cases they had probably been better people than we are. Confession, however, does not mean judgement. The Bible is also full of examples where Israel confessed to God that their ancestors had turned away from God and sinned greatly. Should God reserve the right to punish unto the third and the fourth generation, then surely confession can also come from the descendants of those who had sinned. We are not, after all, free-standing individuals, but humanity through the ages comprises a unity.

Confession of guilt is something personal and a group or a nation cannot confess

The first part of the statement is true: personal conversion and confession of guilt is a *sine qua non*, the essential starting point. Whoever has not yet confessed to God his or her participation in the evils of apartheid, should rather keep quiet where compatriots are concerned.

The second part of the statement, that a nation cannot confess, is not true and is not Biblical. Nehemiah and the whole nation of Israel confessed in tears. Even the pagan city of Nineveh acknowledged its sins. And these are only two among numerous instances in the Bible. God does not only hold individuals, but also nations responsible for their deeds. And if they fail, individuals and groups have to confess their sins to each other and to Him.

An institution cannot confess guilt, because it cannot sin

This view ties in with the previous one, viz. that a confession of guilt is something personal and intimate. As with the previous one, however, it is an individualist view and not Biblical. Naturally it is true that only people can sin. Societal relationships (such as marriage, family, state, church or university) consist of people, however: those who are subservient to authority and those who exercise authority. Both groups can act wrongly. (Simple logic tells us that if they are supposed not to be able to do wrong, they also cannot do right.) Should it be wrong to use the word "sin" in this case (which I doubt), one cannot deny that they can do evil by, for example, determining an unjust policy or simply applying it.

A fairly pietistic, individualist view of sin used to be current. Today, however, it is realized that something like institutional evil or structural injustice is a terrible reality (cf. what has already been said in this regard). For that reason confession is essential.

Naturally it does not help to try and change structures unless one's personal attitude has also changed - otherwise the change of an institution will not be true reform but mere show. It also does not help to plead for an attitude of reconciliation while structures are left in

place as they are. This wrong notions of Christians has already led to the sharp remark: "When I give bread to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why they do not have bread, I am called a communist."

As said above, institutional evil is in a certain sense far more serious than "individual" sins: (1) It affects more people. (2) Because of the individualistic nature of our Christianity we are not always aware of it. (3) Social evil is often done very subtly. People's eyes have to be opened to it, otherwise they will not see it - it becomes "legitimized". (4) Often the suppression is not done directly - those in power simply neglect their duties to all citizens of the country.

One confesses one's guilt to God and not to people

However strange it may seem, this is a view that is also held. The ideological blinding that is evident would seem to have reached its zenith in this argument, because once again God's Word is crystal clear on this issue.

Not only is it said expressly in many instances in the Bible that we should confess our guilt to one another, but confession to others and to God is linked inextricably with each other. You cannot be reconciled with God unless you have put things right with people. Christ's injunction in the Sermon on the Mount is very clear "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother; then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23-24). Here it is not even a matter of you against your brother, but of your brother against you, and yet God expects of you to set the matter right before approaching Him. Should you not do this, God is not interested in your "religion" - He will reject it as mere hypocrisy.

We have to forget about the past and build the future

This argument usually betrays a bad conscience. It is also an evasion of the past by saying that we have already started doing the right things and fully intend to improve in future. It is maintained that this amounts to an admission that we have changed our wrong ways. Such an attitude, however, is not a fitting one for a Christian.

As already stated, we cannot deal with the past in this facile manner. Confession and forgiveness are the *only* way to eliminate a past that is wrong and evil. This should *precede* the promise of improvement and restitution - however essential the latter might be in order to confirm the sincerity of the confession.

A simple example from marriage might suffice to make this clear. If I have in one way or the other treated my wife badly, it won't help if I say: "Darling, I would like to take you out for dinner and buy you the ring you have wanted for such a long time." Her answer would definitely be: "If you don't acknowledge that you were wrong and hurt me badly, I am not interested in your nice words and gifts." Such nice promises simply mean a cover-up of the evil - an infected sore has to be lanced and drained for the evil to come out.

It goes without saying that such a confession should be an honest one. It also does not help to go on your knees and then to continue in the old ways.

Why should we specifically confess the evils of apartheid?

The clever argument that we face here is roughly the following: We should confess ALL our sins - also the many others that we commit. Once again this is a half-truth. Naturally we have to confess all our sins, but this does not mean that, because we have so many sins (!) we can avoid confessing to this specific sin. Should this "logic" be drawn through to its logical consequence, confession of ALL sins in the end mean confession of NO (specific) sin. If I read the Bible correctly, God wants of us not only vaguely to confess "our many sins" but that we should confess concrete, specific sins and ask forgiveness for them.

We live in a broken, sin-corrupted world and the apartheid ideology was simply an instance of this corruption

You will note that the arguments against a confession gradually become more and more ridiculous. With arguments such as this one the corruption in the world is, as it were, exonerated. I have always thought that the Bible teaches that corruption in all its forms should be *struggled against*, and not simply be *accepted*. Is brokenness not after all the result of sin?

We do not know whether our confession will be accepted and whether we will be forgiven

I did not suck this argument out of my thumb. (Is this really how low our Christianity has sunk?) There are people who have to confess, and there are people who have to forgive - if necessary, up to seventy times seven. If you have to confess your guilt, you have to do it, whatever the effect of such an action is going to be. If you are honest, God will forgive you. If people do not want to forgive, that becomes their responsibility before God. To make forgiveness a *condition* for confession, however, is utter arrogance. It smacks of the same arrogance of which apartheid was guilty. Such a person is, in all instances, still light years removed from the honest confession which is needed …

An example from our own reformational history

I would like to close with something which struck me profoundly many years ago, and which I still remember vividly. I stood at the Servet Monument in Geneva, which was erected on the hill of Champel where Michael Servet, a Spanish lawyer-theologian-doctor-astrologer was burnt alive at the stake for heresy on 27 October 1553. This happened not only with the approval of Rome but of Calvin himself. Historically this could be explained (just as apartheid), but on principle there was no justification (just as with apartheid).

Calvin's descendants had to come back to this event, but it took very long indeed. 350 years later, on 27 October 1903, a simple monument was erected on the spot of Servet's stake, a monument of confession …

It consists of a large rock smoothed on both sides to make provision for inscriptions. On the one side it is only stated that Servet died there, on a specific date. On the other side there is the admission (translated from the French): "We, reverent and grateful descendants of Calvin, our great reformer, condemn this apostasy, which was the apostasy of his time. Strongly committed to the principles of freedom of conscience, in line with the true principles of the Reformation and of the Gospel, this monument of reconciliation is erected on 27 October 1903."

One is greatly touched while reading this admission of guilt. But one also trembles with fear: No monument can put right the wrongs of the past. Even in one's zeal and commitment for the Gospel one can be blind and fanatical, turning fallible human insights into divine commandments and in the process destroying human lives instead of saving them ...

For somebody who has stood for a while in front of such a striking monument, for somebody who has seen but something of the suffering caused by apartheid (even while not suffering much personally), of knowing what apartheid had truly been and what it had truly done to people (humiliation, sorrow, suffering), the question is no longer whether an individual or a communal confession is necessary. It is.

4. CONCLUSION

The case study of the South African society of the past clearly indicated that it had been a failure, because it did not acknowledge and apply the three basic principles of structural, religious and cultural diversity.

Because it did not apply the reformational principle of structural diversity, it degenerated into political absolutism. Politics totally dominated religion and culture in a totalitarian manner.

Because it did not acknowledge confessional or religious pluralism, Christianity was imposed on all people, for example, in the case of compulsory Christian education in state schools.

Cultural diversity was also wrongly interpreted. It was emphasized so strongly that unity (between different nations and cultures) was seen as a threat. The enormous emphasis on cultural diversity lead to cultural division (separate development or apartheid). The issue of cultural diversity was therefore not really addressed, but simply shifted out of view.

What became of the unity? It was sought in the wrong place, within the own Afrikaans culture, instead of in the Christian faith. Instead of people from different cultures finding their unity in a shared Christian faith in the same country and at the same institutions, the stress was

primarily on the diversity of nations and the unity in Christ did not realize -- the national triumphed over the Christian!

Thus far about the past. What about the future?

What the new South Africa is going to look like, is hard to predict. It would seem, however, that whereas diversity used to be the keyword, unity will be the new catch phrase. The past, after all, showed what the awful effects of excessive emphasis on diversity are. In reaction to this it might now happen that heavy stress might be laid on unity, not a unity within *ethnic* groupings, but the unity of a new *political* nation. The equality of people, cultures, religions and sexes will be stressed. Structural diversity (between the different societal relationships within one political dispensation), diversity of faith and diversity of culture will not be emphasized.

Such an ideal of unity might result in uniformity. Forced unity might become sameness, in which case we would once again fall into the trap of an ideology, that of "modern generality" or colourless monotony. In this case too unity is sought in the wrong place. It would be merely a secular unity - nothing better than the unity which used to be sought in the culture of one (Afrikaner) nation.

In this way the ideal of a rainbow nation for South Africa would never be realized, as the different colours simply disappear. Such a unity is merely a seeming unity, which implies terrifying cultural impoverishment.

In the past we were caught in a *monotone* identity. We might be on the way to a *colourless* identity. It is my fervent hope that South Africa should not forget the third possibility, viz. that of the *multi-coloured* identity - structurally, religiously and culturally. Such an open, dynamic and rich identity should be the rainbow ideal of what we hope to achieve in building the new South Africa.

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APPENDIX:

NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF A FEW (LIBERAL ARTS) COLLEGES IN AFRICA

Daystar University (College)
P.O. Box 44400, Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: 2+723003
Fax: 2+724684

Nairobi Evangelical School of Theology
P.O. Box 24686, Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel 2+882104/882105

Faculté de Theologie Protestante de Butare
B.P. 619, Butare.
Tel: 30+298

Université Protestant Afrique Central
Contact address:
Rev. Willard Ferguson
B.P. 1689
Kigali, Rwanda
Fax/Tel: 250-8-4036

Université Adventiste d'Afrique Centrale
B.P. 525
Gisenyi, Rwanda

Institute for Christian Studies
P.M.B. 017
P.O. Gboko
Benue State, Nigeria

Catholic Higher Institute of Eastern Africa (CHIEA)
P.O. Box 62157
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 2+891601/2/3/4/5

St. Paul's United Theological College
P.O. Private Bag
Limuru, Kenya
Tel: 154+40965 (Karuri)

University of Eastern Africa (Baraton)
P.O. Box Private Bag
Eldoret, Kapsabet
Tel: 2018

Africa Nazarene University
P.O. Box 53067
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 2+720302
Fax: 09254+2+72030

Scott Theological College
P.O. Box 49
Machakos, Kenya

Christian College of Southern Africa
P.O. Box 3488
Harare, Zimbabwe
Tel: 2+79721
Fax: 4+724684

Africa University
P.O. Box 1320
Mutare, Zimbabwe
Tel: 2+61611/61618/60026/60075 or 63192
Fax: 2+61785

Solusi College
Private Bag T5399
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
Tel: 83+1723 (Figtree)
Fax: 83+229

Bugema Adventist College
P.O. Box 6529
Kampala, Uganda

Adventist Seminary of West Africa
P.M.B. 21244
Ikeja, Lagos State, Nigeria

Valley View College
P.O. Box 9358
Airport-Accra, Ghana

Helderberg College
P.O. Box 22
Somerset-West 7130
South Africa

The Christian University of East Africa
Ndejje Campus
PO Box 7088
Kampala
Uganda

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