

## CHAPTER 2

### AFRICA, A CONTINENT IN NEED OF RECONCILIATION

Today Africa is well known in the world for its specific problems such as political tension, high rates of HIV/AIDS, her numerous debts to the world economy, and human rights abuses. It seems that all that is bad, and nothing which is good, belongs to Africa. Even though the continent possesses numerous mineral resources, they were exploited in the colonial period and even today Africa is still fighting for its economic independence, facing many internal and external problems. The whole continent stands in need of reconciliation. Rebels everywhere increase political tension, and the imperatives for democracy as well as increasing globalization all pose challenges to Africa.

This chapter offers a panoramic view of certain African countries which have been struggling for a long time for peace and reconciliation, discussing Africa as a continent exhibiting the lack of these features. This need is clearly seen in human rights violations and the struggle to set up a new mood of democracy, as well as in the new ideology of globalization which constitutes the present world market. We are not writing the history of all of Africa. Rather, insights are given into a smaller section of the continent for those who wish to investigate the field of reconciliation, so that readers can find specific information about some countries. The information in this chapter stems from many materials, including books, electronic documents and articles. The chapter provides a broad framework before we accord special attention to South Africa and Angola, which we wish to study comparatively in terms of their events of reconciliation, and their actual needs for reconciliation. Africa's struggles for independence have resulted in many difficulties such as political, economic, social and religious tensions. Africa is still struggling to discover its identity, and achieve greater development or economic independence. Conflicts and rebellions are everywhere observable in Africa, along with civil war, all of which give birth to crises. Reconciliation is an urgent need for Africa as we shall discover in this chapter.

## 2.1. Africa at the Beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Despair and Hope

The 21<sup>st</sup> century in Africa has been characterized by many challenges in Africa, especially those stemming from political tensions. It seems that in the previous century coups were the most common model of access to the various presidencies, instead of free and democratic elections. Hence there is despair almost everywhere in Africa. But might we also say that there is hope in Africa during this 21<sup>st</sup> century? We believe this, but our hope needs the combined action of Christians and other faith communities to combat the evil in Africa. Democracy, as well as globalization, in Africa is a challenge which calls for real endeavour and good leadership. Among all the problems that Africa is facing we number: leadership, political, economic, socio-cultural, ideological and religious tensions as stated above. We will investigate these below. We have selected some of the many materials available concerning Africa, among them: *Human Rights Law in Africa volume two: Domestic Human Rights Law in Africa* edited by Christof Heyns; *Amnesty International Reports 2004, 2005 and 2006*; *Human Rights in Africa* edited by James T. Lawrence; *State, Conflict, and Democracy in Africa* edited by Richard Joseph; *Government and Politics in Africa* edited by William Tordoff; *Freedom's Distant Shores: American Protestants and Post-colonial Alliances with Africa* edited by R. Drew Smith; and many other books in addition to electronic documents and articles. Despair and hope in Africa live side by side, as we now discover.

## 2.2. Africa: Field of Tensions

Despair in Africa is easily visible in a series of tensions throughout the continent as well as despair within the political, socio-cultural, ideological, and religious spheres. All these tensions find their pattern in the legacy of leadership in Africa, where we have to work especially hard in order to offer Africa hope.

This section focuses on details concerning Africa as a field of tensions, providing cases to illustrate our view. Although many more examples could be quoted, the following will provide sufficient evidence of the need for reconciliation on the continent.

### 2.2.1. Leadership: Legacy of Despair

Despite some exceptional cases, the general opinion of leadership in Africa is, according to Sello Patrick Rankhumise, Tony Modise & Meshack Mbowane, one where: "African presidents [have] appointed themselves as life-time presidents" (2003:3). Roger Southall and Henning Melber confirm that it was a dominant perception until the early 1990s that African rulers did not vacate their office alive (2006:xvi). To the majority of Africa's leaders, democracy is incompatible with their vision of being a "life-time president". This section deals with the despair related to African legacies in terms of the issues referred to above. When one views Africa there is no way to ignore these negative legacies of leadership. Piet Meiring quotes Archbishop Desmond Tutu's words in this regard: "Africa, oh Africa, where are your leaders?" (2002:719); furthermore, Meiring names some African leaders he considers able to lead their countries, but also the legacies of some who failed their people by not offering good leadership. He wrote:

But the disappointments, too, were many when leaders were not able to produce what their people had been promised. In many African countries – Uganda under Milton Obote and Idi Amin, Ethiopia under Mengistu Haile Mariam, Somalia under Mohamed Siad Barre, Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe, as well as Sudan, Burundi, Rwanda and Liberia under a succession of military rulers – the high ideal of the democracy of an independent judiciary and economic growth gave way to autocratic rule either in one party states or military dictatorships, where repression, injustice, human rights abuses, mal-administration, misappropriation of public funds and other resources, as well as corruption became the order of the day (op. cit.: 720).

How painful must such leadership and its leaders be to the people who are called to elect them or are used to support them as leaders. Repeatedly, Lawrence writes that many African countries are dominated by a strong presidency (2004:21).

Poor leadership in Africa seems to be the root cause of most of the problems Africa faces. Norman Mlambo in his article: "Africa and World Bodies" discusses the relationship between African countries and the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the United States of America (USA), in which it becomes clear that lack of leadership in Africa is the continent's biggest problem. For instance

in writing about Africa and the UN interventions in numerous situations, Norman Mlambo argues:

Moreover, some of the blame for the continuation of Africa's intractable conflicts must go to the African Union and its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity, which also failed to effectively intervene and resolve the continent's conflicts (2004: 9).

Why should Mlambo make such allegations regarding the African Union and its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity (OAU)? Obviously, some African leaders, who had been members of the OAU, are still seated in the African Union, which has changed its name, but not necessarily its policies. It is clear that most African countries are led by a "strong presidency and centralised power" (op. cit. p.4). Mlambo's allegation concerning the African Union, where African leaders meet to resolve questions regarding Africa, is accurate. In the case of Africa and the EU, where the Southern African Development Community (SADC) seems to be a sign of hope for Africa, the failure is still one of leadership. Mlambo points out that the largely good relationship between the EU and Africa has been disrupted by a number of disagreements, especially over matters of governance. The Zimbabwean issue is such an instance (op. cit.: 11). He shows how meetings were cancelled owing to the lack of good governance in the case of Zimbabwe. In the case of the World Bank and the IMF, where Africa is seen as the most indebted continent, these monetary institutions still control most of the available funds, which could, as a means of control, be taken away from corrupt leaders. Mlambo considers both institutions as "puppet masters in Africa" (ibid: 11). Africa, because of its leaders' legacy of debt, is exploited, not only in its mineral resources, but even in its human resources. Many sound initiatives like the Southern African Development Community (SADC), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and others find themselves undermined by the lack of leadership. For instance Jikang Kim criticises NEPAD for its dependence on its partners, terming this "neo-colonialism" because there is no plan by African countries to obtain sustainable funding by their own initiative (2003 <http://www.ai.org.za>). African leaders must therefore gather together soon, discuss this issue thoroughly and redefine its relationship to these initiatives if they really want to give hope to Africa. A good partnership cannot be based on imposition or imperialism as is the case in Africa today but should be based on fair negotiation and mutual understanding; equivalent participation from an equal position. To reinforce such a disposition, Africa needs to review her own leadership and focus on policies encouraging good governance. The legacy of those who have opted for a lifetime presidency,

such as Mobutu who called himself “*sese-seko*” (forever), should not be tolerated. As Sello Patrick Rankhumise et al. observed, South Africa’s first democratically elected President Mandela only served one five-year term of two five-year terms afforded by the South African constitution (op. cit.: 1).

Such examples of leaders willingly stepping down constitute signs of hope for African change towards good governance; this will encourage partnership with others.

### 2.2.2. Political Tensions

Power struggles comprise one of the weapons which leaders use to manipulate their people and institutions. The resulting political tensions likewise create despair. Most of the time, the political process is hampered by the ambitions of leaders and their ruling political parties. Little knowledge of the democratic system, and patterns of ethnic loyalties and traditions, often influence politics and the economy in a country for the worse. Here lie the real reasons for conflict and the rise of rebellions. There is no doubt about the existence of political tensions in Africa. If one checks the election files in Africa, some of which were declared fair and free by outside observers, it becomes evident that local observers, including civil society, do not share the same view. They perceived them as unfair and thus not as free democratic elections. As a result, struggles between ruling and opposition parties break out and civil society pays a high price, resulting in more bloodshed and extreme poverty. The cases presented below will be enough to indicate how political tensions are tearing Africa apart.

In the case of **Sierra Leone**, 11 years of political tensions ended on 18 January 2001. The cause of this conflict, according to the Lawrence Report, was firstly a power struggle. According to Lawrence (2004:155) the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) insurgents fought successive governments since 1991 for a very simple reason: power. Both parties wanted control over the country. In May 2001 presidential and parliamentary elections took place in which Ahmed Tejan Kabah was again voted president and his Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP) succeeded in gaining a majority of seats in the parliament. International observers declared the election to be free and fair. However, as one might expect there were numerous contradictions, accompanied by reports of irregularities and abuses (ibid: 155).

In the case of **Sudan** the Amnesty International Report (2006:242) records the death of John Garang de Mabior, head of the government of south Sudan and first Vice-president in the new Government of National Unity, in late July, which resulted in widespread rioting in Khartoum and Juba. This occurred in spite of what had previously been achieved politically. But according to Lawrence, tensions emerged when President Omar Hassan al-Bahir took control in a military coup during 1989 (2004:187). He was re-elected in the 2000 elections that all major opposition parties boycotted. The major opposition political parties, for the most part, remained marginalized from the political process. Lawrence reports:

National Congress (and) National Islamic Front NC/NIF members and supporters continued to hold key positions in the Government, security forces, judiciary, academic institutions, trade unions, professional associations, and media. The judiciary was not independent and was subject to Government (ibid: 185).

A lack of hope stemming from Sudan's complex conflicts was not only due to internal factors since the international community also failed to discover any solution. The civil population was slain by armed troops on all sides of Sudan's conflict.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** political tensions issued from the fall of Mobutu's regime. According to Nzongola Ntalaja: "The fall of Mobutu came as a consequence of the drive by the new Rwandan authorities against Hutu extremists in the Congo" (2002:225). To this the Amnesty International report adds that the transitional power-sharing government, created in 2003 and including members of the former government, major armed groups, opposition political parties and civil society, made little progress towards a transition to democratic rule. Serious delays in the passing of electoral laws and the organization of elections planned in June 2005 resulted in the transition being extended to June 2006 (2006: 95).

Elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo took place on 31 July 2006. They were declared to be fair, free and democratic but were followed by tensions and violence. The result was that a second round of presidential elections needed to be held for there was no winner with a clear majority. A great measure of instability in the DRC still exists.

**Cote d'Ivoire**, with both delight and darkness in its history, is today one of the African countries under United Nations care: firstly by means of the political mission called the "United Nations Mission in Cote d'Ivoire" (MINUCI), set up in May 2003; secondly in terms of the peacekeeping mission termed "UN Operations in Cote d'Ivoire" (UNOCI), established on 4 April 2004, as Tshiliso Molukanele, Grayden Ridd & Jamila el Abdellaoui report (2004:48). Why should the United Nations dispatch peacekeepers to Cote d'Ivoire? Lawrence answers that although in October 2000, Laurent Gbagbo became the country's third elected president, ending an almost 10-month period of military rule, the election, which excluded two of the major parties, was marred by significant violence and irregularities (*op. cit.*: 47).

It is clear why political tensions persist in this country.

In **Burundi** Molukanele *et al.* indicate that the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) "was created by UN Security Council Resolution 1545 on 21 May 2004 for an initial period of six months" (2004:50). Unfortunately, or fortunately, the ONUB continues to operate because tensions are continuing. Lawrence writes that in July 2001, President Buyoya and the regional leaders signed an agreement to begin the 3-year transition period agreed to in peace negotiations on November 1, 2002 but that the two major armed rebel groups declined to join the peace process. A transitional Constitution was adopted in October 2001, and on November 1, 2001, Buyoya was sworn in as president; Domitien Ndayizeye, the secretary general of the predominantly ethnic Hutu opposition party FRODEBU, as vice president. Under the agreement, Buyoya would serve as president for 18 months and then be succeeded by Ndayizeye, who would likewise serve 18 months as a transitional president. Continued efforts to negotiate a cease-fire with the two largest rebel groups were unsuccessful. As a result political parties operated under significant restraints (2004: 15).

It seems that Burundi shared the same experience as the Democratic Republic of Congo. Suggestions such as that all opposition leaders should be incorporated into the transitional presidency might bring some comfort to those who feel marginalized but will probably be offensive to the ruling party.

To end this section, we consider what is occurring in **Zimbabwe** where the cries of Zimbabweans are being heard everywhere, as declared by Reverend Reginald Mudenda: "Zimbabwe is currently struggling through an economic and political crisis. Most Zimbabweans

lose hope when they look around them" (2004:6). To provide some background to Zimbabwe, the *Atlas of World History* records that Zimbabwe had been a British colony and became independent as the Republic of Rhodesia on 11 November 1965. On 1 June 1979 it became the Republic of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, for a while remaining as a British colony until 18 April 1980, when complete independence was granted (1994:91).

The actual Zimbabwean situation has raised many questions politically and economically, regarding what is taking place as regards the intimidation of its civil population and destruction of the infrastructure. Lawrence has pointed out that Zimbabwe is a republic in which president Robert Mugabe and his Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) have dominated the executive and legislative branches of the Government since independence in 1980 (op. cit.: 223).

In 2003 the World Mennonite Conference meeting in Bulawayo gave to the Zimbabwean Government a General Council Declaration concerning Zimbabwe. The World Mennonite Conference (WMC) participants were disturbed about the decline of the economy, the deterioration of social order and the increase in cases of HIV/AIDS. This Declaration of the General Council (*Declaracion Del Concilio General Sobre Zimbabwe*) was ratified on 17 August 2003. A summary follows:

The document especially deplored the actual situation of suffering within Zimbabwe: The fear and brutality resulting from oppression and political conflicts, excessive political power and arbitrary arrests, and legislation that limits democratic expression and freedom of assembly; the difficulties and the exploitation which result from the bankrupt economy, the abuse of privileges and the corruption, scarcities on all levels, the unemployment and the endemic poverty; The disunity and death result from a humanitarian crisis in large part caused by the poor administration of the economy, the massive lack of provisions, medications and medical services, and the calamity of HIV/AIDS (My translation from Spanish, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 17 August 2003).

This information does not contradict what Lawrence writes further about the Government security forces, arguing that security forces committed extrajudicial killings. Ruling party supporters and war veterans in some cases killed, abducted, tortured, abused, raped and threatened farm owners and their workers. There were reports of politically motivated



disappearances. Security forces and Government youth militias tortured, beat raped, and otherwise abused persons (*op. cit.*: 224).

As long as the behaviour of Zimbabwean leaders continues, the necessity exists for a reconciliation process to give hope in Zimbabwe. As we saw above in the case of Zimbabwe, the progress made in the SADC did not help because many meetings were postponed. Not only Zimbabwe, but also Africa in general, illustrates lack of good leadership. I argue that security forces which do not defend and protect the civil population, which is their first mission, but one-sidedly serve those who are not acting justly, can be seen as hunting the very people they have the duty to protect. They work like "rural dogs", only good as hunting animals for their owners.

From the above examples we can easily conclude that Africa is a continent filled with tensions. Many questions arise: Why the lack of respect for the constitutions? Why do the terms of certain presidents double in length, at least? Political ideologies such as democracy do not hold because the traditional or cultural societal policies are still alive and control the minds of most national African leaders as well as of leaders in the churches.

### 2.2.3. Economic Tensions

Africa today is characterized by great unemployment everywhere and poverty reigns, even where growth is rapid. The socio-economic divide is a mirror reflecting huge differences between the rich and poor. The rich constitute a minority and most of them are members of the ruling party. The poor, always the majority, are voiceless. The economic situation is one of the issues that illustrate the results of poor leadership in Africa. It leads to many African countries experiencing tension and despair. When a reconciliation process begins, in whatsoever country, the population expects economic and health issues to be solved. Some instances follow. As a backdrop to them, Poku K. Nana in his article on "Poverty, debt and Africa's HIV/AIDS crisis" shows that deprived social conditions favour the spread of HIV. According to him, some debt would have to be cancelled, including that owed to the multilateral institutions themselves (which accounts for almost one-third of Africa's total debt). Creditors agreed that, in principle, as much as 80 percent of external debt could be cancelled (2002:539).

Africa is well known as a continent burdened by huge debt and poverty. As a consequence, in Puko K. Nana's opinion, HIV/AIDS results from the impoverished economies which contain most black Africans. Thomas M. Callaghy also describes Africa's debt since 1998 in these terms:

In 1974 the total debt of sub-Saharan Africa was about \$14.8 billion, but by the end of 1984, according to World Bank figures, it had reached about \$91 billion. Other estimates put the figure closer to \$125 billion. Of the \$91 billion, 63.5 percent was public and publicly guaranteed medium- and long-term debt, broken down as follows, as percentages of the total \$91 billion: bilateral, 24.3 percent; multilateral, 16.1 percent; suppliers' credits, 2.4 percent; and private bank, 20.7 percent (1998: 384).

When close attention is given to what is said above, there is no doubt that Africa carries heavy debt as a continent. On 14 December 2001 BBC News revealed the collapse of the African economy in many countries, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit source, which added that the African Development Bank had predicted that current economic growth would be barely 3-5%, no more than the continent's rate of population growth as projected for 2002 in sub-Saharan Africa: Zimbabwe -5.0%, Gabon -0.6%, Liberia + 1.0%, Kenya 2.5% and South Africa 2.9% ([www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)).

However, BBC News also reports the fastest growth in some African countries: Equatorial Guinea 34%, Angola 10.3%, Chad 10%, Mozambique 9.5%, Ethiopia 6.8%, Burkina Faso 6%, Mali 6% and Senegal 5.9% ([www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)).

Economic growth in the case of Mozambique is also confirmed by Sello Patrick Rankhumise *et al.*, where they estimated its growth rate to be approximately 10% (*op. cit.*: 2). Lawrence provides a succinct economic report about each African country. Most political tensions are linked to the economic behaviour of African political leaders, who appropriate for themselves with their allies the wealth of the country. For instance, in **Malawi**, it is said that wealth remained highly concentrated in the hands of a small elite. Annual per capita income was approximately \$178 (*op. cit.*: 93). This is the case, not only in Malawi, but also elsewhere in Africa. In the case of **Nigeria**, Lawrence also perceives the national wealth as being in the

hands of the numerically small elite and notes the deterioration of the general economy which was hindered by “mismanagement”; the agricultural sector declined greatly during the oil boom decades and years of military rule, which contributed significantly to increased unemployment. The majority of economic activity took place outside the formal sector (ibid: 121).

Paul Collier in his article on “The Economic History: The Colonial and Postcolonial Eras,” referring to Africa, likewise mentions the decline of agriculture and the growth of oil wealth among the ruling classes, citing the case of **Nigeria** as “the classic example (2005:6).

In The **Republic of Congo** the tension between Pascal Lisuba and Denis Sassu Nguesso resulted not only in political problems but also in difficulties regarding the exploration of national oil resources. Lawrence notes that oil and timber exports remained the country's main sources of foreign exchange, adding that although per capita gross domestic product was estimated in 2001 at approximately \$700, this figure included substantial oil export revenues, which were not distributed widely throughout the population (ibid: 45).

If the national revenues are not distributed to inhabitants in general and are subject to foreign exploration, it becomes obvious that those who have already allowed such exploration want to see it sustained and desire to get rid of those who wish to hinder such exploration. Again it is clear that the wealth of the country remains in the hands of the small elites.

In the case of **Zimbabwe**, to which BBC News refers above, the economy collapsed and Lawrence states clearly that gross domestic product (GDP) dropped to an estimated \$4.1 billion (ZS\$6,560 billion). During the year, per capita GDP fell to \$344 and, according to authoritative estimates, more than 70 percent of the population lived below the poverty line (ibid: 223).

In **Kenya**, according to Lawrence, many international financial institutions still maintained pressure by means of financial subsidies based on anti-corruption measures. The gross domestic product for 2001 was officially published as \$300 million, which meant that about 57 percent of the poor population, their conditions exacerbated by poverty, survived on less than \$1 per day as their standard of living. Many people are infected with HIV/AIDS: those living with infection comprise about 13 percent of the population between the age of 14 and 49, a situation

which increased many kinds of reactions to the salaries earned among civil society professionals (ibid: 79-80).

Economic tension should not be isolated from the others since it is linked with political and cultural factors. In **Sudan** for instance, Lawrence reports that the talks at Machakos focused on power and wealth sharing, and on November 18, 2001 the two sides agreed to extend the ceasefire and humanitarian access agreements until March 2003 (*op. cit.*: 187).

For many African leaders, usually black, the economic issue seems to take second place, but it is central to all the other tensions. For those who are in power, politics often means extending their respective tribes' and family members' control over the country. As shown above in both preceding sections, political and economic tensions are linked with each other and with socio-cultural differences. Economies are concentrated in the hands of small elites. Government leaders create tension with the people by marginalizing minorities and ignoring opposition parties. This pattern is not sustainable and dialogue regarding reconciliation should therefore be adopted as a peaceful way to resolve economic differences. In his article "Africa: Still on the Anti-graft Crusade," Adewale Banjo refers to the broad campaign against corruption from northern to southern Africa in the new programmes of the "Economic West African States (ECOWAS)" and of the "Southern African Development Community (SADC)" but observes that anti-corruption campaigns and the institutionalisation of anti-graft crusades in Africa may have become superficial in nature, rarely addressing the actual fundamental problems (2003:3).

Furthermore he demonstrates that some African countries are among the world leaders as regards corruption. Among them are listed six African states, the most corrupt of which is Nigeria, followed by Madagascar, Angola, Kenya, Uganda and Cameroon (ibid: 3). The anti-corruption campaigns adopted in almost all African countries do not seem to function effectively. Adewale Banjo suggests in his conclusion that loans granted to African countries without direct economic benefits should cease and that cross-border economic crimes should be tackled (*op. cit.* 4).

African poverty, exacerbated everywhere, even where growth is rapid, is caused mainly by corruption which is perceived as a failure of leadership. Unemployment is an outcome of this.

#### 2.2.4. Socio-cultural Tensions

The postcolonial period has been considered a time of renaissance for Africa, a time of the re-discovery of African cultures trampled upon by the colonialists. Africans fought for independence; political, religious and traditional leaders thought their ethnic and other inter-ethnic organizations would rediscover their lost identities. Yet ethnicity continues to play the same role as in the period of independence. Ethnic groups seek to prove their pride and capabilities to their fellow citizens. Leaders of major ethnic groups, by showing how powerful they are, cause tensions with other ethnic groups who feel marginalized and offended by the leading ethnic group. This kind of ethnic conflict leads to diverse conflicts and tensions in all levels of life in Africa. Wim M. J. van Binsbergen, in his article on “Ethnicity: Central Africa”, indicates how ethnicity can be a constructive as well as a destructive tool in the reconstruction of a country. The case of Rwanda evidences a destructive aspect of ethnicity, he argues. Ethnicization turns class conflict into ethnic conflict over control of the state, and having captured the state, an ethnic group seizes its political and military resources to further its own aims. With the global availability of sophisticated weaponry, ethnic conflicts are easily precipitated into large-scale violence, of which the 1994 tragedy in Rwanda is only one example from central Africa (2005: 5).

During the era of democratisation in Africa, ethnicity played the role of supporting leaders fairly or blindly in various areas. The results of such strategies are seen everywhere in Africa. Lawrence confirms that this problem is found in many countries. Certain cases follow.

In **Botswana**, ethnicism seems to result in a policy of marginalizing others, as Lawrence writes: “Some citizens, including groups not numbered among the eight ‘principal tribes’ of the Tswana nation, the majority ethnic group, remained marginalized in the political process” (op. cit.: 9). This means that the president’s ethnic group dominates the country. Desperation results from such policies, which shows that the influence of leadership in Africa remains a significant problem.

In **Cameroon** members of the Beti and Bulu ethnic groups dominate the government, civil service, and management of state-owned business (ibid: 19), while in **Mauritania** Lawrence notes the concentration of much of the country’s wealth in the hands of a small elite, including

the president's tribe and related Moor tribes (ibid: 99). This reinforces the point that frustration stemming from socio-cultural tensions is a result of a lack of good governance. Earl Conteh-Morgan (in chapter 6 of his book) "*Democratization in Africa*", "The Ethnopolitical-Democratization Conflict Nexus", demonstrates that everywhere in Africa, ethnicity is often/always involved in the pattern of conflicts. He writes: "In **Ethiopia** [emphasis the researcher's], until recently the societal trend has been one of Amhara dominance in government; in **Liberia** [ditto] until 1980 it was one of Americo-Liberian hegemony over the native groups". Furthermore, he evokes the case of **Rwanda** again, saying that in January 1994 a dispute erupted with opposition leader Bernard Kolela following parliamentary elections. The following clashes took place along ethnic lines. In **Burundi**, the success that ushered in the first Hutu elected president was quickly shattered in 1993, when a coup d'etat led by Tutsi military officers overthrew the new regime and killed its president (1997:94/113).

As regards **Kenya**, the article written by D. Foeken & T. Dietz, "Of Ethnicity, Manipulation and Observation: the 1992 and 1997 elections in Kenya," published in *Election Observation and Democratization in Africa* (2000: 122-149), commented extensively on this country's socio-cultural and political conflicts. It shows how manipulation was possible in two ways: first, by demarcating the boundary of a constituency and second by the determination of numbers of constituencies. These authors adduce further evidence in the fact that the registrations of voters for the 1997 election continued for 48 days, while the 1988 registrations took three months amidst alleged anomalies regarding the inability of many voters to participate caused by the lack of identity cards in some sectors of the population.

In this context we need also to discuss the question of racism in Africa. Africa exhibits not only tribal tensions but also tensions based on racism. The cases of South Africa and Angola focus on this aspect. Apartheid policies were based on racism and similarly the guerrilla Savimbists in Angola fought against the government, which they alleged was corrupt because of whites within the Angolan government. This was adduced as one of the reasons, among others, for civil war. The living together of black, white, and coloured people in Africa becomes problematic even though apparently in some areas they do cooperate. Generally they reside separately and only if there is some kind of obligation do they come together for a while.

### 2.2.5. Poverty and HIV/AIDS threaten Africa

HIV/AIDS and Poverty also bring despair to Africa's inhabitants. HIV/AIDS as well as poverty surely kill everywhere, every day and every class, indiscriminately, leaving many orphans and widows. To HIV/AIDS, we must also add other diseases such as malaria. Nana K. Poku confirms this by remarking: "Today HIV has become the leading infectious killer on the continent, but its structural impact threatens to be much more devastating than that of Africa's other infectious killers" (2000:532). The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) has reached all nations and does not spare any country. Fiona Fleck comments: "It is said that over two-thirds of the world's HIV/AIDS cases were in southern Africa but now the virus is spreading fastest in eastern Europe and Central Asia, where the number of cases tripled between 1999 and 2002 " (2004:77). Hence HIV/AIDS really is threatening the world in general with a rapidly-increasing fear as regards Africa in particular. Cases multiply wherever there are high rates of poverty, resulting in death and many other problems. The world economy is now in danger because of HIV/AIDS, observed Nana K. Poku:

Of course, by treating the pandemic as a health crisis caused by a crisis of a hypersexualized culture, the World Bank and the IMF can continue to pursue their structural adjustment programmes (SAP) on the continent uninterrupted (op. cit. : 538).

For some, HIV/AIDS is not only a medical issue: it becomes more political than medical. R. A. Freedland's words are quoted by Poku: "For some time many observers of this grotesquely pervasive HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa have taken the view that its dominant feature has been politics, not medicine" (2000:532). The South African government came under heavy criticism for its perceived underestimation of the pandemic, and the lack of programmes to try to curtail the disease. Discussing the issue of HIV/AIDS, Nana K. Poku states: "Mbeki's 'audacity', as one Western scientist viewed it, was to challenge the view that Africa's HIV crisis was functionally related to its unusually high rates of sexual partner changes" (ibid: 532). He discusses this issue cautiously, commenting that although this view merely reiterates the central thrust of prevention programmes over the past two decades it can be refuted in these terms:

It is important to remind ourselves that significant levels of unprotected multipartnered sex take place in the Western world as well, as evidenced by serious epidemics of other STDs, such as herpes-2 and chlamydia. Sexual behaviour is undoubtedly an important factor in the transmission of any sexually based disease. Alone, however, it appears totally inadequate in explaining HIV prevalence as high as 30 per cent anywhere in the Western world (2000:533).

He believes that HIV/AIDS can be linked to the dramatic and extreme poverty which control Africa and its population. Regarding this view, echoed also by Pastor Louis and Jonathan Mann, he argues that the environment in which any infection is transmitted is bound to be strongly influenced by crucial societal factors such as the levels of poverty, sanitation, malnutrition, environmental degradation, and access to preventive and curative care. Herein lies Africa's vulnerability to diseases more generally and to HIV in particular (Ibid 533).

It is important to point out that sexual behaviour is the main issue identified in the transmission of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. But poverty is undoubtedly also a factor. Today the rate of sexual immorality in our towns is high. Poverty is the accelerator of HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS is facilitated by extreme poverty. Shall we observe how the economy is connected with HIV/AIDS? Nana K Poku considers that cutting the health budget for the purposes of international debt payment is a high risk for Africa. For him such circumstances make it almost impossible to treat the virus effectively, or to undertake effective campaigns to reduce high-risk behaviour and provide essential resources in the fight against the pandemic (2000:538/9).

Even though the World Health Organization (WHO) is making enormous efforts, HIV/AIDS remains a massive challenge for Africa in particular and for the world in general. The WHO's AIDS epidemic update 2003, released on 25 November, calculated that 40 million people – 5 million of whom were infected in 2003 – were living with HIV/AIDS (WHO News, 2005:77). Hope as far as the WHO is concerned was based on getting antiretroviral drugs to 3 million of these by 2005. The WHO news states that this plan, known as the 3-by-5 initiative, is seen as a vital step to providing universal treatment for AIDS patients across the world (2005:77).

This effort embodies the best of medicine's resources in dealing with the pandemic but there still remains the economic question of how the poor gain access to this treatment or the drugs.



Branwen Gruffydd Jones, in his article, *"Africa and Poverty of International Relations,"* draws attention to studies of development and international relations. He considers poverty as a phenomenon of the shift from traditionalism to modernism, where structures themselves alter, adding that the modern social condition of poverty in Africa can only be understood as a global phenomenon, in the sense that conditions of local poverty are the outcome of a historical process of social change rooted in the world history, and reproduced today through social relations which are themselves globally structured (2005: 987).

It is important to point out that the move from the traditional to the modern world should be taken into consideration if we want to solve the problem of poverty in Africa, rather than by violently challenging structures which hold to the traditional type of life. In Jones's words: "The logic of analysis consists of identifying empirical characteristics and patterns of behaviour of the state" (ibid: 991). In this respect Lasswell states that the science of development is necessary to inform policy because the process of modernisation requires assistance from the more advanced states (ibid: 990). It is important to investigate what is keeping Africa in such precarious conditions. According to Branwen Gruffydd Jones, it is obvious that Africa is still controlled by traditional processes, which produce a modernism still surrounded by traditional behaviour. Thus assistance is necessary for training people as regards sustainable development.

### 2.2.6. Ideological Tensions

Africa is not only burdened by political, economic and socio-cultural tensions but also by ideological pressures, which further contribute to despair. Democracy, federalism, capitalism, and socialism are political ideologies and in the international market economic ideologies such as partnership and globalization create confusion for the leaders of new African nations and their people in general. It is often claimed that these ideologies function on behalf of the developed and industrialized countries of western cultures, in order to keep the third world under their control. This is neo-colonialism. Norman Mlambo writes: "On the one hand, globalisation is concentrating economic power and centralising political control in a few Northern countries while at the same time it is marginalizing and impoverishing parts of the third world" (2004:11). Lawrence observes for instance that in Malawi no clear-cut ideological difference among the three political parties is evident (*op. cit.*: 93).

Such confusion may be verified within many major African nations. Political parties should really identify with one of these ideologies and focus their attention on the reconstruction of the country. The government too should develop a clear vision of its leadership. For instance the African National Congress (ANC), according to Saunders, thought that apartheid was an integral part of the capitalist system in South Africa. The previous rulers were concerned about the influence of communism in the ANC (2005: 3). This kind of ideological misunderstanding has existed since the struggle against colonialism began among African leaders.

The case of the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** reveals this tension in the person of Lumumba, who is considered a national martyr who died for the sake of his country's freedom. His socialist ideology caused him to experience great tension with other ideological leaders who laid many traps for him and led to his making many mistakes. For instance Lumumba requested the withdrawal of UN troops to welcome the Russian troops in Congo, but when, during the crisis between Lumumba and Kassa-vubu, Joseph Desire Mobutu seized power by force, Lumumba again called on the UN for help, contradicting his previous request. His mistakes were both political and ideological and reined in his great personality and his extreme nationalism. Ralph, Uwechue *et al.* write about his death that some observers believed that the UN had handed him over to Mobutu's troops who later claimed to have arrested him. Lumumba was severely beaten up before being jailed in Thysville, pending his trial (1996:363/4). Although the apparent democratization of Africa has taken place, most political leaders are still mired in federalism, which is not proclaimed as such, but in practice each leader clings to his homeland village or tribe. In the case of **Ethiopia**, Lawrence observes that highly centralized authority, poverty, civil conflict, and unfamiliarity with democratic concepts combined to complicate the implementation of federalism (*op. cit.*: 61). When discrimination and "marginalisation" dominate within the process of democratisation in Africa, we can only say that these kinds of mistakes among African leaders constitute an ideological crisis. Workshops and seminars dealing with democracy, federalism, capitalism, etc., could be helpful to leaders and people in general.

The world today tends toward universal liberal globalisation policies because the open market has both a constructive and a destructive impact on the third world, as Mlambo states above. If today we do not understand how to live peacefully, tomorrow, when we try to make peace with each other, the challenge of global mission will find us without anything to share with other developed countries. Ecclesiastical leaders, with their theological belief that God does not

abandon the world, in which he commissioned the church, should take part in the political issues of their own countries without reserve. In doing so, the churches could become the light of the world in all aspects of life. But it should be noted that religions in Africa have also contributed to many tensions during both the pre-colonial and post-colonial periods.

### 2.2.7. Religious Tensions

Colonization in Africa brought with it many difficulties, including poverty, political tensions, economic differences, ethnicism, racism and religious tensions. In particular, the religious tensions arrived on the scene early when Africa was divided into territories with boundaries, which separated one state from another state in terms of the religions to which each state had been tied. The history of religious tensions goes back many centuries. Sanneh confirms this when he writes:

From such dispersal, both planned and unplanned, Christianity from the fourth century onward penetrated beyond the boundaries of the Roman Empire into Egypt, Meroe, and Aksum, and the sixth century into Ethiopia, a penetration that stamped the religion with its territorial character (2005: 3).

In later centuries, during the period of colonization, Roman Catholic as well as Protestant missionaries were either welcomed or prohibited, according to the "faith" of the colonial government. Sanneh observes that Christianity began to shed its territorial complexes only with the nineteenth century Catholic and Protestant missions (ibid: 3). Although these missions could share their traditional territories, this exceptional case is not the same with other religions. Today there are tensions between Christians and Muslims, Christians and traditional African religious practitioners and other religions or unidentified beliefs which resist Christianity. In Nigeria where Christians comprise 45.8 percent and Muslims 44.0 percent of the population, according to Barrett's data (1999:26), they are always in tension. Throughout Africa, two major religious groups (Christianity and Islam) are dominant and are often in conflict with each other. When we observe Barrett's statistics and those of other scholars relating to religious groups in Africa, we find that in northern Africa, Islam is the leading and influential religious group, while in Central Africa as well as in southern Africa, Christianity is the leading religious group. A table of data adapted from David B. Barrett (1999:26) follows:

Country name	Christians	Muslims	Traditional	Hindus	Buddhists
<b>Northern Africa</b>	<b>9.3 %</b>	<b>87.5 %</b>	<b>1.9 %</b>	-	-
Algeria	0.2	96.7	-	-	-
Egypt	16.0	83.4	-	-	-
Libya	3.9	95.4	-	0.1	0.3
Morocco	0.6	98.2	-	-	-
Sudan	16.1	71.7	11.1	-	-
Tunisia	0.5	98.9	-	-	-
Western Sahara	0.3	99.3	-	-	-
<b>Southern Africa</b>	<b>86.5 %</b>	<b>0.9 %</b>	<b>10.8 %</b>	<b>0.2 %</b>	<b>0.1 %</b>
Botswana	61.6	0.2	37.1	0.2	0.1
Lesotho	92.6	0.1	6.3	0.1	-
Namibia	92.3	-	5.7	-	-
South Africa	81.5	2.4	9.9	0.2	0.1
Swaziland	86.9	0.7	10.7	0.2	-
*Angola	94.8	-	4.2	-	-
*Congo DRC	95.9	1.1	1.9	-	-

Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo in Barrett's data are included in central Africa which includes Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Zaire. In this region, Christians represent 82.6% of the populace, Muslims 9.1%, Hindus 0.1%, Buddhists and traditional religions 7.2% (ibid: 26). The data show that Christianity and Islam, in spite of the presence of other religions, are the two leading religions in Africa. The majority religious group usually wields strong influence, as Lawrence confirms (*op. cit.*: 122). Even though a majority of African states declare themselves to be secular, they take sides in religious issues. In the countries where Christians are a

majority, Muslims and other believers are subject to discrimination while where Muslims are a majority, Christians and other believers are subject to discrimination and violence. Abraham McLaughlin describes such tensions between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria and Sudan: In Nigeria's religious city of Jos (short for "Jesus our Saviour") the Government reported that 50 000 people died between 1999 and 2004 in sectarian clashes. Until a peace deal last year, Sudan's northern Muslims and southern Christians had been at war for two decades (2006) [www.csmonitor.com](http://www.csmonitor.com).

These kinds of mistakes and unfortunate behaviour have led Africa into its current crisis, of which inexperienced democracies have also been alleged to be one of the main causes.

It is possible to trace the roots of this behaviour to the colonial period where leadership was weakened and developed into the kind of leadership legacy described above. For instance in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the case of Simon Kimbangu and the Kimbanguists, when the movement announced the country to be a "Catholic State", the taking into custody of its leaders was influenced by Catholic leaders, according to David W. Shenk (1997: 119; see also Marie-Louis Martin's similar view (1975:58). As a further example, when in some African countries their constitutions recognize only one form of religious wedding as legal, only the most influential religious group enjoys this privilege. Others' weddings are then not recognized. We think that such situations should be minimized to give consideration to all religious groups, allowing them to benefit from the same privilege. Frontline Fellowship News comprised a valuable source in reporting how Christians and Muslims proceed in mutual persecution: "The Muslims then went on the rampage down the main road in Jos burning Christian businesses, churches and homes. The next day the Christians rallied together and stood firm to resist the Muslim attacks" (2003:5).

We are living on the same planet and in the same continent. This situation should be redressed. We should put aside all religious tension under the Holy One who gives us this beautiful continent with our differences as a wonderful world to be part of, with countries as our inheritance to share with each other. The church should promote dialogue as regards the unity of religious groups and all other human beings' beliefs, as a continual process without discrimination. This should occur at the regional as well as at the local levels.

Africa is a field of tensions, where the United Nations is very busy resolving conflicts, and sending out not messengers of the gospel of peace for the proclamation of the kingdom, but armed peacemakers who challenge militias and government troops. Hope in such an atmosphere seems to be utopian but the church and communities of faith must join their hands together to reflect deeply on how Africa can be made a peaceful, reconciled and united continent rejoicing in the diversity of its abundant resources and beauty of life for the Lord's glory.

How could this become possible? Jessica Powers, quoting Canon Taylor, as regards understanding Muslims, writes that: "Islam is an imperfect Christianity," she termed it "a half-Christian faith" (2006) [www.csmonitor.com](http://www.csmonitor.com). Christianity too, in the eyes of Muslims, is an imperfect Islam. Christians recognize that the Q'uran expresses some basic truths about and respect for Jesus, whom it believes to be a holy prophet of Allah. Hence there is the possibility of working towards peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians. Abraham Mclaughlin in his article referred to above, entitled "In Africa, Islam and Christianity are growing – and blending", indicates the progress of coexistence between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria in some places, even though there are hostilities and tensions elsewhere. A well developed reconciliation ministry, understood in the local and regional context, could be helpful to foster such cooperation between Muslims and Christians and other faith communities.

### **2.3. The Role of the Church in Africa, to promote Unity and Reconciliation**

The rapid growth of Christianity in Africa also offers hope for the world. Churches are spreading everywhere, in the cities as well as in the rural areas. John Mbiti estimated that by the year 2000 A.D. 400,000,000 Christians would be found in Africa (1975: 182); in this respect Drew Smith writes that worldwide, members of Pentecostal churches numbered more than 147,000,000 in 1970 and in 1995, more than 605,000,000 (2006:2). But this growth of Christianity in Africa is for some people associated with the fact of western influence, which is perceived in terms of cultural propaganda. John Mbiti notes that in the minds of some people it is still associated with Europe and America, since the majority of the missionaries stemmed from those territories (op. cit.: 182). But one should recall that Christianity in Africa is not a question of the arrival of European or American missionaries: this religion boasts an ancient history, in the north since patristic times.

Many western thinkers and theologians consider African spirituality as offering hope for the evangelization and re-evangelization of the world. But they also see the legacy of the growth of the Church in Africa, which does not self-finance, auto-manage or auto-sustain itself. Siaki Paul writes the following on behalf of Anglicans: "Africa will probably lead all continents for the Anglican Communion with an estimated 42% of all Anglicans by the year 2010" (2002: 34). Such an affirmation could be seen as overall support for his denomination. But Africa represents hope only if we address the questions which challenge Africa and produce despair. The first legacy that the churches must put aside is western denominationalism, which has a strong hold of our Christianity and divides us. If we do this the unity, for which the Lord prayed, would be seen by all nations in one united Church. The case of Rwanda, as one example, shows how fragile our Christianity is. We will examine what this means concretely for the Church's mission. Thus, two points are central to the following section: Firstly the disunity among the Churches and secondly the potential role of the Churches.

### 2.3.1. Disunity among the Churches

As stated above, denominationalism is so strong that the unity for which the Lord Jesus Christ prayed turns us into divided believers, not in the Christ but in the denominations. Denominationalism, some will argue, is a diversity of services in Christ. But when we investigate more deeply, there is not just diversity, but really division and tension among Christians. In the church councils we perceive tension between Ecumenical and Evangelical movements in the denominations founded by western movements. Among African churches that are influenced within their already divided ethnic contexts, denominations adopt all sorts of western cultural influence as part of the gospel and, under pressure, require all members to submit to these, which then results in divisions and the proliferation of new independent and charismatic churches. Sherwood Lingenfelter's criticism is worth considering:

Why is it that in the process of establishing churches in non western nations we transfer our culture of church? Can we find a biblical basis for this practice? Are missionaries planting biblically founded indigenous churches, or are they transferring their culture of Christianity to every nation of the world? (1997: 12).

The case of the Methodist Church in South Africa has been cited as one example of division resulting from cultural differences between white and black. Hendriks & Erasmus wrote:

All who know the history of the Methodist church will be well aware of its missionary zeal in previous centuries, but also the large numbers of Black people who broke away to form Africanised or indigenised 'African Methodist' Churches (2002: 28).

Much of the disunity of the churches stems from the racism and ethnocentrism which dominate the various denominations. The genocide in Rwanda should summon us to realize how weak Christianity is in Africa so that fellowship is patterned not on Christ but on our ethnicities and race. Brothers and sisters killed each other within the church in Rwanda because they belonged to Hutu or Tutsi ethnic groups. And as Piet Meiring asks: 'what was the role of the church in Rwanda? (1999: 110). "*The Kigali Covenant*", in *A New Version for Africa* (Geneva: World Council of Churches 2005), paraphrased by Itonde Kakoma, states:

The church, called to be a light upon a hill for the whole world to see, continually covers its flame with shadows of complacency and hypocrisy. Where were the cries and confessions of Christ's redemptive sacrifice when thousands of Rwandans sought refuge in sanctuaries, only to perish at the hands of parishioners, nuns, monks and clergy? (2005: 15).

Most of the leaders of the different denominations are supported by their tribal or ethnic members within the churches. Like the political leaders, denominational leaders act and behave in similar ways. If we want to look deeply at this legacy of the churches in Africa, there are many cases to refer to, not only that of Rwanda but in many countries and all denominations: Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Pentecostals and Mennonites are all weak and divided even within their own denominations. Special attention will be given to this point in the comparative studies of South Africa and Angola in order to understand how the divided churches actually increased and influenced tensions within the national crises by which these countries were overwhelmed for many years during apartheid and civil war.



### 2.3.2. The Role of the Church in Africa

As mentioned, the Church is an imperfect community of believers, the mystic and lovely body of Christ, called to become perfect for its own sake, as well as to help and to transform the world for the glory of God. She has a powerful role to play. Though she is, as Lesslie Newbigin says, "The bearer of the presence of the kingdom through history, [this] is surely not as the community of the righteous in a sinful world ... it is a sinful community" (1978:59). The church should not only assist affected communities or nations by donating goods but should also condemn ideologies which are inhumane and destroy the law and the rights of people. We appreciate what, for instance, the South African Council of Churches did for Zimbabwe in August 2005 by sending assistance to the population when the government violated their basic rights (*The New Dimension* August 2005, vol 35 No 08:1). This is offering real hope and constitutes a partial role of the church in serving the world in which the Lord commissions us to be the light.

By giving our assistance to the affected population, what lesson do we communicate to the government? Are we not telling them to "destroy and we shall rebuild what you are destroying"? Furthermore the *Methodist Newspaper* states that it was feared that the government would hijack the aid, valued at about R 220,000. The churches in Zimbabwe should not only take the responsibility of distributing the relief, but should normally challenge the government by peaceful negotiation, demonstrating the legacy of their policies in terms of the *Missio-Dei* in which the church is one of God's partners or instruments. If the church wishes to express something for or against the Zimbabwean government the Council of Churches, through its delegates, should speak courageously to the government leaders. By doing so, we are not only providing material assistance to the people affected, but also helping political leaders by fair negotiations, dialogue and showing them God's will for the good governance of the nation.

By despatching its delegates and aid to Zimbabwe, the South African Council of Churches (SACC) could also be involved in such a mission, through the Zimbabwean Churches' Council, to promote peace and reconciliation. The Church should at all levels promote unity and reconciliation; if the church is in any sense apostolic it is because of the reconciliation for which the Lord Jesus appointed us as ambassadors according to 2 Cor. 5: 16 – 21. The role of the Church is not only mono-cultural: by sending our aid to other countries, as did the South

African Council of Churches (SACC), we are reaching the trans-cultural dimension of the *Missio-Dei*, which is truly apostolic and catholic. This means that we are useful to God and that we might hear, in the *eschatos*, an excellent word for the Church: “well done, good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25: 21).

In Somalia, for instance, the churches and other religious groups which were present in the International Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) sponsored a reconciliation conference led by Kenya, in association with Ethiopia and Djibouti, as Lawrence records (*op. cit.* : 157). God is using us, as his instruments, to correct, but not by violence, those who are trespassing and breaking the Lord’s command of love (to himself first and then to our neighbour, as we love ourselves). If we do not carry out this commission to those we are supposed to correct, God will use them to correct us. This means that we need to refresh our minds through the Bible, to understand what God wants us to do as his people, the body of Christ. Africa today flourishes with many new initiatives, which should be seen as fostering hope: African Union (AU), Southern African Development Community (SADC), New Economic Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as well as others not mentioned here. The Church and community of faith should not be indifferent to these new ideologies and African initiatives, but should at all levels take part in them.

## 2.4. Conclusion

After this rapid survey of Africa one may reach the conclusion that she is indeed a continent in need of reconciliation. Political, economic, sociological, religious and ideological tensions are observable everywhere. Consequently, reconciliation is both an imminent and an immanent mission for Africa. Richard Joseph concludes his chapter introducing the volume *State, Conflict, and Democracy in Africa* as follows: “The underlying sentiment common to the authors in this book is that African nations should assume a place in world society as assured actors, rather than as perpetual objects of charitable concern” (1999:13). Such encouraging words express challenges with which all African leaders, political and religious, should engage when taking positions at any level where we are called to serve. It is not good always to be “objects of charitable concern” to use Richard Joseph’s terms. For instance it is lamentable to hear what Marsha Snulligan Haney comments regarding the church, which should normally be the source

of hope: "While some churches planted by American Protestant denominations began to voice their resentment of their dependence upon foreign church leadership and resources, others eagerly sought it" (2006:195).