CHAPTER 5

DEVELOPING A MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION FOR THE ANGOLAN CHURHCES: THEOLOGICAL AND PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES

In this chapter the researcher considers the basic ministry of reconciliation as firstly God's ministry carried out through Jesus Christ, as we read in 2 Corinthians 5: 16 – 21. The writer draws attention to biblical texts so as to consider how the ministry of Reconciliation constitutes part of the Missio-Dei and the Missio-Ecclesiae. Theological and practical perspectives will therefore be discussed in terms of the biblical texts. Consideration will be given to certain articles, books and reports written on reconciliation as God's imperative to the church. Among the sources selected was, firstly: *Theology of Reconciliation* edited by Colin E. Gunton, with special attention to the chapter by Christoph Schwobel entitled: "Reconciliation: From Biblical Observations to Dogmatic Reconstruction". Four theological areas will be explored (Schwobel's four angles):

1. The Soteriological dimension,
2. The Christological dimension,
3. The Theological dimension and,
4. The Pneumatological dimension.

A little modification of this scheme will be necessary in our thesis. We will consider *five* theological *perspectives* instead of dimensions: Soteriological, Christological, Pneumatological, Historical and Missiological, where the theological perspective will act as an umbrella to these five theological dimensions. We choose the term "perspective" because we do not offer a complete theological discourse in which debates and many other considerations are very important, though the term perspective suggests a careful observation of a quite complex subject. The article on "Leadership for Reconciliation: A Truth and Reconciliation Commission Perspective" written by Piet Meiring as well as the book edited by Gregory Baum and Harold Wells, *The Reconciliation of Peoples: Challenge to the Churches* and certain extracts from the seven volumes of the TRC Report will serve as practical guides. From Piet Meiring we will examine five aspects of reconciliation as ministry: A clear vision of the reconciliation as ministry, respect for the truth, a sense of justice, an understanding of forgiveness and

commitment. To this we added the twelve theses of David Bosch as dynamic factors with respect to the leadership of this particular ministry. They are ingredients of reconciliation theology.

The definition of reconciliation in the first chapter of this thesis will be applied. There we have already made some anticipatory observations, which will be tabled in this chapter in debate with other scholars in the field of reconciliation. In addition this chapter will consider the practical perspectives which stem from our findings in the two main chapters: The South African Experience and The Angolan Experience, so that our work will not be considered as useless, academic discourse, only good enough for the library. The *Ubuntu* theology of Desmond Tutu, in South Africa, will be compared with the *Tata Nlongi* and *Ondjando* theologies (theologies of care) in the Angolan context. Particular attention will be accorded to the healing of the relationship between the churches and the state where collaboration should be genuine since they are God's institutions for the welfare of human beings. No longer should the churches be excluded from decision-making on behalf of the nation. Though they should not support political parties their members should be active, performing the role of being light and salt. In the same vein we will see the local church as an embassy representing God's kingdom, of which its members are ambassadors in the world according to 2 Corinthians 5:20. Many other matters such as incarnation, ecological and diplomatic perspectives will emerge in connection with the five main theological perspectives. Factors such as repentance, forgiveness, love, justice and peace as characteristics of reconciliation will be discussed in connection with theological and practical matters.

The chapter is divided into two main sections: the first concerns the five *theological perspectives* and the second the *four practical areas of involvement*: Cultural, sociological, economical and political. The first part follows.

5.1. Theological Perspectives

Before we undertake any discussion of the ministry of reconciliation we need to know what reconciliation stands for. A clear vision for the eventual exercise of this ministry in South Africa and Angola is necessary both in this thesis and perhaps also for other countries. The debate about the nature of reconciliation in all sectors demonstrates that it is a central and universal

concept. However, some think that the word is severely abused and confusing. A minister in this field of reconciliation, Piet Meiring, on the contrary expressed his hope, which is also mine, that:

> Leaders in fields of philosophy and linguistics may help analyze the history and meaning of the concept of reconciliation. Sociologists and Psychologists need to define the context as well as the process of reconciliation and theologians are challenged to develop a theology of reconciliation (2005:4)

We are all welcome to contribute to defining the concept and need not exclude others. This creates conflict and division instead of transforming them and reconciling people with that diversity which is the beauty of being *Imago Dei*. The term Greek "*Καταλλαγή*", translated in English by reconciliation, which derives from the Greek verb "*Καταλλάσσω*", translated as reconcile, concerns bridging broken relationships. Reconciliation as "*Καταλλαγή*" in Greek philology connotes the renewal of a broken relationship. Reconciliation is the way to receive one another again, to renew broken relations, to walk again together with separated and lost friends, to sit and share new fellowship again, after a broken relationship. It is time to consider the renewal of old relationships as healthy for the community if the parties to the conflict wish to overcome their differences. Walter Wink confirms this point: "Reconciliation … is more difficult. It requires that I and the other person from whom I have been separated by enmity, mutually forgive each other and walk into a common future together" (1997:11). When a community or family lack peace, "shalom", division, disharmony and storms occur and if people wish to restore harmony they should look to the causes which have led to hard times. Notions like justice, forgiveness and peace are connected values in the field of reconciliation. Reconciliation is a complex process: it needs, as Piet Meiring comments: "a clear vision, understanding of the sense of forgiveness and justice" (op. cit.), because relationships with human beings are very complex. In transforming or managing conflicts and reconciling people, leaders in this field must for instance know about the intra-personal and inter-personal conflicts which are localized on the individual level. And on the macro level, intra- and inter-relations concern social groups. In the resolution of conflict the mediator has to understand the parties' involvement in the process of conflict. For instance, who takes the initial step in conflict? It is also most important to understand why people support conflict.

Forgiveness also needs discussion before we consider the theological perspectives. The Greek term "αφεσις", translated by forgiveness, takes many senses: send away, give up, abandon, or give away in the sense of tolerance. People are limited in the way they define forgiveness as the means by which they are obliged to remember the past: possibly the most well-known definition in the present climate is "to forgive but not to forget" as John W. de Gruchy wrote (1997:27); see also Mark Hay's remark, "for some reconciliation means 'forgive and forget'" (1998:14). However, we should bear in mind that forgiveness is an irresistible spiritual power, one of the strong spiritual pillars of the reconciliation ministry by which healing occurs. A non-violent method has much force here, as we will see in the theological perspectives. There is little disagreement concerning the concept of reconciliation but much regarding forgiveness and justice where the notion of distributive justice is predominant. Since we all need to be partners in reconciliation, it is important that our discourse be coherent. For this we really need to understand the basic pattern of this doctrine of reconciliation, turning to the five aspects of systematic theology mentioned earlier.

5.1.1   Soteriological Perspective

Reconciliation entails the redemption of humanity from its broken relationship with God. The Bible offers clear examples of how redemption has been administered to humankind. Here lies the foundation of reconciliation as soteriological theology. Genesis 3:21 narrates the first innocent bloodshed for the redemption of offenders in order to restore the broken relationship with God. According to Christoph Schwobel: "the attempt at offering a dogmatic reconstruction of discourse on reconciliation cannot but begin from scripture. It is both the origin of all dogmatic reflection and as paradigmatic testimony to God's self-disclosure in Christ" (2003:15). After the breach created by the fall of humankind God took the initiative to be reconciled with people through Christ, as we read in 2 Corinthians 5: 17 – 20:

> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's Ambassadors, as through us God were

making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: be reconciled to God. (NIV 2005)

We are not undertaking a textual hermeneutics of reconciliation but it is obvious that the text entails the theological and sociological spheres when we consider terms Greek like "*κόσμος*", translated by the world, and the term "*πρέσβεύω*", translated by being ambassadors who are useful in the sphere of social reconciliation. God is seen as victim but at the same time as actor, taking the initiative to reconcile himself with his offenders. Some commentators on this passage place emphasis on the "divine- human relationship", as Christoph Schwobel (op. cit.: 15) has observed regarding the use of the term "*Καταλλάσσω*" which refers six times to God and only once to the interpersonal relationship. But the divine relationship does not exclude the inter-human relationship; on the contrary it requires the latter as the second great command. Reconciliation has been instituted for the disciples as ambassadors to reconcile people with God first and then with other creatures, not only interpersonal but global, holistic reconciliation. This is the soteriological dimension well expressed in the last verse of the text: "God made him (Christ) who had no sin to be sin (not to become sinner) but sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21). This dimension has been well expressed in the Old Testament in terms of the covenant, which required the sacrifice of animals where the blood plays the important role of purifying the guilt of the sin committed against God and against the community, which for instance could be sin against a fellow individual within the community. This perspective gave rise to the evangelistic mission through which churches are generally busy gaining souls, neglecting the physical dimension of salvation. But the soteriological perspective concerns not only human beings but also the ecological perspective as one reads in Romans 8: 20–21. The environmental dimension of reconciliation is very important because it is the first mandate given to the human being regarding his/her right and responsibility to care for other creatures. The soteriological perspective is completed by the Christological dimension.

5.1.2   Christological Perspective

Every exegete of the New Testament who reads 2 Corinthians 5: 16–21 will be struck by the repeated use of "in Christ", denoting the Christocentricity of the doctrine of reconciliation. Schwobel remarks that "the Christological reference of reconciliation is more comprehensive

than the references of the metaphors of sacrifices or atonement" (op. cit.: 24), adding: "The fullness of the presence of God in Christ is the condition for the all-inclusive character of reconciliation" (ibid: 24). De Gruchy writes: "The world is not at the mercy of fate, … but one that has been reconciled to God in Christ" (op. cit: 53). This Christocentricity makes obvious the dimension of incarnation, embodying two or more aspects: the first being God himself in Christ reconciling the world with himself, while the second is our incarnation in Christ where we are justified as righteous before God. The third aspect of incarnation is to be found in the liturgy as Itonde Kakoma suggests: "the language of 'incarnation' to describe the authentic expression of a people before God and one another is by all means appropriate" (2005:12): incarnation in this regard should also be seen in the sacramental elements. Some might ask: does the Christological perspective of reconciliation also fit the social context of reconciliation in this world of multi-religious contexts? Of course, if Christ is the Lord, his kingdom rules over all and is for all generations. But our answer to such ecumenical questions calls for flexibility, not a "quick fix" answer. The Christological perspective on reconciliation accords a sense of its multi-faceted nature, as in the ecological dimension because "For in him God in all his fullness chose to dwell and through him to reconcile all things to himself" (Col. 1:19 -20a); Schwobel (op. cit: 24). And Christ is the focus of this ministry because of his reconciliatory office as the great high priest. It was right for John the Baptist to present him as: "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29 (NIV)). Basing himself on the Old Testament the author of Hebrews wrote: "In fact the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22 (NIV).

We also call attention to pictures or images of the reconciling Christ in a multiracial not only in a religious context, since we must keep our minds alert to how we are representing Christ. Here is a good example of the reconciling Christ according to the Kimbaguist who appeared to Simon Kimbangu (as quoted by David W. Shenk): "In which vision Christ appeared as neither black nor white" (1997:119). We hear the cries of African poets and theologians describing Jesus. Gabriel M. Setiloane in a poem, "I am an African", pointed out that the white child Christ which Western theologians brought into Africa is not recognizable, like Moses wearing western garments: but the one who is sweating on the cross when He is stripped naked like us, his face and body bloody in the hot sun, is black so that we cannot resist him (1995:130). If our image of Christ is a biased one then the ministry of reconciliation will not be accepted by the people we pretend to reconcile with God and with one another. The Christological as well as the Soteriological perspectives in the letter of 2 Corinthians 5: 16–21 are well expressed: being in

Christ requires self-judgment, renewal of behaviour; meanwhile God is the author of reconciliation and Christ the means by which it is made possible: God punished him so that we might inherit his righteousness and gain a new identity, that of children of God. This message is central in the proclamation of salvation in Christ and of reconciling people with God and one another in Christ.

Christ has to be positively presented to all the cultures of the world. The Gospel of John describes Christ using many metaphors, some of which are not found in the synoptic Gospels. He is the living word, creator, the Lamb of God, the living water, the living bread, the door of the sheep pen, and the good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep. If we do present him like this we avoid the dividing Christ, which David Bosch refers to as: "two different but very muscular Christs" (1988:103): the confronting Christ does not reconcile but divides people and denominations. The Christological perspective offers divine forgiveness to humankind through the death of Christ. But it also gives us opportunities to offer pardon to those who do wrong to us.

Lastly, we should not forget about reconciliation with the spirits of our ancestors, since to Christ all powers must submit: "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Phil.2: 10). Carrying out reconciliation, in Christ churches and believers hold His authority (Matthew 28:18). Dwight N. Hopkins, inspired by Black theology, pointed out: "The resurrected lordship cosmologically altered the balance of forces over sin's dominion, so the kingdom of sin likewise submits to the kingdom of Christ" (2006:102). This authority conferred on the disciples for the benefit of the world operates in the baptism in Christ through the Holy Spirit: the Pneumatological perspective.

5.1.3   Pneumatological Perspective

The Soteriological and Christological aspects are achieved in terms of the Pneumatological perspective. The Holy Spirit is the excellent counsellor who convicts the world of guilt, but also conveys a knowledge of right, truth and justice and convinces people to forgive one another. Reconciliation, most times, is experienced as difficult. Christoph Schwobel stresses the Pneumatological perspective during three periods: the past, the present and the future. He

wrote: "The Spirit is in this sense both the link to the past event of Christ's death, the medium of our relationship to the living God and effective anticipation of the perfection of this relationship in the *eschaton*" (op. cit.: 25). Also, Schwobel emphasizes that: "the plausibility of the notion of reconciliation and peace with God depends on explicating this largely implicit pneumatological element of the model of reconciliation" (ibid: 25). When reconciliation occurs, where tension and confrontation have held for decades, even centuries, it is the implicit work of the Holy Spirit. There is no formula of reconciliation: the Spirit of God guides ministers of reconciliation regarding how to act in specific cases. The healing relationship between Jews and Gentiles, as in the case of Peter in the house of the Roman officer, in the book of Acts (10: 15, 34) was the work of the Holy Spirit. Many cases of reconciliation are delayed, waiting for the proper time, and while negotiations are being carried on to some degree people are afraid to be open on some issues; apologies are sometimes not accepted. These cases demonstrate that the work of reconciliation is truly the ministry of the triune God. Hence the TRC experience of Desmond Tutu saying to the audience when he was asked *not* to pray before a hearing, not to invoke the help of God's Spirit: "No, this won't work! We really cannot start like this, … People, close your eyes so that we can pray!" (Meiring 1999:30). Reconciliation in this pneumatological perspective should be seen as a ministry of intercession as in John 17. Reconciliation is sometimes a process of confrontation, in which case it is important to emphasize that the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit are given to believers for them to become able to reconcile and comfort people. We are not saying that the Holy Spirit only ministers within the Church: he cannot be encapsulated in one specific box and such a conception should be held as wrong. He is free to use even the institutions we consider as the most evil: however the church should be seen as his privileged and beloved institution and a dwelling place of the Holy One of Israel for the mission of reconciliation.

We cannot move from the pneumatological perspective without saying something about the truth to which the Holy Spirit will guide all people, being himself the Spirit of truth (John16: 12). Meiring reminds one that the leaders of the ministry of reconciliation need to respect truth: "In all the traditions of religions searching for the truth turns into spiritual exercise. Finding truth, the leader will soon discover, goes far beyond establishing historical and legal facts." (2002:5). Finding the truth would set one free, taught Jesus Christ. According to Meiring, looking for truth "is more than collecting facts" (ibid). Moreover, what we sometimes consider as truth is not necessarily what the other party regards as truth. Transforming conflict among people, we need to uphold the truth, within the context of the conflict. The historical perspective demonstrates

the interaction of: the Soteriological, Christological and Pneumatological perspectives of reconciliation. We now turn to this perspective.

5.1.4   Historical Perspective

This perspective is a broad one which cannot be explored in one or two pages but for the purposes of the topic we need to summarize its main concepts. The history of South Africa and Angola records contact amongst different people: free settlers looking for new areas for their own safety and peace, colonizers, and hunters and merchants. This history is generally taken in a negative sense, but should it not be seen as the way by which God's mission of reconciling and uniting people has been made possible? Despite the wickedness of humankind, God's will was and is to reconcile and unite people for his glory. The immigration which characterized the old world, had also been characterized by violence against the first owners of the land.

It was in obedience to God's will that a wave of missionaries arrived in Africa during the period of colonization, but those peaceful messengers were accompanied by the power of the colonizing countries from which they came. Emilio Castro testifies: "The priests came with the soldiers, the church with conquerors" (1985:4). The history of missions is often seen as evil, wiping out black people's cultures by inculcating western civilization instead of salvation. But, as mentioned previously, the African history of Christianity did not begin with colonialization. Furthermore, the pre-colonial era also evidenced a dramatic history of cannibalism and divisions characterized by wars between kingdoms. "We are prisoners of history," wrote David Bosch (1988:101): thus reconciliation becomes a field of confrontation for our mutual liberation from our prisons of history. The confrontation of MPLA, FNLA and UNITA as liberation movements with the Portuguese brought independence to Angola, which should be perceived as one of the first steps of reconciliation between Angolans and Portuguese. The confrontation of the ANC and the Apartheid regime in South Africa brought about a correction of mindsets to search for peaceful coexistence. Confrontation often precedes the process of reconciliation. Confrontation should not be understood always as violent but might also be seen also as an opposition of opinions.

God desires the interaction of people: when He called Abraham for a mission involving such interaction, Abraham was required to leave the prison of his history, which incorporated his

culture, family and land, for the new identity and new culture of being a man of God. Even Abraham did not truly understood God's will when he was called. The Kingdom of God as perceived in the New Testament is a kingdom of all-inclusive nations gathering before the enthroned King of kings. The historical context of mission became one way in which God made reconciliation possible between different races of humankind. Today we are considering how to facilitate that interaction, which is the outcome of history, as the focus of healthy cooperation and openness in the contemporary mission perspective.

5.1.5 Missiological Perspective

The Missiological perspective, like the historical, went hand in hand with the history of Christendom in Africa. In this section the researcher intends to offer a clear and concise view of mission in Angola and South Africa in terms of the biblical perspective on their particular contexts. In South Africa the apartheid context was altered by the endeavours of many powerful actors including the churches, who thereby accomplished their prophetic mission, but still have much to do. The missionary endeavour of the churches in Africa also contributed to the process of reconciliation. In Angola the churches should also considered to be responsible for the peace we experience, even though the military victory is often perceived as the reason for change in Angola. The churches did what they could in accordance with the Lord's will but much is still to be accomplished. "Mission" should be understood as an "attribute of God" (Bosch 1991:390) and as the "mother of theology": Martin Kahler's notion quoted by Bosch (ibid: 16). To Bosch's understanding of mission we need to add Ralph D. Winter's notion of "modality and sodality". Ming-Suen Po presents the notion here below:

> Ralph D. Winter proposes a lay ministry model that is built on the interrelationship between two structures: the ecclesiastical structure (modalities) for building a communal life, and the missionary structures (sodalities) for outreach to win the lost (1974:121 -139) (2002: 59).

Both structures become decisive in determining God's will as regards the transformation of our relationship firstly with Him and then with one another. Whereas modalities (churches) cannot cross social and political boundaries, sodalities by their essence transcend these frontiers, with creative missiologists working in all spheres of the social sphere, bypassing the traditional

understanding of sodalities, religious para-ecclesial structures. Lutiniko, explaining the work of the Mennonites in the Congo, shows that it was the result of both structures: in his view the "Anabaptist presence in Africa resulted from the early twentieth century missionary activities of various Mennonites churches (modalities) and teams of missionaries (sodalities)" (2006:133). In Bosch's understanding modality and sodality are described as *ecclesiae* and *ecclesiola*: "It was not the church (ecclesia) that was the bearer of mission, but the small, revived community inside the church, the ecclesiola inside ecclesiae" (opcit: 253). In the Acts of the Apostles we notice how the mission of reconciliation travelled from Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria to the extremities of the earth by means of both structures, redeeming structures working together in transforming the world. Reconciling people should not only be seen as church planting, which is not excluded, but also as dealing with the socio-political and economic issues of people, because: "The churches in our day face a variety of missionary options" (Emilio Castro op. cit.: 14). For this reasons in applying the practical dimension, the contextualization of the missiological perspective is necessary for ministers working in any social context of reconciliation. Mbala Vita Lusunzi's powerful explanation of how contradiction between the blessing ceremonies of Christianity and religious tradition embodied his experience is worthy of attention:

> When I was about to leave my family to embrace my career the church pastor came to bless me in the presence of all, but my father who took part in the ceremony was not convinced that I had been blessed. Later he called my mother and my brothers behind the house and said "Now I want to bless my son; forget about your church blessing. Then he stood and spread his legs and asked me to pass under his legs three times; then he held both my hands. We jumped up three times and he said, "Go, say a word to be heard by all, step on a stick and break it; be a man and blessed my son" (Luanda 16-09-2006; edited verbatim account)

In this way, the churches really need to understand the social context in order to contextualize the Gospel within it. The TRC as a sodality in the above sense needs to renew its mandate in the case of South Africa; meanwhile Angola needs to create it for the healing of the country. How? The following section on practical perspectives will explore this aspect.

5.2.   Practical Perspectives

The second part of this chapter discusses the four practical perspectives which act as the main anchors by which reconciliation is held in order for it to occur: cultural, sociological, economic and political. All are covered by the contextual dimension, which serves as an umbrella term for all of them. In the chapter considering Africa's need of reconciliation, we described the different and fertile grounds of tensions in Africa but we now need to look at these dimensions as fertile soil for peaceful coexistence and possible reconciliation where tensions are still imprisoning our societies. Reconciling people is a noble mission that requires careful consideration of all these contexts: when one of these dimensions is omitted reconciliation fails. Erich Weingartner, describing the "*Tozanso Process*", describes important lessons, such as: "In circumstances like Korea, it is better to involve political authorities in an open process than to try bypass them" (1997: 77).

5.2.1. Cultural Perspective

Today each African person is fighting to retain his/her culture: no one wants to embrace his/her neighbours' cultures or be invaded by surrounding cultures. We are truly prisoners of our history. Most of our conflicts are generated by our cultures, which may have given us insights into how to do things well and how to avoid wrongs. Culture is a wide field, which incorporates many aspects of society such as languages, traditions, sport, art, and religion, even psychology. Dealing with culture in the field of reconciliation requires skills and knowledge. In the South African experience we learn, in terms of the cultural dimension of reconciliation, the theology of "*Ubuntu*". In Angola we proclaim the "*Tata Nlongi*" and "*Udjango*" theologies, which we consider as counselling, or theologies of care: one from the culture of Congo and the other from the Umbungu culture. We will place them in a parallel comparative table in order to illustrate similarities and divergences. Emilio Castro defines the thrust of these theologies, which: "also reflect the richness of church in our day, the interplay of culturally linked manifestations of the Christian faith" (op. cit.: 15). *Ubuntu* theology is well known in South Africa and has a literature but the Angolan theologies are not really known and do not have a literature. *Ubuntu* is registered in the Black consciousness where Black theology should be seen as a further contributor to overturning apartheid. We should not dismiss these Angolan

theologies as theologies even if they are not really known as such, but are culturally useful in social transformation.

5.2.1.1. *Ubuntu* theology: an effort for reconciliation, in South Africa

What does *Ubuntu* entail? To answer these questions, it is good to say something about Archbishop Desmond Tutu who is regarded as one of the prominent exponents of such a theology. Desmond Mpilo Tutu is without doubt the most influential church leader in South Africa, in recent times. He was born in Klerksdorp (1931). His father was a teacher, his mother a domestic servant. He too was trained as a teacher and taught for some years, before he received a call to become a priest in the Anglican Church. After theological training in Johannesburg and London, he accepted a part-time post at the Federal Theological Seminary (Fort Hare). In 1970 he moved to the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, before travelling to the United Kingdom where he was appointed co-director of the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches. In 1975 Tutu returned to South Africa, firstly to become dean of Johannesburg and later as bishop of Lesotho. In 1978 he was appointed general secretary of the South African Council of Churches. During this time his theological insights as well as his leadership in the struggle against apartheid drew world-wide attention. In 1984 the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to him. In 1985 he was elected bishop of Johannesburg and in 1986 archbishop of Cape Town. In 1995 President Nelson Mandela appointed Desmond Tutu as chair of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission where he, arguably, played the most important part of his career. Tutu has been recognized worldwide for his leadership and theological insights, as well as for his role as reconciler in the community. He is the recipient of honorary doctoral degrees (inter alia from the universities of Harvard, Oxford, Cambridge, Colombia, and Pretoria). He is a popular author. Among his many books are: *Crying in the Wilderness* (1982), *Hope and Suffering* (1983), *The Rainbow People of God* (1994), *An African Prayer Book* (1995), and *No Future without Forgiveness* (1999) (Saunders, 2005:10).

A number of books have been written about Tutu's *Ubuntu* theology: among others, Michael Battle's *Reconciliation: The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu* and Michael Nuttall's *Number Two to Tutu: A Memoir*. Many other sources which refer to *Ubuntu* have helped us greatly in considering *Ubuntu* as a well-known theology in the South African context. Briefly, *Ubuntu* as

theology, according to Desmond Tutu, is peaceful coexistence and a consideration of others in the community since we constantly need one another. As he puts it:

> That story speaks about how human beings need each other, that God has made us so that we know we need each other – In our African idiom we say: 'A person is a person through other persons'. None of us comes into the world fully formed. (1997:5).

This is the basic thought of *Ubuntu* theology. It rests on mutual respect between human beings, not succumbing to racial discrimination or human rights abuses. This theology has its roots in the African culture where human beings are seen to learn from one another, to experience their togetherness. Tutu said: "We would not know how to think, or walk, or speak, or behave as human beings unless we learned it from other human beings" (Ibid: 6). It is a theology of "interdependence". No one is "self-sufficient"; if he/she attempts to be he/she will end up a "subhuman" (ibid). *Ubuntu* touches upon every sphere of our lives, and our culture. Tutu explains:

> In Africa we have something called ubuntu in Nguni language, or botho in Sotho, which is difficult to translate into English. It is the essential of being human. It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and is inextricably bound up in yours. I am human because I belong. It speaks about wholeness, it speaks about compassion. A person with ubuntu is welcoming, hospitable, warm, and generous, willing to share…For they have a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that they belong in a greater whole and are diminished when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are. It gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them. It means it is not a great good to be successful through being aggressively competitive, that our purpose is social and communal harmony and well-being (op. cit.: 7/8).

Tutu's theology centres upon this notion. It is a theology which confronts evil in the community when others are violated and diminished. Michael Battle described *ubuntu* as theology which denies racial discrimination: "Tutu tirelessly denied that the color of one's skin can be an index of one's value as a human being. Indeed, his *Ubuntu* theology can be understood in its entirety as a Christian rebuttal to such a claim" (1997: 1). *Ubuntu* is an African notion. Tutu saw *Ubuntu*

in some form in many African countries. In Kenya, after the Mau Mau campaign, Tutu remarked: "*Ubuntu* was abroad in the post-independence of Kenya" and in Zimbabwe also, "*Ubuntu* was at work" (1999:36). There was no retaliation but forgiveness. However, Tutu observed the failure of *Ubuntu* in Congo and Rwanda. Tutu asks: "Where was *Ubuntu* in the Belgian Congo in1960s?" Why did the Rwandans forget *Ubuntu* in 1994?" (Ibid: 36). Michael Mnyandu, in the same way as Tutu, perceives *Ubuntu* as central in his article: "Ubuntu as the basis of Authentic Humanity: an African Christian Perspective". In his introduction he states: "The objective of this essay is a better understanding of the concept of *ubuntu* as the soul of African society" (2003:304). It is according to him God's ethical gift to all human beings: "*Ubuntu* is a free divine gift as well as positive training in and regular practicing of virtue by doing good deeds and treating other people with respect as *abantu* (human beings)" (ibid: 307). Tutu's *ubuntu* theology was tested and proved by the TRC success and helped to bring about the dramatic change in South Africa: the new challenge of the new South Africa, democratic and open to a new type of understanding because of its complex multi-cultural dimensions as a nation.

Orlando de Almeida testifies to this in his article: "Moving into dance," where he explains that we are not fighting but we are dancing (2003:18). Culture created apartheid policy and culture overturned it; theology elaborated apartheid discourse and theology in response elaborated a destructive discourse so as to dispose of it. In this respect one may enquire about the "*Tata Nlongi*" and "*Udjango*" theologies in Angola.

5.2.1.2. The *Tata Nlongi* Theology: A Hope for the National Reconciliation

The *Tata Nlongi* theology is still unknown and as an oral theology it does not yet possess any literature. We explain it in the hope that future generations will articulate and structure it very well. For the moment we erect the first cornerstone of the so-called theology. *Tata Nlongi* was a catechist, a teacher during the colonial period in the Congo tribal context. He should be understood as assimilated into the rural context, educated, civilized, knowing a little Portuguese or French but not as well as those assimilated in the urban areas. This is a brief historical context of *Tata Nlongi*, of which a literal translation could be "father teacher". Why should such a person serve as a reference for a theological model in Angola? I knew such persons as servants in my infancy when *Tata nlongi* Bivwala Daniel arrived the first time to request my

father to let me go to school. My father had refused to allow me to learn western "witchcraft" (the knowledge of how to write and read, gained from the first contact with missionaries, was construed as witchcraft). It was *Tata nlongi* who helped my father and my mother to understand that it was for their good that their son learnt to read and write. It was not easy to make them understand. I also saw *Tata Nlongi* mobilizing the community for worship, for the collective task of repairing wooden bridges, visiting families every morning, comforting people when they were frightened by any negative event.

When I left the rural area for the capital city I could not discover such a person and ministry amongst those called ministers / pastors. When I realized my calling to the ministry, the *Tata Nlongi* image rapidly began to preoccupy my mind. What exactly did the *Tata Nlongi* ministry mean? And what should it entail? These questions caused me to investigate the Congo culture where I established that the *Tata Nlongi* was really a product of culture. When I learned my own proverbs I understood that one's sense of being in the community means taking care of each other. One of them is: "*Bole Bantu umosi kininga*", a literal translation being "Two are persons, one is a shadow". I observed a traditional gathering for dialogue and conflict resolutions called "*Nku*", which is a traditional king's mat on which the throne is situated for him to welcome his subjects and solve problems within the community. Today this gathering is well known as an expression of traditional dialogue accompanying every event held by the Congolese people in Angola: Marriage counselling, death, divorce, management of conflicts or transformation of conflict, consideration of tribal beliefs, the value of totems and the reverence of ancestral names. I found the qualities of *Tata Nlongi* in the traditional men and women. So I taught it in Angola as part of Angolan theology's contribution to the religious and African traditions. In the short period of my research at Luanda during which I discussed Angolan theology, the *Tata Nlongi* theology was encouraged as a model by the majority of the theologians we interviewed.

Briefly, the *Tata Nlongi* theology concerns the care of each other, the sense of being in the community, not being isolated. It comforts, enables people to work, develops their environment and seeks peaceful coexistence. It avoids violence, adopts silence instead of confrontation with one's neighbours who may be wrongdoers.

In addition, Michael G. Comerford alludes to *Ondjango*, a traditional parliament where the transformation of conflict and many issues were discussed in the presence of the *soba*, a

traditional political municipal administrator (2005:218/221). The *Ondjango* should be seen as theology in the Umbundu context and be encouraged to promote reconciliation for Angola, as should the *Tata Nlongi* theology. If we compare *Ubuntu* theology to that of *Tata Nlongi* we initially observe similarities: a sense of belonging within the community, hospitality, care of each other, seeking for harmonious co-existence. But divergences are also evident. In the case of the *Ubuntu* theology the sense of the defence of human rights, and its confrontation of the apartheid regime, has been much discussed in literature and is well-known from its most famous promoter. The *Tata Nlongi* theology is still in a conceptual phase lacking literature, and mainly concerns tribal issues: even though in colonial times some *Tata Nlongi* were involved in national liberation, as in the case of the prophet Simao Concalves Toko, not many others were. This theology does not at present benefit from a promoter: we hope to fill this role because it is of value as regards resolving and transforming conflicts.

This traditional ideology of "*Nku*" where the spokesmen possess the qualities of the Tata Nlongi must be promoted at the national level as part of the struggle for national reconciliation, as must the *Ondjango* in the Umbundu context. Forgiveness and truth as evident in the *Tata Nlongi* theology during the traditional gathering are central values of reconciliation. The wrongdoer is summoned before the elders, not the "*sobas*" who are political administrators in the rural area, to which Michael Comerford refers. But the spokesmen in the *Tata Nlongi* are still active in the capital city and urban towns. Forgiveness is granted after the truth has been told and the wrongdoer has paid for his/her guilt according to the requirements of the gathering of people, which in ancient times might have taken the form of being beaten in public, as a means of dealing out justice: then reconciliation could take place. Retributive as well as restorative justice is found in the *Tata Nlongi* theology of reconciliation. Today for forgiveness to be granted, since most people are Christians retribution is not the focus: confession before the elders satisfies the victim and reconciliation then obviously takes place. In terms of the leading theology of the TRC, *Ubuntu*, forgiveness was one of the miracles. The case of Ms Ngewu recorded in volume five of the TRC report illustrates this point:

> What we are hoping for when we embrace the notion of reconciliation is that we restore the humanity to those who were perpetrators. We do not want to return evil by another evil. We simply want to ensure that the perpetrators are returned to humanity (1998:366).

In addition to the *Ubuntu* and the *Tata Nlongi* theologies, the cultural dimension of reconciliation is necessary, because it promotes interactions among people. Culture finds its expression in the arts and education, where unity should be promoted. Religious or Christian music can be a hindrance to reconciliation but, skillfully used, all music could be helpful for the healing of society. In recovering from trauma, healing music can offer really helpful therapy. Reconciliation as ministry needs to take account of these issues and use them for interaction, as Orlando suggested, "moving into dance". Yet most Angolan secular music is very violent, as referred to above, which calls for more emphasis being placed by art and music on peaceful co-habitation not division, of which Alidjuma has also sung. Popular instructive music, well known, could be one of the mediums for action and interaction which might represent a first step towards dialogue among people in a divided society. The cultural dimension should be viewed together with the sociological dimension, discussed next.

5.2.2. Sociological Perspective

Reconciliation is a necessity for any society small or large, but to minister reconciliation to a divided people we need to know the structure of the society in which the reconciliation is needed. South Africa, we remarked, is a cosmopolitan society, two nations in one according to President Mbeki (2000:75). Vicente wrote that our past still lives with us and it is obvious that South Africa sociologically is a divided society, even in the churches. In Angola we portrayed the divisions among Angolans: the *Langa* and the *Shungu*, the mutual insults used a society divided by unequal economic power. We must also include the high rate of illiteracy within Angola. Since in both countries divisions still exist there is a perennial need for reconciliation, especially at the national level, in both countries. To overcome these divisions once again the *Ubuntu* principle in South Africa should be actively and creatively used. We have already pointed out in the South African experience that churches need to experiment with the planting of new churches where young ministers, white and black, could work together with trust and confidence in each other. New primary and high schools could be founded to promote the interaction of all South Africans, while universities need to renew the policy of distribution of bursaries to all South Africans, whites and blacks and foreign students. The actual conditions, under which non-South African students must study in South African Universities, are not at all satisfactory. Reconciliation as a ministry should collaborate with civil society in order to empower people to discover their dignity and to respect each other as Imago-Dei, which

constitutes the philosophy of *Ubuntu*. Tensions stemming from different traditional beliefs among South Africans have to be transcended by a mutual acceptance that we are different.

The Luena Memorandum could teach us many lessons. The decades of civil conflict have destroyed us completely and we are tired of being betrayed and of hating one another. We need to rebuild our country. Why should we continue to insult each other? This gap could be healed by the ministry of reconciliation in Angola which should create an open space for dialogue where Angolans in the local social structures could sit and talk openly so as to achieve such mutual understanding and acceptance, rejecting mutual insults. This is why we suggested an Angolan Truth and Reconciliation Commission (ATRC) though it could be called by another appropriate name: as long as Angolans are allowed to evaluate the past our hopes will be satisfied. It could be termed the "*Nkuu*" (dialogue) Commission.

In this regard the *Tata Nlongi* theology could be experimented with and appreciated. We have to seek the reconciliation and the healing of our land: we need to confess and ask for forgiveness as did South Africans. Even though they are divided to some degree the situation is not as severe as it was during apartheid. We too need to forgive one another for the healing of our land as we read in Psalm 85, because "Reconciliation is built on a mutual understanding and acceptance of these differences and a capacity of people to manage conflict and live with others", as the fifth volume of the TRC Report (1998: 443) puts it. In our society, the civil war left us the legacy of orphans and street children. A ministry of reconciliation needs to focus on how to help them, so that they become useful to society instead of being a problem as is the case today.

In the TRC experience it became necessary not only to revert to the past, but also to take care of the deceased. In some cases the remains of victims had to be reburied according to the traditional rituals, to heal some of the wounds of the past. The ancestors needed to be recognized and honoured. African theologians today are aware of this, as Sylvester wrote: "Moreover, most African theologians further assert that the ancestors contributed toward an understanding and worshipping of God, as well as the inception of Christianity" (2005:93). This makes reconciliation a holistic ministry. The structure of Angolan society goes beyond the political parties' structures to the traditional ones where the *sobas* (counsellors) are recognized in the management of the municipalities, a fact which the national reconciliation dialogue

should also take into consideration. The social perspective goes hand in hand with the economic and political perspectives, a discussion of which follows.

5.2.3. Economic Perspective

This is a sensitive and disturbing issue. In this section the writer wishes to argue that the ministry of reconciliation should help leaders to find means to alter a situation which causes many conflicts among people. We simply want the economic issue to be addressed and to establish a fair lifestyle amongst rich and poor, to enable the poorest to acquire the means to supply the necessities of daily life: this is merely just, and before God we will need to justify the use of what He gives us in our beautiful land with its many rich mineral resources. The South African experience shows that the poor are becoming poorer and the rich wealthier. And if, as many think, the apartheid regime is still alive within South African life, one of the most crucial issues is still economic inequality. It is known that many whites and political elites are rich and the majority of blacks still poor, as we have noted in the third chapter of this thesis.

In the same vein the Angolan experience has told us that economics was one of the main issues of the civil war in Angola and that the war was a means for the adversaries to reap economic benefits. The lack of transparency regarding the state's budget, half of which is missing, is the reason why the National Bank took the decision to appoint overseas auditors in all financial institutions. In Angola too, the poor are still poor and the wealthy are still rich. Millions are still discriminated against by a minority. The majority still suffer, working for a miserable salary. Yet the constitution, Article 18, stipulates the equality of all citizens under the law, including economic equality. A look at the statistical data on Angola regarding this issue published by Kairos-Africa causes one really to feel ashamed and sorrowful:

> Poverty statistics: Population living in absolute and relative poverty 82.5%, Maternal mortality rate during 1996 1.9%, Population without access to drinking water 62%, population without access to adequate sanitation 56%, population without access to healthcare 76%, …Unemployment 80% Adult literacy 42%, Disabled landmine victims 86,000. (www.kairos-Africa)

We understand that while we were mourning the deaths of our brothers and sisters there was not enough time to take care of each other, but the moment has now come to rebuild the country and restore our Angolan identity. We believe that through a ministry of reconciliation the churches can significantly contribute to healing our beautiful country, to addressing the economic issues. In South Africa we noted that the TRC was helpful in dealing with national reconciliation, placing a particular emphasis on economic inequality, and that it pleaded for the payment of victims of the apartheid regime. Many critics of the TRC's process mentioned the fact that reparation and rehabilitation for victims were slow to arrive, as wrote Hugo Van der Merwe (2003:4). For Angola, as regards economics, we suggested that churches train their members and pastors as chaplains to assist the state in dealing with financial issues, for moral reasons. Comerford points to this sensitive issue when he comments on Malaquias' doctoral thesis that "His overall assessment of Angolan NGOs prior to 1995 is rather negative: it creates the impression that the founding of these NGOs was more about personal gain for their founders than about pursuing objectives in relation to development or reconstruction" (2005:157).

This comment also shows how the economic issue has to be taken seriously by at least three parties: the Government or state, national NGOs and international NGOs, which must use funds objectively for the reconstruction and the development of the country. How many local initiatives lack support while the already established institutions misuse the funds, thereby hindering newly created institutions? Malaquias' observation should not be rejected but is rather to be taken seriously.

The plight of the poor and the necessity of redress has already been mentioned. We have really to be careful in such a process not to dwell on the wrongs already done, so as merely to feed emotions, but we do need to discover how bad the damage to our humanity was. It could follow, as we recommend, a process like the TRC. The evil done in Angola kept people in a traumatic state, and their healing will take place only if an opportunity is given to them to breathe by recounting what they saw and offering a sincere pardon to all offenders once for all. There will be no real reconciliation without true confession and true justice, of which forgiveness and peace are a logical consequence.

5.2.4. Political Perspective

Reconciliation in its political sense assists people to be free, but also to be responsible, to be patriotic, by defending their rights and those of others, participating in the reconstruction of the nation by free and democratic elections, combating the status quo where centralized power is held by one institution. The reconciliation process aids people to access a democratic state and enjoy freedom. Here we recall the South African experience: we will always remember the dramatic change which has taken place since 27 April 1994, with South Africa becoming a truly democratic state where people are free to criticize and express their opinions, thereby showing the maturity of people and government. But evil will never end as long as we live in this world, and true reconciliation is a hope of the *eschaton* (Schwobel 2003:25). This is why we continue to experience human rights abuses, a high rate of crime, rape, kidnapping of people, theft of cars and transmission of HIV by injection and the belief that this can be healed by having sex with a baby girl etc. We encourage the work of chaplains with the security and military forces. We also encourage the same in the hospitals and even in hotels, where we recommend that chaplains should perform worship services with patients and tourists to meet the spiritual needs of some tourists. We have noticed and encourage the healthy collaboration of the South African Government with the churches, clearly seen in the TRC and the presence of chaplains in the security forces, hospitals and military camps.

In the case of Angola, we argued that the memorandum of Luena is a promising beginning. We need to accept it and proceed further with national reconciliation. Churches should not be confused with political parties (Comerford op. cit.: 22 and Henderson, op. cit.: 222, cited above). To this end we uphold a healthy collaboration of churches with the state, but always keeping a proper distance between the two. Because the churches are "moral authorities enjoying significant popular legitimacy" it is important to distinguish their authority from that of those in power during war, argued Michael Comerford (2005: 62). Critics of the media in Angola and of the lack of freedom of expression in this arena during the civil war have said the media stoked the fire, inciting division among Angolans who had already been divided since colonial times. Luis Ngimbi referred to this as "coterie evangelism", focusing on specific tribes like the Bakongo, Umbundu, Ngangela, and Ovimbundu – and thus further dividing the people of the country. And likewise the media, according to James Lawrence, suffered from a lack of freedom: some journalists were detained, some killed, as in the case of Alegria Gustavo of

Radio National de Angola and the detained Gilberto Neto of *Folha 8* independent newspaper, according to the Kairos-Africa Protest letter (July 19, 2001). Reconciliation in such political conditions needs courage to defend and set free the Angolan nation: the churches have to be part of this. Constructive criticism, formulated by Michael Comerford, merits repetition here:

> Had the churches been incorporated into the negotiation structures adopted by Troika or the UN, their outcomes may have been different, but perhaps not. The churches themselves appear to have been insufficiently organised to make an intervention at this level (op. cit.: 62).

Comerford encouraged future church leaders to be politically active and courageous, to undertake initiatives in any instance where the light is needed. If the churches and Christians are to succeed in becoming the light of the world, it is particularly in this field of reconciliation, but we will have to work hard. The TRC report Volume 4 confirms: "African Initiated Churches have, at times, been regarded as inward looking and disinterested in political participation." (1998:62). As mentioned previously, church and State need a healthy collaboration, both being God's instruments for the welfare of the world (Samuel Kobia, 2004: 17).

The civil war in Angola is regarded as one of the greatest crimes against humanity, contended Solomon Schimmel, mentioning it along with: "The 'killing fields' of Khmer Rouge in Colombia, the Hutu massacres of Tutsi in Rwanda, the Serbian ethnic 'cleansing' of the Muslims in the former Yugoslavia and of the Albanians in Kosovo, and the unbelievable brutalities of civil wars in Angola, Sierra Leone, and many other countries" (2002:6). The United Nations would be well within its rights to ask the Angolan government to help establish an international court to try the civil war crimes. We thank God for the first steps towards peace but we need to give close attention to those voices calling for true reconciliation. The establishment of an "Angola Truth and Reconciliation Commission" (ATRC) – call it even a "Tata Nlongi Commission" or Ondjango Commission – may help all Angolans to evaluate the past and heal old wounds. We have also suggested the placing of chaplains in the hospitals, schools, police stations, military camps and in the big hotels.

As regards the educational system, instead of establishing our "own" universities, it would be better for all to work together in an interdenominational faculty of theology within the Agustino Neto National University. Some will surely ask whether such a concept is part of the ministry of reconciliation. The answer is certainly yes! Because, at the University, national cadres are trained in togetherness, and there the image of unity as the outcome of the reconciliation of the nation should be evident, in the meetings between students and lecturers under the chaplains of the university.

Juridical issues should be a further goal of this ministry. However, critics perceive the institutions of justice negatively. The sense of justice that churches teach in the pulpit should be heard and seen in action during reconciliation initiatives, and the churches may have to remind the jurists of their duty by the presence of chaplains working with them in the courts. Hence at this point we need to formulate some practical recommendations as to what should be done, based on the findings of this thesis, and try to summarize them in a general conclusion.