

CHAPTER 3

Post-Apartheid Liberative Projections

3.1. Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on the inherent soteriological questions the symbol of liberation raises. We contend that liberation is the gestation of black expectancy in contrast with an en-framing or *Gestell* discourse which subverts the promises of black expectancy in the post-Apartheid public life in South Africa. Because Apartheid has been dismantled, resulting in many to believe that liberation is no longer an important symbol, pseudo-innocence in public discourse is uncovered in the current democratic dispensation by contrasting different “frames” of expectations. We argue for the *praxiological* bases of salvation from the point of view of the oppressed and present liberation as an analectic vision for an alternative paradigm of theology in public life in South Africa. The anthropo-soteriological question of Black Theology is our main prism to search for the promises of Black Theology to the masses that yearn for liberation.

To achieve our purpose we glance at the post-Apartheid challenges to Black Theology of liberation. The intricacies of the continuation of the school and its apparent impotence are examined in this era. We assert that culture matters as we look at liberation and inculturation and liberative reconstruction as new proposals. We present the architecture of liberation to signify its vitality for use in public life and the space it provides to bind together the aspirations of the poor in the new era.

3.2. Challenge to Black Theology

It is apt to begin our conversation with the following thoughts expressed by Maluleke (1995a:5) hardly a year after the first democratic elections in South Africa:

Black theology can justifiably be said to be in crisis. But this crisis is wider than both the singular issues of cultural appropriation and Black theology itself. It is a fundamental crisis in all theologies of South Africa.

The appropriateness of this quotation stems first and foremost from the fact that it is an internal debate about the future prospects of Black Theology of liberation. In this particular article, Maluleke vehemently responds to Motlhabi who had begun to postulate the need to delete the designation Black Theology in favour of African Theology. Our first point is that this debate was internal, affirming in this manner a noble tradition of Black Theology to accord space for serious engagement among its exponents.

Second, the crisis of Black Theology is justified and not denied. Maluleke however, employs the term crisis to mean both danger and opportunity with which we concur. Of the crisis factors highlighted in the internal debates that demonstrate the inherent culture of self-introspection in the tradition of Black Theology of liberation, three need to be mentioned. The first of these is what Maluleke designates as the vulnerability of Black Theology to the moods of the oppressed. This means that shifts in political praxis and ideological positions impact on Black Theology.

The current shift in the South African political landscape is an example of the change of mood among the oppressed that impacts on the nature of Black Theology. While the mood and opinions of the oppressed are equally vulnerable to distortion and manipulation, it should be stated that, on the positive side, the change of mood or tone itself can be an opportunity for Black Theology to move on rather than come to an end as it is often suggested. The issues of anger in relation to question of mood can be cited as a good example. Black Theology has been an intellectual tradition of theology based on anger. Anger is mood. At the demise of Apartheid, the mood in South Africa changed. This implies that the mood of doing Black Theology should also change. It is however, crucial to understand that mood or mode cannot be equated to essence. Of course in the mood that has changed, Black Theology positively continues to present its principles and notions of liberation in a less-embittered mode.

Another factor is the often suggested foreignness of Black Theology as a tradition that has been largely influenced by the American version of Black Theology. We need not belabour this point as we have argued for a broad demarcation of Black Theology in the previous chapter. Moreover, in the tradition of Black Theology, closed covenants have been repudiated in favour of solidarities with other critical forms of doing theology as we have also shown in the previous chapter. Black Theology of liberation is open to insights that critically engage with oppression irrespective of race. We also note that Black Theology of liberation has in its internal debates reflected on the question of reliance on foreign tools and cautioned that uncritical reliance on foreign tools can perpetuate hegemonic tendencies that could be counterproductive.

The last point we would like to highlight, which is quite dominant in our current context, is the assumption that Black Theology would have retired as the white scenario of oppression is over. What this essentially means is that Black Theology is too preoccupied with racism and whiteness, which in our current context do no longer matter as South Africa is led by blacks. This is not true considering the fact that Black Theology is not based on racial reasoning but the political experience and ethical responses that should arise out of the black experience to validate humane relations and Christian faith. In this regard what is often presented as a crisis of Black Theology of liberation often conceals a wider crisis of theology in South Africa captured in this chapter as *Gestell* as most of the proposals masqueraded as alternative paradigms are premised on the subtle charge that Black Theology of liberation depended on whiteness and even Apartheid. Our point is that although the crisis of Black Theology is not to be denied, the emphasis on the dangerous side of the crisis factors is unacceptable as the same crisis factors can be harnessed as an opportunity for creativity in Black Theology and all theologies in South Africa.

Flowing from this, we acknowledge that the post-Apartheid phase challenges Black Theology to consider other themes such as reconciliation, empowerment, development, human rights, political economy, civil society and the engagement of culture in all of them. Our view, as articulated by Maluleke (1997: 4-23), is that careful note of the ground captured by Black Theology is a *quid pro quo* for new innovation and construction so as to allow continuity. Maluleke further rightly suggests that there is a need to alter traditional agendas of African theologies.

Operating in consultation with the insights of emerging theologies in the New World Order he undertakes to perform this task in tentative terms himself and draws broad strokes in the direction of the future of Black Theology of liberation and African Christianity.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) almost dominated the first five years of democracy in South Africa. The government model adopted became known as the Government of National Unity (GNU), meaning that opponents of the Apartheid regime and those who previously supported or served in the Apartheid government became part of the newly formed government. The concept of GNU was inclusive and clearly aimed at reconciliation and healing. It should be stated that this transition to a democratic order in South Africa was generally a huge success, defying predictions of possible turmoil given the history of fragmentation and violence at that very time. For instance Chris Hanu, one of the most popular leaders and symbols of the struggle was killed at this time. So did the Boipatong Massacre in which dozens of people were killed in the violence then dubbed as “black on black” violence manifested by the turbulent conflict between the followers of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the African National Congress take place in this era. To the extent that the first elections were a success, the transition and political settlement of the country came to be described as a “miracle.” This new situation had enormous implications for theological development and engagement for Black Theology and other forms of theology in South Africa.

Many of the church leaders and prominent theologians went into government structures and this move led to what is often regarded as an exodus of luminaries of the struggle, which almost created an unbearable *lacuna* with regard to critical engagement with the transition and settlement by compromise and nonviolent means in South Africa. In fact, metaphors such as “wilderness” have been tossed around to describe the nature of theological impotence during the transition with regard to Black Theology in particular, being regarded as having become moribund. Of course, there were sporadic contributions by Black theologians, but their scale and intensity could not measure up with what used to be the case before the demise of Apartheid. While our slant in this chapter will be on the architecture of black expectancy, we first have to give attention to two important proposals that came at this time: liberation as inculturation and the theology of reconstruction.

3.3. Liberation as Inculturation

The inculturation-liberation debate is a well-documented phenomenon. In this work inculturation and liberation are not seen as two opposing theological paradigms. As it has been recognized in due course, the problems addressed by inculturation and liberation are all African problems simply viewed from different perspectives. Someone like Marc Ela (1991) already tackled both themes of liberation and inculturation in his *Africa Cry* and he has been persistent in this endeavour. The Mosala-Tlhagale *Unquestionable Right to be Free*(1986) afforded space to African Traditional Religions and African Theology.

This is an attestation to the fact that inculturation does not need to be seen as one thing and liberation as the other.¹ Of course the debate has always been on what African culture is and how it needs to be appropriated (Maluleke 1995a:8). In South Africa, there is a growing appreciation of culture for the purposes of dialogue with Christianity by younger theologians like Keteyi (1998) on whom the influence of liberation has been great. The cultural strength of African people, not to mention its resilience² has become an aspect we cannot ignore and underestimate.

Inculturation is a theological term, meaning that the gospel enters a culture and becomes the force that propels that culture. According to Keteyi (1998:9) liberation that does not take inculturation seriously runs the risk of remaining an imposition from outside, while at the same time any project of inculturation devoid of liberation will run the risk of making Christianity to capitulate to the dictates of culture. His link of liberation and culture echoes the sentiments expressed by Mofokeng in his notion of “liberative undercurrent.”

¹The problem of culture and liberation in South Africa is summed up in the debate already alluded to between Tutu and Mbiti. The use of culture by the apartheid regime in some ways dispelled Black Theologians from emphasizing culture. In South Africa the Steyn’s Commission perceived African Theology as a confirmation of Apartheid and Black Theology as a revolutionary threat to the political establishment. The rise and support of Inkatha by the Apartheid State is an indication of the imminent dangers then attributable to the use of culture as opposed to the liberation hermeneutic. It is furthermore an indication of how power in relation to culture is important to underscore at all times.

² The resilience of African culture in resisting penetration by modernity in conditions of dispossession and domination is demonstrated in the following works:

Maimela S.S. has long ago asserted that the horizon of black African oppression was not a total domination of black African masses by the colonizers. Maluleke T.S (1995), in his Dissertation demonstrates how culture has been liberative in providing agency for the oppressed masses. Njeza, M.M.(2002) (Dissertation) follows up this thesis to construct his argument about the “subversive subservience” of African people in their struggle against colonization. It is our view that God-talk in Africa has been a combination of translatability of the Gospel into the culture of the African (Bediako Kwame), its “vernacularization” (Lamin Sanneh) rooted in the oppressed and silenced masses on whose side God is. All these works have one thing in common, namely, African culture as the root paradigm.

By “liberative undercurrents” Mofokeng (1987:7) contentiously posits that Jesus Christ the crucified was present as the liberative undercurrent in our African past, creating and evoking and empowering liberative undercurrents in African history. The notion of liberative undercurrents cautiously avoids the romanticization of African culture. Indeed Mofokeng (1987:8) clearly states that Black history is not in its entirety liberative, hence Black Theology retrieves and appropriates this history employing the criterion of “liberative currents.”

Keteyi (1998:49) appeals to Tlhagale in this manner:

Blacks ... celebrate their heroes not so much in remembrance of what has been lost but more in anticipation of a certain victory over the dominant groups. The names of Shaka, uDingane,...Robert Sobukwe - or events of Heroes Day, June 16...kindle feelings of hope, the desire to avenge the dead and regain the lost land.

As many of the works written before and after Apartheid will show, the mistake the early missionaries and colonizers committed was the frontal attack they launched against African culture with the view to obliterate the African cultural identity. Amilcar Cabral has asserted that the foundation of a people’s liberation is their history, whose continuity lies in culture. Fanon (1959:12) asserts the place of culture as a profound motivation for the emancipation of the oppressed in this manner:

Culture like truth is concrete. And for the masses the most elevated form of culture, that is to say, of progress, is to resist imperialist domination and penetration although this might come wrapped up in valid forms of “culture” or civilization.

In the Ethiopian struggle and the rise of African Initiated Churches, Africans take both culture and the gospel as active forces of liberation. In the dialogical processes of inculturation and the gospel of Jesus, culture becomes empowerment and a strategy for liberation. The “liberative current” (Mofokeng) of culture is possible through dialogue between culture and Christianity as oppressive and anti-life components in both are challenged. As it should be clear from the very beginning, it is the dehumanizing cultural elements that preoccupy the African Womanist theologies explained by Oduyoye in this poignant manner:

Liberation of the mentality that keeps women coping with marginalization and repression rather than resisting it has become an area of much reflection. Several have turned to the study of African Traditional Religion and Culture as a source both of empowerment and dehumanization of women. Studying this undergirding factor of life in Africa, is required, if the liberating aspects are to be fully appropriated and the oppressive ones exposed and disposed of (1993:209).

In this manner, a non-evasive but creative approach to inculturation as a strategy for liberation is attained. *Wayibeka induku ebandla* (an expression in *isiZulu*) meaning “to lay down one’s staff in the courtyard,” used to describe a communal, valuable and challenging contribution of a person,” Maluke reverberates (1998a:61).

Culture in the context of the new democracy has been suggested as a material basis from which theology can draw without juxtaposing liberation with inculturation or evading one of the two in favour of the other. Written within the context of transition to democracy Pityana's doctoral thesis states that:

Theology has a role to play in national life. However, this will only happen if South African theology undergoes transformation; engages the use of social critical tools with the dynamics of society; seeks a unifying vision and eschews polarities for their own sake; takes seriously the plural character of our society. In order to do so, theology will need to pay special attention to the role of theological method to map a course towards an authentic theological enterprise. A key element of this unifying vision will be a new understanding of culture in our society and in the life of the church. It is culture that binds humanity together. Culture is destined to be one of the pillars of theological method for a transformed church in South Africa (1995:63).

Indeed the centrality of culture for theological method in the post-Apartheid South Africa implies that culture and liberation are key to the vision of democracy and its emancipatory potential in South African public life and "the meaning and continuing relevance of the variety of theologies in South Africa: contextual theology, African theology and black theology" (Pityana 1995:273). According to Leonardo Boff (Pityana 1995:189), cultures are "an echo of the voice of God." If God's voice is "the voice of the voiceless," then the "echo of the voice of God" must be the culture of the "voiceless."

The integration of liberation and inculturation implies the integration of the culture of the voiceless with liberation in public life. This is an important acquisition in the context of democracy in South Africa, the quest for the echo of black African culture in public life.

3.4. Liberative Reconstruction³

In 1987 in the Assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), reconstruction as a new theological paradigm was gaining currency. This was given momentum by the predictable demise of Apartheid and the urgency for a new theological paradigm. Jesse Mugambi is the African theologian whose name is widely associated with the notion of reconstruction. Mugambi began to propose that a shift from the post-Exodus to post-Exilic imagery for Africa be considered. Mugambi in his (1995) *From Liberation to Reconstruction* asserts that the 21st century should be a century of building and renovation. He compared the 15th and 16th centuries of Europe and their respective awakenings of the Renaissance and the Reformation and defined the 90s in Africa as an epoch of Africa's Renaissance and Reformation and therefore, the commencement of a process of reconstruction.

In South Africa, Villa-Vicencio in his book (1992) *A Theology of Reconstruction: Nation-building and the Human Rights*, teases out the same theme. Both of them perceive the necessary shift within the framework of the post-exilic text that becomes the centre for the proposed theological paradigm in African Christian theology.

³ The subheading is deliberately coined in this manner to mark its distinction from Reconstruction Theology which is the topic of our next chapter.

The suggestion is that the book of Nehemiah is a logical development from the Exodus motif which has been central to liberation theology. In the proposed new paradigm, the mission of Jesus is seen as reconstructive rather than destructive and the Sermon on the Mount as the cardinal reconstructive theological text in the Synoptic Gospels.

The proposal for reconstruction as a new paradigm is new. In 2000 in Mbagathi, Nairobi, Kenya, in a Theological Conference which brought together representatives of the Conference of African Theological Institutions (CATI); the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC); EATWOT; The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (THE CIRCLE); and the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) the first pronouncement on reconstruction *vis-s-vis* liberation was made. The tension between liberation and reconstruction became clear when South African theologians, Mofokeng and Maluleke, expressed their critique of the reconstruction motif. The major concern was that reconstruction as a new motif was downplaying the role of liberation for Africa's social transformation and development. We must further state that for EATWOT members, the movement to the paradigm of reconstruction, was not an internal consensus of EATWOT and thus a "communal" product of the Association. Our point therefore is that while there have been proposals for innovation, such as Reconstruction Theology, it is currently a debated move which needs further elaboration and reflection, particularly the relationship between reconstruction and liberation. In 2002 in South Africa at the Conference on Theological Education and Ecumenical Formation, liberation and reconstruction were seen as complementary "for Africa's *liberative reconstruction* and sustainable development" (Martey 2004:7).

3.5. The Architecture of the Liberation Symbol

We now turn to the role the metaphors in defining the architecture, “civilization” and spirit of theology. We need to appreciate that a metaphor in theology is an image or symbol at best, which gathers up and encompasses in shorthand form all of the factual details explored and reflected upon theologically (Schner 2000: 3-10). Thus as shorthand forms, metaphors or symbols act as proposals to guide and evaluate a multiplicity of activities and their interrelations. Symbols unify purpose, presuppose basic principles, imply the kind of practitioner of theological task and presume a context and a relevant audience. About symbols Ukpong (2000:191) says:

The term “symbol” is from the Greek noun *symbolon* whose verb form *symbollein* means literally “to throw together.” The term is derived from an ancient Greek practice whereby a contract or agreement between two people was often sealed by breaking a coin, a piece of pottery, or a ring into two pieces and each partner keeping one half. The two pieces called *symbola*, when brought together, served to identify the legitimate partners in the contract. The word later came to mean a sign that bound members of a group together. In ecclesiastical usage it designates the profession of faith, the creed, that binds Christians together, and the images and instruments through which aspects of that faith are expressed. For example, the fish is an ancient Christian symbol for Christ...Religious symbols are polysemous and guide the mind to encounter the ultimate. Because theology deals with the ultimate reality, theological language is highly symbolic.

In inculturation theology in Africa, for example Christ is symbolized as Ancestor or Elder Brother, the church is symbolized as family; and the community of saints as the assembly of ancestors. The Christian religion centers on Jesus the Christ as the symbol of God's renewal of creation, and Christian theology has to do with God's continued renewal of creation in Christ through the Holy Spirit. When Third World theology describes Christ as liberator, this is symbolic language pointing to the liberation movement as a process of the renewal of creation in Christ (*Dictionary of Third World Theologies*).

The definition of symbol given above will have immense implications for this work. It links the word first and foremost to another key word in Christian theology "covenant," which will be discussed later in the chapter that deals with the link between ecclesiology and publicity. This thought of binding together, when translated to liberation, implies that liberation is an instrument or a metaphor through which aspects of Christian faith are given expression. Indeed, as Ukpong confirms above, Christ himself becomes the symbol of liberation, signifying and embodying the renewal process of creation and thus the restoration of human participation (agency) in the process.

So what we have stated above is in "shorthand" the expression of what we need to grasp in the metaphor or symbol of liberation. In the first chapter of this work we have already stated that liberation is the root paradigm - a governing symbol of a particular way of doing theology. In this section we seek to appreciate much deeper the proposal offered by the symbol of liberation with regard to inculturation and reconstruction. Liberation is a binding symbol of inculturation and reconstruction and generally, themes emerging post- Apartheid in South Africa.

3.5.1. A Global Symbol for Christian theological Method

The classification of numerous theologies within the framework and context of liberation theology⁴ immediately places the symbol of liberation as a global, worldly expression of the concern for liberation. Gibellini (1987:2) observes that in 1975, the first encounter between Latin American theology, Black Theology and Feminist Theology led their exponents to talk about “theologies of liberation” in plural for the first time. Recently, (2005 January 20-25) in Porto Alegre in Brazil, this fact was attested by a Forum that brought together all genres of liberation theologies to discuss the theme: “Another World is Possible.”

Liberation as a global symbol places the task and themes covered in Black Theology in global context. Liberation becomes a cord that joins together the local and the global reading of the Christian message. This means that liberation is a prism of meta-narratives or macro-conversations in world politics, economics, religion, culture and societies pertinent in the post-Apartheid era. Indeed,

The introduction of the language of liberation into theology represents a significant linguistic innovation in that it brings about a shift of the semantic axis of the word freedom and a recovery of the historical and dynamic force of biblical language (Gibellini 1987:8).

⁴ Black Theology in South Africa, Kairos Theology, Black Theology in America, Latin American Liberation Theology, Minjung, Dalit, Feminist Theology, African Theology, Contextual Theology and Womanist Theology- all use the category of liberation to define their task, purpose and methodology. All of them; originating from different contexts, symbolize a global, “worldly” expression of the liberation motif for another possible world.

For this reason it becomes extremely important to revisit the proposal of liberation in its proper context by looking at the world situation to which it is intended to respond. The division of the world into First, Second and Third in 1952 according to Alfred Sauvy (who drew similarities between the nations moving toward independence from colonial powers and the Third Estate in France demanding freedom and equality during the French Revolution) is a simple testimony to the different worlds of expression in theology which must always be kept in mind in our analysis (Fabella 2000:202). All these worlds have different experiences and Fabella (2000:202) explains thus:

Currently “Third World” is used as a self-designation of peoples who have been excluded from power and the authority to shape their own lives and destiny. As such it has a supra-geographic denotation, describing a social condition marked by social, political, religious, and cultural oppressions that render people powerless and expendable. Thus Third World also encompasses those people in the First World who form a dominated and marginalized minority (*Dictionary of Third World Theologies*).

The notion of Third World is a supra-geographical self-designation of a condition of peoples. It is an aggregation of the condition of marginalization and suffering in the world, an antithesis to unjust world structures. The link between the symbol of liberation and the notion of the Third World underscores the interlocution of the symbol of liberation with the Third World. The designation Third World Theologies used for the genre of liberation theologies suggests the methodological identification of the symbol of liberation with the oppressed on a global scale. Boesak (1976:18) made this connection in this manner:

The expression of Black Theology can only be understood if one understands the historical situation. All over the “Third World” the struggle for liberation created a new consciousness which took a specific form in every situation. In America this consciousness, having been dormant for decades, was awakened by the work of especially Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. And it is not at all difficult to see why it so powerfully influenced black people in South Africa and all over the world. It has in common with all the struggles in the “Third World” the search for identity, genuine humanity and a truly human life.

This observation is important to make as the demise of Apartheid is linked with globalization and the emergence of the New World Order. It means that the expression of Black Theology of liberation signifies a quest for identity, genuine humanity and a truly human life in the current globalizing historical situation. As part of Third World Theologies, it shares the common struggles in the Third World covenanted by the symbol of liberation.

3.5.2. Liberation: Its emergence and Proposal

Broadly the notion liberation arose in the 1960’s as a critical response to the notion of developmentalism in the post-colonial world. Gibellini poignantly states that “liberation is the correlative of dependence” (1987: 6). As the notion of liberation appeared, linked especially with Paulo Freire in the context of sociology and pedagogics, the critical suspicion was that “development” was a new word for imperialism.

It was felt that both the Western and the Eastern super-powers were using the concept to mask their own political and economic agendas. Underdevelopment was seen as a by-product of the development of developed countries. This is what Gutierrez says about this matter:

Liberation expresses the aspirations of the oppressed peoples and social classes, emphasizing the conflictual aspect of the economic, social and political process which puts them at odds with the wealthy nations and oppressive classes. In contrast, the word development, and above all the policies characterized as developmentalist [*desarrollista*], appear somewhat aseptic, giving a false picture of a tragic and conflictual reality. The issue of development does in fact find its true place in the more universal, profound and radical perspective of liberation. It is only within this framework that development finds its true meaning and possibilities of accomplishing something worthwhile (1974:36).

From the sentiments expressed above, one can deduce that the key to defining the word liberation is the aspirations of the oppressed peoples and social classes. The key assumption is that these aspirations of the oppressed and the social classes are often in conflict with those of the wealthy and the oppressive classes.

While the concept development is not denied *in toto*, as we can see from the quotation above, it is *problematized* as potentially hiding or concealing the conflict between the oppressed and the wealthy oppressive classes, consequently becoming incapacitated in accomplishing anything worthwhile for the aspirations of the oppressed peoples and the social classes. It is not a construction or language of the oppressed themselves.

The argument for or against development is nuanced.⁵ For now it is sufficient to recognize that the notion is not as we have indicated entirely repudiated. Rather, it is its tendency to eclipse vital elements of the conflict between the oppressed and the oppressive classes and consequently and most profoundly so, the eclipse of vital elements of Christian faith. As we can already surmise, liberation thus employs resources within and beyond Christianity in order to address the eclipse of vital elements that are indispensable to respond to the aspirations of the oppressed. At this level then, it is imperative that we re-look at liberation from a theological view.

3.5.3. Liberation: Biblical Corresponding Terms and Relations

In quite significant a manner, Shannon (1978: 149) uses Biblical terms that seem to correspond to the notions of liberation and poverty. Here is a list of the Hebrew words he uses to explain his point:

<i>Anoyim</i>	:	poor
<i>Mishgab</i>	:	protecting wall (taken from Psalm 9)
<i>Dak</i>	:	oppressed
<i>Ashaq</i>	:	poor
<i>Dal</i>	:	poor
<i>Goel</i>	:	deliverance.

⁵ The examination of the debate between development and liberation will be revisited in the next chapter of the dissertation.

Explaining the word *goel* as “snatching away,” the idea of liberation then as “snatching away” becomes fascinating. With such words as “irruption” having been used to define the new paradigm of doing theology from the perspective of liberation, albeit with limitations, one could say the task of liberation theology is to snatch way from the dominant theological paradigms those committed to the struggle of the poor who themselves need to be snatched out of their situation of poverty. Yes, it is a struggle. The argument of Latin American and Black Theologians is that the basic message of the Bible is liberation - total liberation (Jacob 1998:380). In fact Jacob inveighs that if we accept that the God of the Old Testament spoke against oppression and the perversion of justice, it makes logical sense for Jesus to be viewed as the liberator by liberation theologies. Jesus is God’s incarnation and God is revealed in him and this *gala* (revelation) is given us in order to experience God in full through Jesus Christ.

Boesak (1976:25) brings the word *deror* to this discussion. He explains that the term is related to the “Accadic terms *andurara*, *durara*, which stem from *daruru*: “letting go,” “release,” “to live freely,” “to move about.” An examination of these terms depicts emphasis on movement and thus, a dynamic rather than static dimension of “releasing,” or “living freely.” The word *deror* signifies this dynamic movement of the liberation of slaves in radical terms unique to the Israelite proclamation of liberation at the time of the jubilee. Jubilee and the Sabbatical Year have been understood as symbolizing the total commitment of God’s liberative acts for humanity and creation and *ipso facto*, Black Theology’s call to the wholeness of life and total liberation.

We are aware of the limitations of this etymological approach as language in post-modernist terms is viewed to be polysemic. Further, we have to take into account that symbols are polysemous as we have already indicated. We recognize this limitation, as well as the possible charge that the historical differences and circumstances in which these words were used might be different, so that it would be difficult to apply in strictly similar ways in our context today. According to Boff (1987) we look at these terms in order to establish the correspondence of relationships within our context. This said and acknowledged, it will be hard to refute the notion of liberation as a firmly established Old and New Testaments category. Nelimbu (1994) demonstrates in his dissertation that the basic reason for professing faith in God is *inter alia*, God's revelation to humanity through creation, providence and especially liberation. He focuses on the use of Hebrew verbs and nouns for liberation in Psalms.

3.5.4. Liberation and the Domination of Christian Orthodoxy

The extent to which the aspirations of the oppressed both in the teachings (Doctrine), church practice (Practical Theology), and Ethics have been eclipsed, is the primary concern of the liberation symbol. In other words the question we respond to is the nature of the corrosive interface between "worlds" in the world that led to the emergence of the symbol of liberation. We have already asserted that all traditional disciplines of theology need to be approached from the point of view of solidarity with the poor and marginalized, hence a global picture in this regard is essential.

It is very important to understand that the notion of liberation does not intend to put forward a theme, but points beyond a thematic expression of the symbol of liberation to a completely new way of doing theology. In Frostian terms, it is a symbol of rupture, a new paradigm with a different world, commitments and associations. It signifies a theological reflection within the world of meaning and context of liberation in a divided, unequal and oppressive world. The debate between *orthopraxy* and orthodoxy sheds light on this matter, namely, the essential paradigm shift in theological approach.

Some reference to what is happening in the ecumenical organizations of Christianity will pitch this debate in the correct perspective and we use the World Council of Churches (WCC) to illustrate the point. For years the World Council of Churches has been a driver of global Christian witness originating in the 20th century as a movement that sought to heal the divisions of the churches in the world. Such divisions arose in the context of the history of the Western churches sparked by different doctrinal views. Within the auspices of the WCC, the Faith & Order Commission has devoted itself to this discourse, itself an institution that predates the very establishment of the WCC. Tefsai (1996) analyses the debate between orthodoxy and *orthopraxy* from the purview of the Faith & Order Commission and the impact of the liberation trajectory in the WCC. His insights are instructive for our purpose.

Firstly, the WCC is undergoing a process of reconfiguration led for the first time by an African General Secretary, Sam Kobia. According to Tefsai (1996:5) what needs to be contended with at the moment is that the balance of Christianity has shifted.

It has shifted in favour of the Third World. It is true that many observers expected a Latin American Pope as Latin America is now the largest section of the Roman Catholic Church today. Mugambi has in the same vein designated Africa as the Christian Continent. The Third World has now become a centre of Christian gravity and Christian faith is becoming a non-Western religion as Bediako (1995) has asserted.

The dynamism of this shift at least for this moment is not in the numbers *per se*, but the new theological currents placed on the world centre stage of Christian faith by liberation theologies. For years theological insights were generated from Europe and Germany in particular, but Europe is no longer the centre of theological activity. At best, Christian theology has been decentralized. The great time of the West has come to an end and indeed as Son (2005:101) predicated, mission is now from the “ends of the earth” into the centre of the world - there is a shift in the centre of gravity. Niles (2004:131) has also made a similar assertion presenting the alternative mission paradigm as “the people of God in the midst of all God’s peoples as symbolically moving from “East and West.” This dynamism of new theological currents and the shift of the balance in numbers to the Third World are indicative of a shift in paradigm. Liberation has now become an intricate part of the ecumenical movement as Christianity is literally becoming “the Church of the poor.” If we recall that Third World Churches were practically absent in the earlier history of the ecumenical movement, there has now been an increasing vocalization of their concerns. The point we are making is that Third World Churches bring into this ecumenical space new paradigms of doing theology that are unique to their contexts, especially the paradigm of liberation.

Of course, in the WCC this is not necessarily a development that goes well with all, particularly the Faith & Order discourse. According to the proponents of orthodoxy, questions that should be asked by the ecumenical church should not be the common commitment in the difficult search for justice, peace and human rights, but the true faith in Jesus Christ. Orthodoxy has traditionally been taught as being in conformity with the apostolic faith. It has implied that a clear distinction between truth and error can be drawn. It has also implied that there is pure, uncontaminated faith and a correct teaching. Logically, the orthodox vision of unity of the Church has been that of visible unity. A sharp wedge between an ecumenism that seeks to serve humanity and one that concentrates on healing the divisions of the church paradigmatically demarcates the orthodox and *orthopraxy* visions of the world inhabited church.

Our view on this is that this debate is not just a contest of ideas, but has deep roots in power relations between the Euro-American Churches and the Third World Churches. Classical orthodox theologies are rooted in the sixteenth century Europe and introduced dangerous confessionalism in Christendom. It is a well documented fact that the Reformation engaged the attention of princes and magistrates, whether as patrons or beneficiaries, against papal authority and it is hard to divorce power from this history within Europe itself (Hopfl 1991:vii). The picture gets worse when the movement of the Reformation surges outside Europe. What was a religious upheaval in Europe has become a total travesty in Africa and other parts of the world as there is no classical, orthodox theology there without the experience of colonization and conquest. In South Africa, de Gruchy (1991:8) has attempted to make the point:

In much the same way as the sixteenth-century colonists in Latin America were Roman Catholic by tradition, so the first Dutch settlers at the Cape in the seventeenth century were members of the established Reformed Church of the Netherlands, supplemented by a significant group of French Huguenots who came to the Cape in 1688. The conquistadors in Latin America pursued their task of conquest and colonization in tandem with the missionary endeavour to spread the Catholic faith and establish the Catholic Church on the continent. Hispanic colonization and Catholic evangelization were regarded as integrally related. Likewise the “founding father” of the Dutch settlement at the Cape, Jan van Riebeeck, whose mission in 1652 was to establish a halfway house for Dutch ships engaged in trade with the East Indies, prayed shortly after his arrival that the “true reformed religion” would be spread among the peoples of the new colony.

The crucial point that comes out of this quotation is that both the Reformed and the Catholic traditions “in the same way” pursued their tasks of evangelization in tandem with the conquest of the indigenes of the two continents. De Gruchy (1991:11) further explains that the problem has been between “...a Christianity, irrespective of its confessional form, that is captive to the sectional interests of the dominant white culture and a Christianity identified with the struggle for justice and equity.” While sounding euphemistic or even sympathetic, because being “captive to the sectional interests of the dominant white culture” is no less than being racist, de Gruchy’s endeavour to “liberate Reformed Theology” is indicative of the inescapable motif or paradigm of liberation in the conversation of orthodoxy and *orthopraxy*.

It is Boesak (1984) who asked an important existential question even before de Gruchy's project that goes deeper: "can we be black and reformed⁶," he asks. Boesak provides a re-reading of the Reformed Tradition from a black perspective as many of the adherents of the tradition used it to challenge his views and theological convictions against the apartheid state. He uses the same tradition to negotiate the struggle and to point to the foundational character of liberation within the Reformed ethos.

Projects that have attempted to translate Christian orthodoxy into the African horizon and the Third World simply fail or succeed to the extent that they harness the liberation symbol at least for the emancipation of the Africans and the Third World. The life-system or value system of the Third World is different and such a difference between Western and liberation theologies is rooted in power. Earlier⁷ on in the controversy between *orthopraxy* and orthodoxy, when the objection was made against Marxist tools, led by among others, Pope Benedict II, (who was Cardinal Ratzinger then), a formidable response was made by the liberation school (Gibellini 1987: 42-52).

⁶ This is a paraphrase of the title of his book, *Black and Reformed*.

⁷ The debate between liberation and the orthodox Christian faith is documented in the two Vatican publications *The International Theology Commission*, 1974 and the *Instruction on Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation*, 1983. The dialogue that ensued from the publications has inspired works such as those by Gibellini and most recently Tefsai, who have been cited in the text. While the debate is extremely important, our intention here is illustrative. More could be said on this. The cardinal point of the section, however, is that liberation and orthodoxy are not the same in paradigm that liberation is representative of another world of theology in a world that is deemed to be without alternatives (Fukuyama). The application of this important observation is made in the last chapter of the dissertation. Kee (1986) teases out this debate and Boff's response to it. Pityana (1995) also devotes space to this debate as he discusses Boff's theology in some length.

According to Gibellini, Marxism, was neither father nor godfather of liberation theology. Marxism was always used as mediation in the service of something greater, namely faith and its historical demands. Through the use of Marxist tools three types of violence were identified: first, the institutional violence in the structures of the dominant social order; second, repressive violence used to defend the first violence and third, counter-violence. It is the first two kinds of violence we must associate orthodoxy with in respect of the experience of the Third World. The seamless garment of Christendom with power, domination and the Europeanization of the world will never be the basis for the emancipation of the Third World. So far there is no historical precedent for any liberation of the Third World peoples by the West. There is only more of the spectacle of the same perpetuation of power and domination by the West against the Third World even in the current world order. In other words, the use of the Marxist tools revealed the structural violence meted out against the poor and the powerless.

Related to the point above, orthodoxy is concerned with right belief and not right action. In the Third World, its Ecumenical Association of Theologians comprises members whose confessional background is varied.

Yet confessional differences do not weigh heavily on them. This fact is recognized by both adversaries and friends alike. Even Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (*now Pope Benedict II*) notes: “The association of theologians from the Third World is strongly characterized by the amount of attention they give to themes that belong to the theology of liberation....The theology of liberation goes beyond confessional boundaries ...Liberation theology seeks to create from its premises a new universality by which the classical separations of the Churches should lose their importance (Tefsai 1996:93).

That the confessional differences do not weigh heavily in the Third World Church is a fact even in the current organization of the World Council of Churches. Stated otherwise, Third World Churches are not confessional territories like First World churches whose confessional boundaries are mostly coterminous with their geographical and national boundaries. Church establishment, which has a strong bearing on confessional frontiers is not a phenomenon in the Third World context. Furthermore, it is doubtful that Ratzinger grasped the matter correctly here by implying that Liberation Theology is a theme. Perhaps even the use of the term “universality” is not acceptable in so far as it implies a monologue redolent of Western Christendom. Yet “classical separations” are nothing more than indications of the exclusion of the Third World Theologies in crucial theological discourse. Denominationalism is a lamented phenomenon in the context of Africa as it is a mirror of the political partitioning of Africa. The Western model of world Christianity is a structure of domination and liberation offers a new paradigm - not a new theme - and dialogue between orthodoxy and *orthopraxis* will only be intelligible when this point is understood. One of the major contributions of the liberation symbol is the notion of the preferential option for the poor as the starting point for theology in its more than fifty years of its existence. This has attained “credibility” even in the traditional theologies that never conceived of this plausibility before. Theology is thus understood as a second act, *praxis* being the locus of theological reflection.

Indeed it is only after we have grasped this paradigmatic difference that we can begin to recognize some points of “convergence” between orthodoxy and *orthopraxy*. One such common emerging theme is the concept of *Koinonia*.

The Church as the fellowship of the believers offers a promising basis for the conceptualization of the world Church. Solidarity ceases to be an option, but an impulsion for a common participation in material and spiritual need. There is also some basis for commonality in the area of justice, peace and the earth and the position of women. Certainly this might sound contradictory as the debates between liberation and orthodoxy will continue, but the cleavages that have been identified are merely cross-fertilizations and mutual influences that can be surely identified as themes common to all worlds of Christian theological thinking. Yet it must be conceded that liberation theologians are still regarded as modern day heretics even though there is an admission that:

The texts and priorities of Liberation Theology have made an irreversible contribution not only to theological speculation but to the texts of Roman documents and the sensitivities of worldwide Catholicism. The subtle and persistent influence and osmosis of liberation concerns even in the camps of the historians of the orthodox faith is thus a fact (Tefsai: 113-114)

The symbol of liberation is about an alternative way of doing theology and the renewal of the world. It is a global symbol which has ushered in a theological rupture. We must recognize that Christologies, Soteriologies, Pneumatologies, Ecclesiologies, and Creation theologies and others written from the perspective of liberation fill many libraries in the world. The discernment that the paradigm is not the same is important to realize. And the most potent contribution of the liberation paradigm is the notion of the preferential option of the poor in doing theology.

3.6. Liberation Expectancy: Experience and Expectation

The soteriological value of Black Theology of Liberation as a Christian apologia is our crucial locus for the overall assessment of this school of thought. All in all, Black Theology as a theology rooted in the struggle for liberation must have created certain expectations among its interlocutors. The experience of the African masses has been that of “anthropological poverty” (Oduyoye 1990:103): a condition of poverty that is more than material destitution, but has to do with an interior selfhood. Black Theology in solidarity with all other Third World Theologies has one preoccupation: the salvation and liberation of the suffering masses in South Africa. It envisions “anthropological dignity” (Martey 1993: 96).

In this section we attempt to decipher the expectancy resultant from the message of Black Theology of liberation. What will be the expectation that results from the corpus of Black Theology of liberation if it is paradigmatically different from Western orthodox Christian formulations? Does Black Theology promise a different route even though destined to the same heaven? Ecclesiology and therefore the symbols and structure of the church, which find expression in public life should be linked to the expectations arising out of the aspirations of the poor if the preferential option of the poor is the cardinal *leitmotif* of theologies of liberation.

The Church has been viewed as “a site of the liberation struggle” during the Kairos in South Africa, hence it is fitting for us to talk of the *Kairotic* expectation to attenuate the symbol of the Kairos in our current public life. Similarly we could designate this expectation “liberative expectancy” in as far as the liberative currents linked to the symbol of liberation are resorted to in the struggle for liberation. Indeed, if there is a pseudo-innocence to depart from, what is the pure innocence, not a childish one, but a child-like one, in which the expectations of the poor could find a home? This implies that the Church should be viewed as a site for an alternative reality. It is this alternative reality we must project in the changed South African public scene. For purposes of vivid articulation of our views we draw from Nürnberger’s (1990: 205-219) insights on salvation:

The impasse centers on soteriology. What precisely is the deliverance which the gospel promises? Soteriology is the existential root of all genuine theology. Uncertainty in this realm creates uncertainty in the entire system. It is the foundation not the peripheries which necessitates the shift in paradigm. There seems to be no theological task which is more pressing at present than to redefine the soteriological basis of our theology - including our missionary theology...To gain an appropriate and versatile soteriology I suggest that we start from the following basic assumptions: The goal of “salvation” is comprehensive wellbeing in peace with God, who is the Source and Criterion of the whole of reality, and therefore also in peace with a pacified natural and human reality. The Old Testament calls this envisaged situation *shalom*, the New Testament calls it *soteria*, or the Kingdom of God. If that is true, the act of salvation must be defined as a divine response to specific human needs, that is to the experienced deficiencies in human wellbeing (1990:206).

If we adopt this as our working soteriological formulation, the foundation of salvation in Black Theology is the oppressive structures of society and the situation and experience of the non-person. The soteriological basis of Black Theology of liberation is the lived space of the non-person on the underside of history. It is the concrete situation of the oppressed. On the other hand, Western theological views on salvation have tended to “spiritualise” salvation. According to Nürnberger, *shalom* in Hebrew and *soteria* in Greek are secular concepts which imply the transformation of a situation of danger and need into a situation of safety and wellbeing. It is the “profanity” of these concepts we must harness to obviate the pseudo-spiritual irrelevancies from our understanding of salvation, Nürnberger maintains.

Salvation is the divine response to the specific needs of the oppressed, their collective experience of deficiency, cultural deficiency, economic deficiency, political deficiency, personality deficiency and religious deficiency. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news in so far as Jesus picks up these deficiencies precisely in the form in which they present themselves. This is what is envisaged by liberation theologies when they emphasize that the gospel is liberative in so far as it is a response to human need.

Nelimbu (1999:6) commenting on the tangibility and concreteness of liberation, sums it up in this manner:

As such, liberation affected the physical lives of the nation as well as those of the individual persons. When liberation was absent, the people could lament, but when it was present they rejoiced.

The question of pseudo-spiritual irrelevancies is complex and we illustrate this through Gibellini's thoughts in his analysis of the debate between orthodoxy and liberation. Gibellini, interpreting the orthodox debate between Christian freedom and liberation projects a crucial difference between liberation and European theologies. He delineates the problem along the lines of redemption and emancipation. According to him, European (public) theology focuses on the relationship between redemption and emancipation, while liberation theology focuses on the relationship between emancipation and oppression. Let us allow Gibellini to speak further on this matter:

Emancipation is the key word which sums up the modern history of freedom; redemption is a key word which sums up the nucleus of the Christian message. The modern world pursues liberation by means of self-emancipation; Christianity puts forward and offers liberation by means of redemption. The problem which arises and which confronts the most sensitive European theologian is how to level down the historical contrast between redemption and emancipation, to the degree that the two projects are not seen as alternatives: *either* redemption or emancipation (1987:54).

What the sentiments above signify is that there is a particular way in which emancipation and freedom are connected to experience (history). Furthermore, emancipation connotes both freedom and liberation but these terms are nuanced. We have already made the point that liberation consigns freedom with a shift of semantic and symbolic axis above. Christian teaching has a well-developed doctrine of freedom as self-determination and power to decide for oneself and through which a person ultimately becomes his/her own cause. This means agency in history.

Redemption promises to restore this freedom through Jesus Christ. Following this, it sounds legitimate to inveigh that from the Renaissance, through the Enlightenment to the French Revolution, the modern age has been a process of liberation or emancipation. Gibellini postulates that emancipation is the key word which sums up the modern history of freedom above.

It is when the matter is viewed within the context of the liberation axis in contrast with European theology that the picture becomes different and complex. First, if emancipation is tantamount the modern history of freedom, then we can say that liberation as a new paradigm of theology does not bring anything new to Christian orthodox teachings in the light of the historical developments of emancipation in the West. To say, as Gibellini alleges, that European theology focuses on the relationship between redemption and emancipation, and that the word emancipation is key to the modern history of the quest for freedom suggests that the historical experience of the West is assumed to be the interlocutor of redemption in European theology. Following Gibellini's analysis therefore, the soteriological question we seek to extrapolate rather centres on the dissimilarity between the Western bourgeois notions of emancipation with its failures and popular processes of liberation and their struggles for freedom. Hence the relationship between emancipation and oppression comes as a leverage that is congenial to the liberation paradigm, its interlocutor being the oppressed and their history instead of the emancipated or freed person.

Emancipation as a key to the modern history of freedom has been experienced as oppression by others. It should be remembered that redemption and emancipation are mediated through the interlocutor of non-believer in European orthodox theology. Redemption, which constitutes the nucleus of the Christian message is conceptualized and mediated through Western philosophical frameworks. To the contrary, the liberation paradigm espouses critical social analysis as the basis for the mediation of redemption which we have described as the nucleus of the Christian message. If emancipation sums up the modern history of freedom, it is the emancipation of the oppressed from the oppression of the modern history of freedom that creates the gulf between liberation theologies and European theology. This gulf is created by the fact that European theology is poised to offer liberation (emancipation) in terms of the European historical gains (the Renaissance, Enlightenment and revolutionary struggles for freedom) ironically to those who were oppressed by the same European historical gains for freedom. Furthermore, those who were victims of oppression in the modern quest for emancipation were perceived as non-believers and could only be redeemed by believing in the Christian message mediated in European philosophical frameworks.

Second, the notion of the spiritualization of salvation and the resultant distortion of the gospel then becomes clearer at this point. To choose redemption against emancipation as the quotation above states is to spiritualize redemption. The other extreme is to choose emancipation against redemption and this is designated as self-emancipation. When this choice is blessed theologically it engenders the “spiritualization” of self – meaning that self becomes an object of worship.

Emancipation without redemption and redemption without emancipation are two sides of the same coin which yield to pseudo-spiritual distortions.⁸ For the oppressed this happens automatically when the modern history of freedom (emancipation) is imposed on those who have not been agents of the same history to satisfy their quest for freedom, because in this manner, they can only find spiritual recourse (redemption) in the European theological resources conceived and mediated through European thought patterns. This happens with a deep sense of gravity when redemption (the nucleus of Christianity) becomes self-emancipation that elevates humanity as the giver of freedom, such a notion of freedom (emancipation) being drawn from a modern history of freedom which has no recourse to the history of the oppressed. It becomes a grave pathology of a dislocated spiritualization of self borne out of a confounded soteriological architecture.⁹ This is a good example of anthropological pauperization.

Christianity offers a dimension of freedom and liberation that is integral and two-pronged. The first dimension is that of freedom as a soteriological gift, i.e. a gift of salvation. Liberation is therefore a gift if the entire gospel is liberation. The second is the ethical dimension of freedom as a task. This means liberation offers agency in God's creative work of redemption. It is a vehicle of participation in the Reign of God.

⁸ We can cite as an example the Marxist charge on religion as an opiate of the oppressed in European discourse due to the separation of redemption from emancipation. At the same time the Marxist deterministic tendencies of self-emancipation will fit the pseudo-spiritual tendencies arising out of the separation of emancipation from redemption. The same can be said about secularization as a tendency that leans to self-emancipation and *ipso facto*, a separation of emancipation from redemption.

⁹ Tiyo Soga's story is illustrative. He espoused the European emancipation (freedom of choice) and married a white woman. The white community insulted him for this. He shredded most of his cultural heritage and espoused a redemptive scheme that needed no hint of his culture; the black community insulted him for this. He had to contend with this ambiguity throughout his life.

Logically, this places our democratic dispensation as an acquired soteriological gift rather than a product of self-emancipation. The task of democracy is ethical and aims at responding to the deficiency between the expectation and experience rooted in the aspirations of the poor. Hence, the distinction we make between liberation and the *praxis* of liberation, the expression of that liberation – namely, the ethical task of liberation. Without this, democracy in South Africa with its link to the Christian message can suffer pseudo-spiritual distortions that will perpetuate anthropological pauperization. Yet, in our view, democracy must be tied with the vision of anthropological dignity among others.

Before we move on, attention must be given to the connection between comprehensive wellbeing (salvation), and the Old Testament and the New Testament symbols of salvation. Let us briefly elucidate this point by summoning this statement by Stackhouse:

The moral and spiritual architecture of every civilization is grounded, more than any factor, in religious commitments that point to a source of normative meaning beyond the political, economic and cultural structures themselves (2002:11).

The Christian moral architecture of the comprehensive well-being of salvation which includes cosmic peace, that is peace between humanity and the whole of creation, is grounded *inter alia* on the story of creation. If this is the case, then it inevitably takes us to the salutary purposes of creation. Black scholars have written about Creation and Salvation in their quest for the restoration of the dignity of the suffering blacks and thus the creative participation of the human beings in God's creative work in history.

From this understanding oppression has been viewed as literally undermining God's intentions for the *Imago Dei* - humanity, created in His image for purposes of creative participation in God's space of *Creatio Continua*. Brueggemann (1977:3-6), reading the Old Testament from the point of view of space, also sees Creation as a major motif in the Old Testament, almost a defining theological theme. Thus salvation, which in comprehensive terms includes the entire cosmos, in other words the whole of the created order, surely includes various world perspectives as part of God's creative work. The distinction between the earth and the world is implied in the previous sentence with the view to pointing out that the world is a gift of landedness therefore, world perspectives for participation in God's creative work should depict this giftedness. This giftedness of space and participation in God's creativity imply the intrinsic dignity and giftedness in the *Imago Dei* and the whole of creation for God's purposes.

The world as we see it is broken. This is the meaning of sin. Humanity and the cosmos are fragmented,¹⁰ from one another and from God. Sin alienates this symbolic understanding of the relationship of God with humanity – it breaks the covenant.

Liberation theology speaks about structural sin and personal sin. God intervenes through His Son with the view to restoring His creation back to His original intents. In doing so God acts salvifically (“liberatively”) through our actions with Christ as the Liberator.

The Church serves in this Mission. Ecclesiologically, the Church journeys with God in the restoration of Creation and the *Imago Dei*.

¹⁰ The word fragmentation, used as a verb in the case above is chosen advisedly. In Critical Theory the terms fragmentation and specialization are seen as dominant features of the structure of bourgeois society under capitalism. Fragmentation thus means the division of labour to the point of alienation between humanity and production or labour itself. Cf. Kelliner 1989:45; Mosala 1989:47.

Ecclesiology harnesses (assembles) these acts and symbols that galvanize humanity's relations with the cosmos and God in the concrete historical acts of intervention by God. The restoration of God's purposes in the world is the restoration of His sovereignty. The symbol for this order is the Reign of God. Because the kingdom is come and is yet to come, liberation continues to concretise the precepts of the Reign of God. Hence the church becomes a site of liberation.

The message of liberation has historical and eschatological dimensions and Boesak (1976:114) says it is not escapism, but a call to arms, a call to denounce oppression (sin). The symbol of the Kingdom and the relationship between ecclesiology and politics will be taken further in our chapter on Black Public Theology. For now it is important to grasp that liberation creates expectancy and that expectancy cannot be incommensurate with the experience out of which it springs.

Metaphorically, if the last fifty years of African conversation about God includes projects of translatability (Bediako); vernacularization (Sanneh); God of the oppressed (Cone), their "silences and absences" (Mosala), then an expectancy of a translated, vernacularized, inculturated, expressively present and liberated gospel in the current public life to fulfill and satisfy the deficiency of the gospel among the poor is the model we should search for. Put in simple terms, the architecture of the project of democratization, morally and spiritually, must be grounded in the normative symbol of liberation with cognizance to the projects mentioned above that have been associated with Black and African Theologies.

3.6.1. The Disjuncture Between Expectation and Experience

Given the history of oppression in South Africa, Kritzinger (1990:46-48) has correctly posited that there are two churches in South Africa: one Black and another White. The Black church is poor. According to him the expectation of the black church is to create its own authentic theological identity as distinguished from the colonial and dualistic nature of the White church. It is further expected that cultural alienation, which is the creation of the colonial conquest and dispossession, will be overcome, hence the twin emphasis on socio-political liberation and cultural liberation. The revitalization of significant cultural elements of the Black people's world view (comprehensive wellbeing) and the socio-political liberation of the same is emphasized. On the other hand, the white church, which is rich and resourced, needs to overcome individualism and its pervasive dichotomies and espouse a wholeness of life. The privatization of Christian faith is not innocent (Boesak), but a class phenomenon until there is a major reconfiguration of society.

The point we are making here is that there is a disjuncture between the expectations and experiences of the two. Salvation to them is not the same. For example, the reason why political theology has been problematized in South African Black Theology arises out of this fact. Let us enlist insights from Francis P Fiorenza to elucidate our point:

In general the difference between political theology and liberation theology can be drawn fairly sharply. Political theology is a reaction to consequences of enlightenment and

secularization as they have been spelt out in existential, personalistic and some strains of some transcendental theology. It seeks to overcome the relegation of faith to the private individualistic sphere by elaborating a new hermeneutic of relationship between theory and praxis. Its primary task is hermeneutical. Liberation theology arises as a response to oppression and injustice within the Latin American scene. It criticizes the theories of developmentalism and points out inadequacies of the models of the Catholic liberation as well as the theory of social action or lay apostolate (in Goba 1988:29).

Political Theology addresses individualism and the privatization of faith. Liberation theology arises from the concrete situation of oppression. While there are clear deficiencies to which the gospel of Jesus Christ must respond, it becomes a problem when the response to one is imposed on the other. This is the conflict we need to deal with in the context of our democratic dispensation today. Expectations are not the same and experiences are not the same. One of the celebrated writers in the post -Apartheid South Africa graphically paints the picture:

“You can ask the people of the town: I am not racist. They will tell you, no one had more enthusiasm for the new dispensation than me. But I will tell you straight: laziness is a terrible thing. If laziness is in your blood, nobody can do anything about it. When the blacks were still angry and wanted what we had, it was better, because they wanted everything. They were angry and they wanted. They voted us out everywhere, they took up all the important posts, they organized everything when and where it suited them. But once they were sitting there in our places, they found that all these things were a lot of work. An athlete you have to train in your spare time. You have to drive him to sporting events over weekends in your own car, with your own money and without overtime pay.

You have to attend coaching courses in your holidays. You have to train your whole athletes the whole of December and January. Without extra pay. That is what sport is. Free dedication of teachers to their communities. The success of your athlete is your reward. *Nou ja*. These people, that they don't like (Krog 2003:17).

She goes on in the following manner:

A black school principal in Maokeng sees it differently. 'It doesn't matter how things have changed, before you know it, the whites have manipulated in their favour. When you say that your school does not have a track or long jump pits or long jump or short-put equipment, they say you must stop blaming everything on apartheid. When you ask if you can bring your athletes to their school, they say that they must first get permission from the school board and that only meets next term. And you dare not call them racists, because now they have a few black kids in their school.

We could have selected any of these graphic stories of contradiction but the point is made. Perhaps the quotation she opens her book with is seminal for our point:

Some rules, according to Noam Chomsky, are transformational: that is, they change on structure into another to such prescribed conventions as moving, inserting, deleting and replacing items. Transformational grammar has stipulated two levels of syntactic structure: deep structure (and abstract underlying structure that incorporates all the syntactic information required for the interpretation of a given sentence) and surface structure (a structure that incorporates all the syntactic features of a sentence required to

convert the sentence into a spoken or written version). Transformation links deep structure (*Antjie Krog 2003, opening quote of the book*).

The “long jumps,” “high jumps” and “short puts” above, symbolically signify theological controversies in South Africa in as much as there are disparaging political, social, cultural and economic expectations. The transformational grammar we use and espouse in view of our democratic expectancy needs both deep structure and surface structure to hold expectancy and experience in tandem. With the differences in expectation clarified, let us now turn to Black expectancy.

3.6.2. Black Expectancy

First, we revert to Biko’s Thesis: “the antithesis is not non-racialism,” it is a humanity that is fully in harmony and sharing “mutual knowledge.” We choose Kritzinger to further explicate the theological basis for this:

...I need to explain why I use Black Theology as the starting point in my design of liberating mission. My first reason is the fact that White South African theologians who try to develop a liberating perspective often focus primarily or exclusively on Latin American liberation theology, thus ignoring the creative contributions emerging from their own “back yard.” This tends to create the impression that a new theological “orthodoxy” has been established, with its centres of authority in Sao Paulo or Lima, which has not yet left behind the pattern of a “universal” theology. It also ignores the African and Asian criticism of the dominance of the Latin American approach in Third

World Theology. In order to develop a genuine liberation theology for South Africa, we need to take our point of departure in the voice of the oppressed people of our own context. In the second place it is necessary to stress that Black Theology, as it has manifested itself since the early 1970s, is the first full-blown liberation theology to arise on the South African soil. There is a long history of black protest theology in South Africa, dating back to the rise of the first African Independent Churches in the late 19th century, but this did not produce a theological method significantly different from dominant “Western” theology. It was only in the 1970s that a different type of theology began to emerge, consciously African and liberational at the same time... My final (and utmost fundamental) reason for my starting point in Black Theology, however, is the fact that I regard it as necessary for any theologian to take sides in the societal conflicts within which they find themselves (1990:38-39)

The tendency to bypass the experience of the black masses continues to leave much to be desired, a point that Mosala poignantly made when he argued that eloquent silences and absences in our current stage in South Africa should be our major concern even more than taking a preferential option for the poor! The extent to which any innovations in South African theology albeit liberational create the disjuncture between expectation and experience of the black African masses will continue to be a critical basis for engaging such innovation. Experience is horizon, it is a lived space.

The converse to this formulation is equally true. The assumption that by giving credence to the experience of the poor black masses then Black expectancy can be dislodged to distant horizons is a fatal mistake - both socio-politically and theologically.

Expectancy emanates from the fact that society is a living organism and therefore it cannot simply absorb perpetual deficiencies without becoming deficient. Society is a bio-sphere of lived struggles and survivals that creatively hold experience and expectation in tension. Expectancy linked with experience incommensurate is the basis for false hope.

Artificial or superficial handling of expectancy is hazardous as the conditions of its germination are but a lived horizon, meaning an existential space out of which specific discourses germinate. At least this is said from an African perspective which views society as a living organism. This has become the problem we associate with the icons of the struggle in particular, who maintain their credibility and legitimacy on the basis of their shared horizon with the suffering. The test of the liberation symbol in public life lies here. Surely in the current dispensation the liberation struggle credentials are no longer adequate to guarantee one an express right to champion the plight of the suffering. One expression of this deficiency is the colonization of African symbols to serve and respond to needs incompatible with this expectancy. The whole question of “delivery” in South Africa is salvific, it is deliverance through and through out of the groans of the struggle.

This point needs some theological illustration. The classic debate between Tutu and Mbiti could be employed to clarify the intricacies of black expectancy in South Africa and its ramifications for publicity today. Mbiti (1979: 478) first charges:

One would hope that theology arises out of spontaneous joy in being a Christian, responding to life and ideas as one redeemed. Black Theology, however, is full of sorrow, bitterness, anger and hatred. Little wonder Black Theology is asking for what black Americans should have had from the start - freedom, justice, a fair share in the riches of their country, equal opportunities in social, economic and political life. The wonder is that it has taken all these years for the anger of Black Theology to surface.

Before we make any comments, let us allow Tutu to speak:

Why should we feel that something is amiss if our theology is too dramatic for verbalization but can express itself adequately only in the joyous song and movement of Africa's dance in liturgy? Let us develop our insights about the corporateness of human existence in the face of excessive Western individualism, about the wholeness of the person when others are concerned for Hellenistic dichotomies of soul and body, about the reality of the spiritual when others are made desolate with the poverty of the material. Let African Theology enthuse about the awesomeness of the transcendent when others are embarrassed to speak about the king, high and lifted up, whose train fills the temple.

As we have already agreed, African culture and political emancipation also alluded to in Kritzinger's thoughts, are "soul mates." What we seek to demonstrate here is the assumption that might still persist that theology can be done out of joy and not anger. But our main point is the disjuncture of this joy from the material problems (what Karl Marx called the opiate of the people) that summons us to ethical responsibility.

The second point made by Kritzinger is the bold stance of taking sides. This means to diagnose the problem from the vantage point of the suffering. For example, responding to the Vatican, Boff, while conceding some of the points raised, immediately asserted that much of the challenge by the Catholic Church was abstract and thus did not arise from the *praxis* of the marginalized Church.¹¹ Remember that the Vatican at that point felt that Boff in his support of the Base Communities was departing from the correct doctrinal understanding of ecclesiology. We should highlight the third point in the quotation namely that Black Theology is the first intellectual paradigm of liberation in South Africa. This will surely continue to be the acid test of any creative innovation which assumes liberation as its *leitmotif* in South Africa. Let us conclude this section by stating the silently eloquent presence in the quotation by Kritzinger above. While he is white, he is a Black Theologian. His theological commitment is to the black experience. He is an incarnation of the expectations deriving from the term black which should be held in tandem with humanity and not non-racialism because the two are the same. To be black is not to be racist. Rather as Maluleke stated before (1995b:4):

[Racism is] much more than racial prejudice. Racism refers to an ideology of power abuse as practiced collectively first by the colonial powers and later by capitalist states of Europe and America against people of colour all over the world.

In the New World Order, which has become boundless, Derrida's definition of apartheid is crucial:

¹¹ We have the debate between orthodoxy and Liberation in mind here. We have already made this point above.

By itself the word occupies a terrain like a concentration camp. Systems of partition, barbed wire, crowds of mapped out solitudes. Within the limit of the mark, the glaring harshness of the abstract essence (heid) seems to speculate in another realm of abstraction, that of confined separation. The word concentrates on separation....It institutes, declares, writes, inscribes...A system of marks, it outlines a space in order to assign residence or to close off borders. It does not discern, it discriminates (quoted by Norval 1994:131).

The abstract essence of apartheid, and the marks or the spaces that it created are evidently racist. According to this quotation such spaces were marked politically. Derrida perceives a semantic resonance between apartheid and certain European discourses on race classifications. The essence of racism is that it is Western in its provenance and final form (1994:133). As the most racist of racisms, Apartheid takes extreme identity logic as it has succeeded in creating ethnic identities and allegiances. Theologically blacks are the sinned against much as they are sinners. This implies that the structures that perpetuate their being sinned against should be transformed. Second, reconciliation with themselves is a necessary expectation - they have been anthropologically impoverished, hence theirs is a holistic life expectancy.

3.6.3. *Gestell*

If expectation or liberative expectancy can be understood as a product of an endogenous gestation of the longings of the poor masses, anticipation is the direct opposite frame or antithesis of liberative expectancy.

It is an external, asymmetrical, frame of the aspirations of the poor. Unlike a glaring discourse of creating a gulf between experience and expectation by using brute force and creating false hope, the frame of anticipation is subtle. It is epistemological and scientific a frame imposed on a horizon or lived space of others. In other words, it is an invasion of the knowledge of the other. *Gestell* [en-framing] is the word we use to capture this arbitrary frame of anticipation.

This notion is developed in this dissertation in the light of public commotions whereby the critics of black exponents, mostly white, find it hard to contend with the fact that oftentimes their critique is deigned to be racist. The expression: “playing the race card,” has become popular in post-Apartheid South and signifies this tension of engaging racism and its disequilibrium of experience and expectancy in our public life. This frame of anticipation is found in expressions such as “reverse racism” in relation to Affirmative Action in particular, because it assumes as a starting point, a symmetrical view of public life and challenges of transition. It is this frame that has been used to designate Black Theology as potentially racist because blacks are now in power in South Africa. The intellectual structure that inherently anticipates the negative in contrast with black expectancy and experience we designate *Gestell*. The term *Gestell* is mostly associated with the discourse of technological philosophy. Viewed from the perspective of epistemology, technology cannot evade questions about the nature of knowledge. Technical knowledge and technical explanation are epistemological questions. *Gestell* refers to technical knowledge and explanation poised to be devoid of racial language even though such technical language and knowledge perpetuate racial reasoning.

Gestell implies that techniques ultimately evoke metaphysical questions about what the comprehensive understanding of reality is considered to be. Techniques are socially constructed and cannot be value neutral. In other words strategic reason cannot be viewed to be devoid of interest and value. Therefore, technological knowledge and technological explanation are not neutral tools.

While techniques are often understood as means to an end, it is true that means produce ends just as causes produce effects (Kaplan 2004:3). According to Aristotle cause is that which brings something into appearance (*poiesis*). Cause makes a thing to be present; it makes something to be brought forth “out of concealment” (Kaplan 2004:3) thereby revealing the truth about it i.e. *aletheia*. This is how Martin Heidegger uncovers the essence of technology. Technology causes *poiesis* and brings things out of concealment. The revelation that comes out of *techne* is, however, redolent with ambiguities. For example, in our current world it reveals nature as a standing reserve of energy and resources. It orders nature and human beings as standing reserve for endless, sufficient supply. In this light, Martin Heidegger employs the term *Gestell* to signify a way of ordering human beings to perceive the world and each other “as mere stockpile of resources to be manipulated” (Kaplan 2004:3). *Gestell* is both in human beings and the world. Its *poiesis* is that of humanity and nature as standing resources to be manipulated. *Gestell*, rendered as en-framing, is as we have alluded above, about technological knowledge and technological explanation which keep the essence of things concealed. It is the ordering of the human beings to perceive the world in a particular manner that conceals the *aletheia* of the expression of action in the world. It obscures *poiesis*.

In other words *Gestell* is a term we employ to capture technical knowledge and explanations that en-frame the *poiesis* that reveals the *aletheia* (truth) of liberation. *Gestell* is the espousal of the *techne* i.e. technical knowledge and explanations that “reveal” black Africa in terms such as “savagery,” “a-historical people,” “virgin territory” and *tabula rasa* used to interpret Africa. *Gestell* for us is about technical explanations and knowledge that partially reveal black as a stockpile and resource of endless, efficient supply of bad and negative. It is a systemic frame, deriving its inspiration outside the epistemological frames and experience of the black subaltern. It is a discarnate form of the discourse of self-love expressed through the disaffirmation of the techniques and *techne* of the other.

Gestell creates opacity against the passionate language and promise of liberation. It is a discourse that besmirches the celebration of liberative promises and symbols intended to anticipate victory and hope against domination and the harmony of human relations. Serequeberhan (1996: 20-21) depicts *Gestell* as a political experience in the African context. He says that the “tragicomic duplication” of Europe depicts the nature of technocratic *Gestell* revealed in the political experience of the colonized. This opacity of the African horizon through *Gestell* creates a situation where it becomes impossible to have a critically coherent conception of the world because it destroys the consciousness of historicity among the colonized. As we have already made the point, liberation is the content and framework of Black Theology. Black Theology thus dismantles both frame and content of domination; yet, subjecting the content and historicity of the black experience to a frame created by others is what is meant by *Gestell*.

It is a technical discourse that inhibits the *poiesis* that black historical tools can offer the liberation of the oppressed. On the other hand Smit (2002:17) defines the German word *Gestalt* to mean whole or total configuration. *Gestalt* means a unified whole, a totality “which cannot be derived by summation from the parts and their relationships.” Used in the field of therapy it means a healthy functioning of a total organism. The connotation of the term *Gestell* is understood well when it is contrasted with the term *Gestalt* used by Cochrane (1998)¹² to develop his *Gestalt* of Theology. He argues that,

Theology in Western Christianity has struggled in the face of Cartesian method and nominalist epistemologies, to unite such founding paradoxes or *aporiai* of theology as Church and world, personal and public, body and mind, internal and external reality, usually emphasizing one or the other side of the pole, or stating each side sequentially without a convincing basis for unifying them (1998:143).

A *Gestalt* of theology seeks to unify and base theology on the configuration of the whole namely, the configuration of the public and the private, the body and the mind, the external and the internal, church and society, *ipso facto*, the unification of the *aporiai* of theology. It signifies the whole of theology that is greater than its parts.

It signifies dialogue as in a flow of rationality or logic through the whole rather than a dissected, dualistic logic. As it were, *Gestell* is an antithesis to dialogue and ethically, it is ethnocentric. This is the ethical challenge we face in open discourse where different paradigms need to engage in dialogue.

¹² We have used the manuscript (1998) before the publication of the 1999. *Circles of Dignity Community Wisdom and Theological Reflection*.

Our Biblical roots attest to a knowing that is comprehensive. In the Exodus epic, we hear that the Lord spoke to Moses face to face (Exodus 33:11). It is in the same book that one of the narratives of a Theophany is recorded. The Exodus designates the journey of liberation as a “face to face” journey of engagement. According to Dussel face in Hebrew is *pnim* or in Greek *prosopon* and in Latin *persona*. Face indicates what appears of the other, the body of the other, the *sarx*. *Basar* - flesh in Hebrew, is the whole, hence, the word became flesh and dwelt among us.¹³ Dussel says that in the book of Acts there is a place for the shade of God in history. He says that *praxis*, in the Acts of the Apostles, marks the dawn of the era of the pneumatological phase of history and such a mark is in the act of relationship, hence our talk about God’s liberation in *praxiological* terms. The terms and the pole of the practical relationship are persons, hence *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (I am therefore we are). Following this, a person is a person and therefore revealed in a relationship of *praxis* shaded by God. It is in relations that the radiance of God’s shade (*isithunzi*) (*theophany*) finds its expression. In solitary individualistic perversities a person ceases to be a person. Adam is both person and nature - is whole! Personal relationships include nature.

The book of Acts alludes to communal life [*koinonia*] - to the breaking of bread and the prayers of the community of believers. It is recorded that those who believed lived at one place and shared all things in common - they would sell their property and goods, dividing everything on the basis of each others’ need. They went to the temple area together everyday, while in their homes they broke bread.

¹³ There is a Zulu hymn, *Sisebusweni bakhe* meaning we are in His face. We can only remember what Jesus said in John that those who have seen Him have seen His Father

With exultant and sincere hearts they took their meals in common, praising God and winning the approval of all the people (Acts 2:42-47). This means that as opposed to *Gestell*, a *Gestalt* view of liberation predicates what we see in another, what we see in another's God, in another's world, in another's experience as nothing less or more than a person. Gestalt is communal and Gestell fragmental. This is what the sacrament of neighborhood means to use Tutu's dictum.

Cheong (2000) advances one of the most recent critiques against modern and postmodern philosophy through a concept which he coins "self-centrism." He argues that according to the system inherited from Descartes, everything had to be explained in terms of a dualism of mind and matter. This firstly came as a result of a long dispute between the clergy and science in the West, which was settled by Rene Descartes by splitting the universe into mind and matter (Fitzgerald 1996:15), thus coining the new humanity as *Ergo sum cogitate*, (I am because I think).

Accordingly, the mind in the West got to be understood as having power to access the truth and this paradigm influenced all areas of human life. Physics, political theory, ethics, economics, and the philosophy of religion were influenced by these modern emancipatory teachings of reason. "The most prominent names associated with this view are Grotius, Hobbes, Descartes, Newton, Spinoza, Locke, Rousseau, Smith, Kant, Hegel, Coleridge and Emerson. In their ways, Darwin, Marx, and Freud would develop the possibilities latent within this framework" (Cheong 2000:24). The cosmos was understood in dualist terms such as matter/spiritual, private/public, sacred/secular.

Modernism produced a new myth of *the self*, stripping humanity of all particularities and advancing an “all human” core of the independent, “reasoning” autonomous self. The modern invention of autonomy of self has a connection with human self-centredness and its differentiation from the *other*. Cheong thus concludes that modernism was the absolute expression of the self-centrism of humanity. The human self accessed the truth via the instrument of reason and this reason made universal rules. Modernity was a paradigm of singularity and totalization, as all other dimensions of life were subordinated and subservient to the individual reason. We need to be cautious about the fact that there were variants in the currents of modernity. The picture given about modernity is, however, in our contention, a dominant sentiment experienced by the Africans.

This totalizing discourse in our view including attempts to embrace the non-Western knowledge *ipso facto*, the reconstruction of the Enlightenment project, potentially remains a subterfuge *Gestell* [en-framing] by the gigantic Western self against the midget African other. To perpetuate judgments based on modernity against black aspirations and expectancy is a *Gestell* [en-framing]. If before the end of Apartheid the diagnosis of the black situation was disparagingly based on the fundamentals of traditional theology, then the *Gestell* of discourse after Apartheid is the prognosis that continues to be hypothesized on the knowledge forms of traditional theology and Western tools of knowledge. *Gestell* means to devalue the salvific architectural frame of Black Theology of liberation by imposing an anticipating frame of the worst instead of contributing to bringing the parts together to develop a *Gestalt* of Black Theology of liberation that is liberative and dialogical.

To borrow from Kee (1986), dogmatic theology has always been content with right belief instead of right doing. In this case it is the preoccupation with what must be the “right” expectation as opposed to actions for the right expectation. Black Theology of liberation is a protest against this en-framing discourse. Naming in South Africa is a living example of this discourse. It is common knowledge that a word such as Bantu which means people, had come to be an affront to the very existence of *abantu* by the time of the rise of the Black Consciousness movement. Churches, public administrative laws, Bantustans are all a reserved memory of this form of exclusion in extreme that saw no Christian values in a name such as Lerato, which means love. In his “Long Walk to Freedom,” Mandela records that the name Nelson was given him at school, not at home, because Rolihlahla was “savage.”

Some aberrations resulting out if this discourse persist up to this day where people are called “Zulus” “Pedis,” “Xhosas,” “Tswanas,” etc instead of *AmaZulu*, *amaXhosa*, *Basotho*, *Bapedi* and so on. While the designation “black people” remains, albeit in protest, the designation “black theology” is found to be redolent of racism. While the content of this theology remains inexorable, its name is anticipated and *ipso facto* en-framed as a dangerous premonition against the desirable non-racial state as Apartheid is gone - the discourse maintains. Maluleke (2000b:47) comments:

...Since the times of slavery, the designation, definition and naming of black people has been - and appears to continue to be – problematic, much more problematic than the designation ‘white,’ even though the two notions are virtual mirror-image concepts.

The reason why the former has always been problematic is mainly due to the powerlessness that has come to epitomise so much of black existence during the past five centuries at least...My proposal is that the naming problems of black people are, and should be, a legitimate historiographical issue.

Adopting Maluleke's proposal is by no means an act of exonerating blackness from ethical dimensions that transcend the ontological reality of having a black skin. The restlessness that accompanies the anticipation and en-framing of the naming and designation of black people as stated by Maluleke, is a critical point we need to constantly drive home as it is a direct inhibition of the black African's "courage to hope" (Kobia 2004)). The presence of this restlessness in the newly found democratic order is something we shall further explore in the next pages of this work. Suffice it to say, its sophistication presents democracy itself not to be ultimately immune of en-framing the black course and quest for the *praxis* of liberation.

One illustration has been given above in the quotation from Krog. It indicates that black people occupy places they angrily fought to occupy and were given - given to perform, because "in reality, these places belong to others." The notion of *Gestell* is evoked to debunk the sophistication of racism in public life which resorts to concealed racial reasoning behind the techniques, or *techne*, meaning technological knowledge and technical explanations.

We conclude with Bujo's (2003) thesis that modern technology creates a monoculture. From an African perspective, Bujo avers, an ethically active subject understands his or her actions as making present the ethical experience of his/her ancestors (2003:56). These actions according to him are both *praxis* and *poiesis*. The significance of ethics and *poiesis* derives from the fact that African ethics is *anamnetic*, meaning that it involves the remembrance of one's ancestors. *Poesis* means the re-establishment of ancestors, it is always a "protological foundational act" (2003 :57). *Anamnetic poiesis* signifies the re-establishment of the memory of the "protological foundations" in action.

Black expectancy derives from the actions i.e. the *praxis* of the poor that signify and re-establish the "protological foundations" of human existence in its liberated forms reflected upon by Black Theology of liberation to reveal a *Gestalt* of human emancipation from bondage. The place of Black Theology of liberation in the post-Apartheid dispensation is reiterative universalism stemming from the dictum I am related, therefore we are (*cognatus sum, ergo sumus*). As opposed to *Gestell*, relatedness is a decisive ethic of Black Theology of liberation, an openness that goes beyond the present and the visible in a given context and the reciprocal acknowledgement of the other as an architect of morality (Bujo 3003:27). Hence an analectic post-Apartheid liberative discourse!

3.7. Conclusion

Liberation is a shorthand or metaphor for the aspirations and the message of the gospel to the poor. It is the structure and the content of the message of the gospel. In the post Apartheid South Africa, liberation as inculturation and liberative reconstruction provide Black Theology with a new vitality to continue against that challenge of impotence faced by the school and other theologies in South Africa.

We presented the architecture of liberation to signify its analectic vision and spirit. Black Theology is part of this alternative vision of the world placed within architectural frame liberation as a global theological method, emerging in the context of “developmentalism” and constructing a language of liberation as the language of the oppressed. *Koinonia*, we have asserted, as a space of mutual influence and cross fertilization between world perspectives of theology is a vital space of solidarity and power for the oppressed. It is a stage and space for face to face relations that germinate an analectic discourse of theology within the cultural cave of oppression. *Gestell* in open democracy creates epistemological opacity and an unhealthy fragmentation between experience and expectation re-established in the *praxis* and *poiesis* that reveals the liberation of the whole of life and the vital force of the human community to live in harmony.

CHAPTER 4

Liberation, Reconstruction and Development: A Critical Dialogue

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a critical evaluation of the proposal for a theology of reconstruction as a new theological paradigm in association with the notion of development. This critical dialogue seeks to establish whether it is possible to redefine “liberation” as a major goal of Black Theology in such a way that it would still be applicable in the present South African public life. The crux of the argument is that “some kind of public theology” is intended, masqueraded though as the proposal for reconstruction as a paradigm to discount Black Theology of liberation. We therefore demonstrate that Black Theology of liberation is not only potentially a kind of public theology but, also, a public theology among other forms of public theology.

Both reconstruction and development are redefined as heuristic devices of liberation. We argue that it is not the essence of liberation, but its expression through the notions of reconstruction and development that must be refined. Hence, reconstruction and development can be interpreted as addenda of Black Theology in the post-Apartheid South Africa. It is not the essence of Black Theology or liberation as a paradigm that needs to be redefined, but the mode of Black Theology and liberation, that must shift to a less-embittered approach with a kind of “constructive impatience.”

The shift to a less-embittered mode with a kind of constructive impatience is within the Black Theological model of insurgency associated with Cornel West (Maluleke 1996d: 35). It is the creation or recreation and reactivation of critical habits for reconstruction and development.

Our key conversant is Villa-Vicencio (1992) who boldly proposes a departure from the paradigm of liberation to reconstruction. Villa-Vicencio's project emerged within the climate of reconstruction and development in South Africa. The notion of reconstruction became rife in the transition period of South Africa. The ANC had already begun to talk about the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) published as the ANC's election manifesto before elections in 1994. Later, in a modified form, the RDP was published as a government white paper in 1994. Alan Hirsch, commenting about the RDP document says that "the document was a blueprint for a productive social democratic haven," (2005:59). The RDP inspired reflection among theologians such as Allan Boesak (2005).

As a theological paradigm, reconstruction began to gain momentum in the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s (Martey 2005:5). In 1987, at the Fifth General Assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches, reconstruction was favourably proposed by Mugambi as a way forward. The advocacy in favour of reconstruction mounted as it became clear that Apartheid was coming to an end. It was thought that a new theological paradigm beyond liberation would be necessary (Villa-Vicencio 1992).

Pityana (1995:229) also notes that African theologians are engaging with the concept of reconstruction and Farisani (2002) concurs. Jesse Mugambi was the first among African theologians to propose a departure from liberation to a reconstruction paradigm (Getui & Obeng 2003: foreword; Martey 2005:5; Farisani 2002:63).

The central conviction that motivates the proposal to shift the paradigm is that a new situation has arisen, which demands reconstruction and renovation in the 21st century. In the proposed shift, the post-Exilic metaphor derived from Ezra-Nehemiah is a central key. The idea is that the liberation motif, which has been largely centered on the Exodus metaphor, is no longer adequate to deal with the change that has dawned.

The Theological Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2000 brought together representatives from a variety of theological organizations in Africa such as: Conference of African Theological Institutions (CATI); All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC); the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT); the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (THE CIRCLE); and the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) and resolved as follows:

At Mbagathi, the tension between liberation and reconstruction became obvious when the black theologians from South Africa including Takatso Mofokeng and Tinyiko Maluleke expressed dissatisfaction with Mugambi's attempt to downplay and underestimate the importance of liberation for Africa's social transformation and development.

Reconstruction must begin with liberation as all Africans are not yet liberated (Martey 2005:6).

That “reconstruction must begin with liberation” is paradigmatic. To maintain that liberation should be a starting point of reconstruction, we will argue, is different from arguing for the shift from liberation to reconstruction. In essence, the statement that reconstruction must begin with liberation implies that reconstruction is not a *quid pro quo* for liberation, but that liberation is a *sine qua non* of reconstruction. Liberation is the framework within which reconstruction and development can find their place.

“Unlike the Mbagathi meeting,” Martey (2002:7) further explains, the Conference that was held in South Africa under the auspices of a Conference on Theological Education and Ecumenical Formation in 2002 saw liberation and reconstruction as complementary paradigms “for Africa’s liberative reconstruction and sustainable development.” We should note the designation “liberative reconstruction” because it our preferred designation in this dissertation. The prong of sustainable development is inevitable in the qualification that Conference. We shall therefore undertake an excursus and glance at development theology is so far as it relates to the liberation symbol.

4.2. Reconstruction Theology

Having cited a number of scholars who have clamoured for the paradigm of reconstruction as an alternative to the liberation paradigm, we will begin by looking at the South Africans notably Villa-Vicencio (1992) and Farisani (2002), the latter who has taken the debate a little further.

We will also look at Mugambi as a deserving interlocutor. We need to indicate that Farisani (2002) has already done sterling work in analyzing Villa-Vicencio and Mugambi. Dedji (2003) also did a sterling work on the subject and discusses Mugambi at length. Our main interest is to establish what the tenets of the proposed reconstruction paradigm are before we attempt to engage the proponents of the reconstruction motif in dialogue.

4.2.1. Reconstruction Tenets in Villa-Vicencio

In his major work on the proposal for reconstruction as a new theological metaphor, Villa-Vicencio clearly states his intention to propose an “unambiguously interdisciplinary” methodological approach to his project of reconstruction and theology. The context that informs this project is the *perestroika* (reconstruction by Gorbachev), associated with the shift of events on the globe marked *inter alia* by the fall of the Berlin Wall. This shift also marked the dawn of democracy in South Africa. Some called this the New World Order.¹ In that sense, the New World Order connotes the disintegration of the Union of Soviet States of Russia (USSR), the demise of Apartheid, the reunification of Germany, moves to create a unitary Europe, the emergence of democracies in Third World countries and globalization (Maluleke 1996:38; McGregor 1990:13ff).

¹ I am aware of the fact that the notion “New World Order” is attaining some new meaning since the era of George W Bush. Bush sees the New World Order through the spectacles of what he calls “the axis of evil” referring to such countries as Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan etc, the politics of which he intends to put in order. We are also aware of the fact that 9/11 has also brought into the global order new dimensions that were not there in the late 1990s at the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dawn of democracy in South Africa.

4.2.1.1. Reconstruction

We must ask the question, what is reconstruction? According to Villa-Vicencio, it is a response to the challenge of the church whose theological task is to restore justice and to affirm human dignity, ensuring that in the process of reconstruction nations are able to turn away from greed, domination and exploitation to communal sharing and personal fulfillment (1992:2). Reconstruction is a process that entails a *metanoia* (transformation) of social ills in order to usher in communal sharing and personal efficacy.

With the political void having lapsed since the un-banning of political organizations in South Africa, the need to move from saying “No” to saying “Yes” has arisen. As Villa-Vicencio points out, the type of theology of reconstruction demanded by this challenge to move from saying “No” to saying “Yes” is in every sense a post-exilic theology.

Reconstruction addresses a situation within which political exiles are quite literally returning home, having left the country in steady streams since the banning of the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress in 1960. Reconstruction involves the task of breaking down prejudices of race, class and sexism, and the difficult task of creating an all-inclusive society built on the very values denied the majority of the people under Apartheid. As this challenge is met, Villa-Vicencio maintains, it could mean the birth of a different kind of liberatory theology (1992: 7-8).

Reconstruction theology is a post-exilic theology. Villa-Vicencio argues that there are resources in the Biblical literature of the post-exilic times that give credence to the appropriation of the post-exilic metaphor as a prophetic theology of reconstruction. The main interlocutors of the reconstruction are “political exiles” who have steadily streamed into the country since the banning of the liberation movements. Reconstruction is therefore a call for a *metanoia* from social prejudices and a creation of a new society built on the values of the masses of South Africa. In the process of engaging in these tasks, a new form of liberation theology, surely reconstruction theology, might emerge Villa-Vicencio asserts.

This kind of theology however, Villa-Vicencio argues, should be radically interdisciplinary and emerge at the interface between theology and law, economics, political sciences and related disciplines. Further to the attributes given above, reconstruction theology will involve the theological wisdom passed on for ages in *public life*² because the church cannot abandon its responsibility to participate in public life. In his reference to Tillich and Barth, Villa-Vicencio (1992:22-5) demonstrates the immense difficulties that go along with any legitimating theology in times of reconstruction. The dilemma as to whether the issue of contributing to good governance is something that the church ought to relinquish and leave to the politicians is an old question about the church-state relations. According to him, reconstruction theology has a role to deal with the vestigial realities of Apartheid.

² That designation is specifically ours as it is not used by Villa-Vicencio himself. The main thought here is that theology must be involved in public life.

In doing so, reconstruction theology will employ the utopian visions created by prophets, preachers and poets. These visions, however, will need to be translated into social practice and operative laws. Villa-Vicencio contends that often social practices and operative laws fall short of the vision of the life-giving power of theology which must be embedded in the realities of every day life. What this means is that reconstruction theology should function as an inspiration for social vision and renewal even if the translation of that vision falls short of the vision itself.

The ethic of reconstruction is one of “middle axioms,” meaning the provisional values and structures, which begin the process of renewal within the limitations and context of one generation. Middle axioms, Villa-Vicencio (1992:9) argues, are ethical principles “not binding for all time” but, “begin” the process of social renewal. In other words, middle axioms are evolving principles in the process of social reconstruction “seeking to define the next logical step society needs to take at a given time” (1992:280). Villa-Vicencio implies that middle axioms should be perceived as “anchors and compasses” of a utopia of reconstruction. These are ethical principles that state what the gospel demands are at a given time and space. Villa-Vicencio employs the notion of the middle axioms as a contextual device to locate reconstruction theology within theory and practice.

Following on Pityana (1995), reconstruction implies that there is a structure onto which a new one should be built. It might be safe for us to perceive these middle axioms as structures of principle on to which reconstruction must be undertaken.

The notion of “middle axioms” is about the application of ethical principles in a given time and space as the church is required to “support certain specific political and economic proposals and not support others” (1992:283). In the chapter on “Theology and Nation-building,” he provides a framework of entry into public life which he defines as “religionless” (1992:28). By this he means that the language of religion should be altered in such a way that it makes sense even to those whose assumptions and beliefs are not informed by religion. Clearly the rationale for an “unambiguously interdisciplinary” approach is behind the assertion. For example, he looks at the political task of the Church and posits:

Christians in places where transition and renewal are happening need not, and probably should not, follow the theological models of the First World any more than they need to follow their political, economic and social inventions. The existence of African, black and other contextual theologies in South Africa, together with Third World and liberation theologies elsewhere suggests that the break with classical theology has already taken place. In struggling to discover what it means to be theo-politically responsible in a time of political transition, Christians in these situations would, however, do well to learn from the insights and mistakes of others who have grappled with similar programmes of theological and political reconstructions in earlier times (1992:37-38).

There are many ways in which the statement can be understood. For our purpose, it implies the ominous task of creating a language and structure of a theo-political responsibility in new situations.

While he does not identify those who grappled with similar situations in earlier times, he says that the theology of reconstruction is “pre-eminently a contextual theology; it is a retroactive theology.” It is a theology that at the same time seeks to deal with the causes of previous suffering and conflict. From this, it stems to reason that critical analysis is the theological task of the proposed theology of reconstruction (1992:41).

What essentially becomes the crux in Villa-Vicencio’s definition of reconstruction is the manner in which he understands the notion of *perestroika* (reconstruction). *Perestroika* to Villa-Vicencio entails “building within the shell of an old society step by step.” This becomes apparent in his discussion of theology and economics. He draws from Dorothy Sölle’s notion of “revolutionary patience” as a significant ingredient of the struggle for economic transformation. This form of reconstruction is a subversive commitment to a long future which must demand more than the ideals of the revolution. He then cautions that he by no means implies that there should be excuses against plausible and viable options at a given time to attain the goals of reconstruction. To support this view, he develops what he designates “a theological check list” for theology to take part in the struggle for economic justice.

Let us recapitulate the insights we have discussed so far. First, reconstruction theology is a process that entails a transformation of society from social ills of racial and gender prejudice coupled with economic degradation. Second, the key metaphor of the theology of reconstruction is the post-exilic corpus of Ezra-Nehemiah. There is an inherent prophetic dimension to the metaphor as well.

Third and related to the point above, reconstruction theology is a form of “religion-less” theological participation in public life and policy formulation. To achieve this objective of participation in public life, a strategy of an “unambiguously interdisciplinary” theological enterprise expressing its faith ideals and vision in a religion-less manner must be assumed. Fourth, its ethical character is expressed through the notion of “middle axioms” i.e. contextual devices applicable in a given time hence its *praxiological* orientation is informed by the notion of transitional ethical principles. Last, it is ideologically a theology of the *perestroika*, a step by step theological engagement in renewal, economic transformation and nation-building.

4.2.1.2. Reconstruction and Liberation

In Villa-Vicencio’s endeavour, clearly a quest for a new kind of liberating theology (1992:13) is pursued. Because reconstruction theology is a new kind of liberation theology, Villa-Vicencio recognizes the concern around theology as a potentially dangerous device in the arena of power which results in hesitation by some theologians to move beyond what they regard as legitimate forms of liberation theology in spite of the need to engage constructively in nation building. As a new liberation theology, the hermeneutical relationship between past and present finds its dynamic liberating exercise in the notion of the post-exilic church with some form of a hermeneutic of suspicion, because not all within the exilic and post exilic periods is readily usable and appropriate for liberation.

Villa-Vicencio further maintains that the response of liberation theology to a church on the side of the oppressive regimes is hope and promise. The challenge now is to translate that hope and promise into concrete theological programmes of home-coming and nation-building. In doing so, the church in developing reconstruction theology will learn from other places. As a liberation theology, reconstruction stands for radical transformation (1992:39). Revolutionary fervour was “inserted” into the mainstream theology by the paradigm of liberation and by implication the same revolutionary fervour will not be lost if reconstruction becomes a theology of liberation. Because liberation theology has not produced the strategies of reconstruction, a new metaphor of reconstruction must be explored in order to shift the paradigm from “No” to “Yes.” Let us hear how other voices have responded to this call.

4.2.1.3. A critique of the Reconstruction motif in Villa-Vicencio

Farisani concurs that liberation theology rarely contributes to programmes of nation building. He also concurs that liberation was exclusively grounded in the Exodus metaphor. We concur with Farisani that Villa-Vicencio does not give a detailed analysis of liberation theology (2002:64). We shall return to this later. For now, let us look at the components of reconstruction as seen by Farisani. He confirms that the prophetic trajectory is an essential component of reconstruction for a thoughtful and creative “yes.” He finds social analysis as an important component and thus stresses the importance of policy analysis. Farisani also sees a strong *praxis* oriented proposal which emerges from the context of the struggle in the proposal for reconstruction (2002:68).

Yes, indeed it is interdisciplinary and does not re-invent the wheel, but seeks to unleash the dangerous power of liberation in human rights; interfaith dialogue; cultural empowerment and economic justice in an open-ended manner.

To offer his critique Farisani engages Maluleke (1994:1996) and Pityana (1995) in dialogue. Maluleke is among those who have sharply criticized the project of reconstruction on the basis that it takes very little account of the ground covered by the heritage of liberation theologies in South Africa. Reconstruction needs to begin with liberation. On the other hand, Pityana argues that Villa-Vicencio's project is not hostile to the liberation project as it is couched within the genre of liberation theology. Pityana's point is that something new has happened, a new situation has arisen. Following this, according to Pityana, dialogue with the Enlightenment paradigm is important.

Furthermore in questioning Villa-Vicencio's commitment to liberation, his past contribution to the tradition of liberation must be taken into account. The conclusion Farisani arrives at is that reconstruction is neither hostile to liberation nor inculturation at least as postulated by Villa-Vicencio.

Farisani's criticism comes from another angle. While acknowledging that Villa-Vicencio is not a biblical scholar and commends him for his cautious appropriation of the post-exilic metaphor of Ezra-Nehemiah, it is the question of the ideology between the *am haaretz* (the people of the land) and the exiles which he finds to be inadequately addressed by Villa-Vicencio and Mugambi (Farisani 2002:86; 2003:30). He says:

My main critique is that Villa-Vicencio's use of Ezra-Nehemiah does not examine critically the ideology behind the conflict between the returned exiles and the *am haaretz*. A careful reading of the text of Ezra-Nehemiah demonstrates that there is a contestation between at least two groups, namely the returned exiles and the *am haaretz*. It follows therefore that if Ezra-Nehemiah is to be used in the theology of reconstruction, it should not be read as representing the voice of only one group i.e. that of the returned exiles (2002:30).

Furthermore, a point that is critical for our next step in this chapter,

Though Villa-Vicencio does mention that there is an ideological conflict inherent in Ezra-Nehemiah, his use of Ezra-Nehemiah does not seriously take into consideration the fact that the Ezra-Nehemiah text is not neutral, when setting forth a theology of reconstruction based on Ezra-Nehemiah and other reconstructionists (2002:30).

Farisani is a biblical scholar. His commitment to a theology of reconstruction, albeit with a clear ideological bias for the *am haaretz* is one thing we need to turn to now.

Employing the word paradigm consciously, Farisani is equally a reconstructionist himself. He says:

Likewise liberation theology's focus would be to make the word of God address the plight of the poor in the context of oppression. Reconstruction theology, on the other hand, suggests proactive actions that would not only denounce poverty, but that would also remove it from society (2002:119).

Farisani argues that a complete break from liberation is not possible and suggests that an “oscillation” between liberation and reconstruction is the way forward. Surely this oscillation should take into account the ideological constraints in between reconstruction and liberation. The best we could say about Farisani’s contribution is that he refuses to jettison the liberation paradigm and contributes to reconstruction theology the dimension of sensitivity to ideology which was overlooked by Villa-Vicencio and Mugambi. The dominant view in this section is that a new situation that has arisen prompted Villa-Vicencio to call for a new kind of liberation theology. However, Villa-Vicencio does not give a detailed analysis of liberation theology to support his call. Nonetheless, Pityana does not see his endeavour to be hostile to liberation theology, while Farisani cautions against an uncritical use of the post-exilic metaphor. Maluleke however, struggles to locate this endeavour within the genre of liberation theology, because Villa-Vicencio appears to minimize the value of liberation and inculturation (1997:23). Perhaps we need to reformulate our question in a different way in order to dissect the proposed project of reconstruction.

4.2.1.4. A Reformulation of Reconstruction as Public Theology

To provide our own critique of the project of reconstruction we contend that the question must be reformulated. Our analysis of the reconstruction project will be anchored on the assumption made with regard to the topography of Black Theology and other liberation theologies as not “clinical” or “pure” public theologies. We argue that in Villa-Vicencio, this kind of an assumption is a “taken-for-granted –substratum” that runs undisclosed.

We argue that the crux of his innovation does not become vivid in the proposal he makes for a departure from the Exodus motif and the prophetic mode of doing theology. So it is not the call to move to a post-exilic paradigm which is essentially problematic. The call for a departure from “No” is not what Villa-Vicencio’s project is proposing at a deeper level, we contend. Mark this ambivalence: “Villa-Vicencio’s project proposes a departure from liberation to reconstruction even though this reconstruction will still remain liberatory.³” It is this formulation that causes confusion.

To reformulate reconstruction as a public theology, we take our cue from concepts such as “religion-less,” “participation” and *perestroika*. *Perestroika* calls upon the church to make sense of its theological values beyond its membership and engage in a secular debate in a language understandable to a broad constituency of people (Villa-Vicencio 1992:4). We concur that a response to this contextual demand for theology to find a place in public life within a climate of a legitimate state is justified and needs affirmation. We need to go a little further though. Villa-Vicencio inveighs that a “religion-less” approach must transcend what might be regarded as liberation (1992:12). This assertion is crucial for our dialogue. Let us first allow Villa-Vicencio to speak:

To do theology in accordance with this understanding of God, is to rediscover a dynamic liberatory interpretation of God. It suggests that the most important theological task is not (evangelically) to insist that the event of liberation be named and promoted in terms of ecclesial symbols and culture, but that liberation (which is biblically understood as a

³ The word liberatory is used by Villa-Vicencio himself.

manifestation of the presence of God) be celebrated and acknowledged by all people in accordance with their own culture and symbolic-structure (1992:25).

To put this quotation in context, Villa-Vicencio deals with the question of the post-exilic church. He correctly employs images such as “restlessness,” to describe the centrality of the quest for liberation by the oppressed in the Judeo-Christian tradition. In the context of this discussion about this heritage of “restlessness” he makes the point quoted above, namely that in the quest for liberation, God’s liberative acts are experienced and acknowledged in history. Up to this point we concur. Our problem arises from what he asserts as a deduction we should make following this understanding of God and His liberative acts, namely that the task of theology is not to insist that the event of liberation be named and promoted in terms of ecclesial symbols and culture. Having already argued the point in our previous chapter, we must simply reiterate that the gospel of Jesus Christ is liberation.

As an evangelical term liberation adheres to the fact that its central core means something positive about the Christian message. Most importantly, it must be proclaimed, professed and confirmed in public, hence we find it difficult that Villa-Vicencio assumes a position that the task of the post-exilic church is not to insist on liberation. On the contrary, we argue, it is by proclaiming liberation that all people will ultimately celebrate and acknowledge this gift with their own culture and symbolic structure. Our public responsibility emanates from our insistence that Christianity’s essence as *eu-aggelion* is liberation (Sobrino 1989:189). This is what we profess in public. Regarding this public role of our faith Boesak says:

The contribution from the Christian faith can only be meaningful and authentic if it is made from the heart of the Christian faith: the belief in the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all life. It has always been my belief that Christian theology, if it is to be anything, is a public theology...Hence Christian theology is public, critical and prophetic in our cry to God; public, critical and prophetic in our struggle with God and in our stand against the godless powers of this world; and public, critical and prophetic in our hope in God (2005:3).

To desist from naming liberation is tantamount to desisting from naming Christ as the liberator. From an African perspective, wherever and whenever there is a celebration, the reason for celebration is named. We have also argued that it is the culture of the oppressed masses that constitutes the “echo of the voice of God.”

To insist that the echoes of God’s voice, i.e. the culture of the poor and black masses, should not inform the ecclesial symbols as a public profession of their liberation is difficult to accept. We insist that in order for all people to celebrate and acknowledge liberation in their own cultures and symbolic structures, solidarity with the ecclesial structures and the culture of the oppressed is the public starting point of the liberation paradigm. It is easy for Villa-Vicencio to argue that he agrees with the preferential option of the culture and the ecclesial symbols of the oppressed. In his discussion of cultural empowerment he makes a point for the integration of indigenous values into the dominant culture of the nation (1992:42-43).

However, it will be difficult for Villa-Vicencio to deny that in the quotation above, he is ambiguous about the place of liberation and the ecclesial symbols and culture of the poor masses. The point of liberation is that such cultures and symbolic structures as those of the black masses are desisted.⁴

It is this ambiguity in his application of the liberation tenets to the proposal for reconstruction that needs to be pointed out. For example, while Villa-Vicencio (1992:38) concedes that “the existence of African, black and other contextual theologies in South Africa, together with Third World and liberation theologies elsewhere suggests that the break with classical theology has already taken place,” he points yet to another direction for the programme of theological and political reconstruction. He avers that we shall do well to learn from the insights and mistakes of others who have grappled with similar questions in earlier times. In this instance, one would have expected Villa-Vicencio to unambiguously state what the break with classical theology implies for the learning process he suggests.

He states that to discern the signs of the times, critical analysis is a pivotal tool for a theology of reconstruction. In this manner, he is in the tradition of liberation theology. He states quite clearly that “A theology of reconstruction is pre-eminently a contextual theology” (1992:41). Again, to make our point of ambiguity, his reconstruction theology places exiles as the interlocutor instead of the non-person.

⁴ This point is important because we need to remember that notions of adaptation, accommodation, indigenization and the recent ones of translatability and vernacularization are simply inadequate without liberation. Cf. Pityana in Chapter 1 on models of contextualization.

Suffice it to say that wherever Villa-Vicencio elucidates liberation tenets, we find ourselves compelled to agree with him, but as soon as he elucidates his reconstruction, we discern a looming ambiguity in the application of the liberation paradigm. Indeed, the assertion that reconstruction theology must assume a “religion-less” approach that transcends liberation, or what might be regarded as liberation is ambiguous even more so when Villa-Vicencio argues that reconstruction is within the paradigm of liberation. If there is a need for celebration, do we not need liberation to celebrate? Villa-Vicencio seems to suggest that we do not need to be liberated in order to celebrate. That is the reason why we propose a reformulation of reconstruction theology as public theology for better clarification and dialogue. Our key to demystifying the project of reconstruction is found in what Villa-Vicencio says:

In this particular study, an attempt is made to make sense, in terms of this tradition, of the history of the struggle for socio-economic, political and cultural liberation and national reconstruction within the South African context identifying the implications of this for a political theology of more universal kind (1992:24)

The tradition referred to is the Judeo-Christian one, rendered marvelously by Villa-Vicencio in the previous quotation to signify the human quest for wholeness in all situations and dimensions of life. Reconstruction is therefore an attempt to appropriate the struggle for liberation within the South African context by identifying the implications of such a struggle for a more “universal kind of political theology,” Villa-Vicencio states.

It is this line of conversation that is pursued in this dissertation, the proposal of reconstruction as a “political theology of a more universal kind” based on the South African experience and heritage of contextual theologies. To this effect Cochrane (1999:147) says:

The Church is in need of a prophetic vision which goes beyond protest and which is prepared to be constructive, a point also argued in Villa-Vicencio’s *A Theology of Reconciliation* (sic) 1992. Neither the *Kairos Document* (1986) nor its direct successor, *The Road to Damascus* (1989), really go much beyond protest, yet our present situation calls for a prophetic vision of the future which arises from and is constituted by the historical consciousness of the poor and oppressed.

Reconstruction theology seeks to go beyond protest. Some have even said that it proposes a departure from a hermeneutic of suspicion to a hermeneutic of reconstruction. Cochrane, with whom we concur, explains that Villa-Vicencio gives much attention to the question of law in relation to constitution-making and human rights as the keys to a theology of reconstruction. In this manner, Villa-Vicencio’s work, Cochrane argues, complies with the model developed by Habermas in which law plays a significant role at the interface between systems and the life-world.⁵ Botman (2000:99) concurs that Villa-Vicencio “founded his contribution to South African post-Apartheid theology in the Frank Chikane question about the youth and the future of the rule of law.”

⁵ Habermas will be discussed below and more will be said about systems and the life-world.

Our position is that reconstruction theology as proposed by Villa-Vicencio is public theology focusing on the rule of the law and related themes of human rights and nations building. One of the key assumptions that mirrors public theology in Villa-Vicencio's project of reconstruction is the discussion of theology and law and particularly the notion of the "Rule of Law." It is hard to find fault with the meritorious analysis he presents on the subject, for indeed he in the final analysis passionately argues for a value-based approach to law. The Rule of Law presupposes constitutional democracy which is the case in South Africa. He tenaciously argues that there is a need to harmonize a value-based approach to law with the participation by all ranks and classes in the creation of their future by appealing to the *arche and principium* concepts. He propounds that if the founding principle (*arche*) of beginning is affirmed as a guiding principle (*principium*), the entity constituted will endure. It is from this background that we understand his proposal for the church's role in the discourse of human rights, nation building and the sphere of economics. The point is that a particular kind of public theology emanating from a particular understanding of public theology is implied. And this is the fulcrum of our critical dialogue with Villa-Vicencio reconstruction theology in this entire dissertation.

First, it is the debate between public theology and liberation theology that has been omitted. Public theology developed from political theology and the dialogue between political theology and Black Theology is a well documented fact (Maimela 1991).

Koopman (2003:3) says:

This concept [public theology] was used for the first time by the North American theologian Martin Marty in an article that analyzed the thought of Reinhold Niebuhr, entitled “Reinhold Niebuhr: Public Theology and the American Experience.”

There has been a pervasive understanding that public theology had a distinct topography and in the case of our context, the implication has been that Black Theology is not public theology. We discern this in Villa-Vicencio’s assertion that liberation needs to be abandoned as there are “experiences elsewhere” that must inform us in the construction of a new language of doing theology in this new situation. In the proposal to move from liberation to reconstruction the debate between political theology and Black Theology at least is conveniently avoided. The proposal to depart from liberation to reconstruction is tantamount to a call to depart from liberation to public theology or a “political theology of a universal kind.” If Pityana argues that Villa-Vicencio’s credentials as an exponent of liberation cannot be questioned, the latter must be aware of the altercations between Black Theology and political theology. He cannot propose a political theology of some kind without evoking this argument and history.

Our second point, flowing from what we have said above, is that there is no one form of public theology (Koopman 2003; Storrar & Morton 2004). Black Theology and liberation theologies are public theologies in their own right. Kee (1986:46) affirms that Deotis Roberts wrote *A Black Political Theology* which made him stand within the tradition of public theology. “A privatized, quietistic version of theology is inadequate for the oppressed. What we need is a political theology – a theology of power,” Kee cites Roberts (1986:47). The book *A Black Political Theology* was authored in 1974.

On our shores, Maimela (1991) addresses the question of political theology and how it differs from Black Theology of liberation. The difference is methodological. So, to the extent that Black theology has reflected on the question of black power, it is public because publicity is about power. Publicity is in some sense about the division of power. Black consciousness is also about the collective power of the black people. In this regard we think that there is greater consensus as Bedford-Strohm (2006a:1) affirms that there is no one universal public theology, but many public theologies. The quest for a universal political theology by Villa-Vicencio falls short at this point. From this the assertion made by Villa-Vicencio that the divide between First and Third World theologies needs to be challenged and overcome is at best ideological (1992:15). There is no divide but, essentially, a break with classical theology in favour of a new paradigm of theology governed by the symbol of liberation. There are many public theologies and the goal is not one universal political theology of some kind. The notion of universality cannot be sustained without clarification because theology in the liberation perspective begins from the particular. It is a particular kind of political theology we should search for in the particularity of our context.

While Villa-Vicencio builds his theological project on the basis of Reformation, the unification of Germany, *perestroika*, Bonhoeffer (and we must indicate that there is nothing wrong with this), he simply fails to demonstrate the “publicity” potential of liberation theologies including Black Theology of liberation. Bluntly speaking, he does not recognize liberation theologies as public theology.

For example, the contrast he makes between communal and liberal categories suggests a contrast we should make between the communal African world view and the liberal world view. With voluminous resources available in African and Black Theology on the subject, he fails to take the opportunity to engage them to develop a South African Reconstruction Theology.

Third, democracy is procedure. It is based on law. Villa-Vicencio discusses “The Rule of Law” and quite superbly so, but he does not discuss democracy itself, which is essentially the touchstone of a new situation that has prompted his work. There are many models of democracy, but his is “a taken for granted polity of democracy.” Yet in strict liberation terms, the form of democracy whose inspiration derives from experiences that are not from his own “back yard” could be a perpetuation of the domination of the symbols and culture of the West in public life. The point he makes about Enlightenment as *de facto* a challenge of authority resulting in the separation of canon law and civil law after five “great revolutions,” acquires a completely different meaning when we recall that at the time of the French Revolution, Haiti was being colonized. . As these “great revolutions” were going on, Africa at the same time was being colonized.⁶ That the great revolutions of Pan Africanism, black nationalism and Black Consciousness and their implications for law making and the African Renaissance are not treated in his project leaves much to be desired.

⁶ We have made this point in Chapter Three in our discussion of redemption-emancipation and emancipation-oppression divide between orthodox and liberation theologies.

We must then come back to Farisani, Pityana and Maluleke. We affirm the ideological uneasiness expressed by Farisani. We recall that Mosala (1989) predicated that an instrument of criticism is not immune of criticism. Villa-Vicencio is not immune to ideological bias. The charge against him is that he has not taken the ideological struggles between the people of the land and the post-exilic reconstructionists seriously enough. While Farisani cautions against Villa-Vicencio on this omission and tenaciously maintains that liberation should be maintained as a central motif of the post-exilic paradigm, he unfortunately suffers the same in his presentation of renewal strategies.

Looking at the popularized concepts of renewal, reconstruction, transformation and reconciliation, Farisani devotes his first chapter to the theme of Pan Africanism. Within this framework, he explains the popular notion of the African Renaissance now associated with Thabo Mbeki. Among the strategies of resistance chiefly associated with Nkrumah, he brings out the latter's notion of "knowledgeability," which we have interpreted as "consciousness" and the socialist system in recognition of the power of the colonial might (2002:25). He concludes that Pan Africanism is about the unity of African countries in their struggle against existing socio-economic conditions. He proceeds to establish concord between Mbeki's African Renaissance with Pan Africanism and identifies three phases with regard to the concept of the African Renaissance. The third he identifies as a post-colonial phase that carries formulations of the idea of Renaissance that seeks achievement and equality with the rest of humanity in all spheres of human endeavour (2002:43). By this very fact he concludes that Renaissance is not an alternative to Pan Africanism.

He does offer some criticism of the Renaissance. The economic link between the concept and the fact that it has become almost a buzz term is a matter of concern for him. Further, he sharply raises the concern that the concept of Renaissance is a monopoly of continental leadership and governmental leadership. Of course these concerns do not make him to deject the concept of Renaissance as he maintains that it remains a realizable goal as the next step to advance Pan Africanism. So far we are in full agreement with Farisani.

Having also examined the role of liberation movements on the African continent, he records the definition of blackness arising out of the Pan Africanist Congress held in 1994 in Kamapala, Uganda (2002:36) which stated that:

...it was not our responsibility to decide who was more African than who. In fact being African alone (including being black) does not make one a Pan-Africanist. The Buthelezi, Mobutos, Abachas, Bokassas, Idi Amins, are as black as you can get but can we truly infer any Pan-African commitment from their ignominious acts? It is one's commitment and willingness to sacrifice for the unity and progress of Africa at home and abroad that is crucial; it is a question of consciousness and action (Abdul Raheem).

To put this into correct perspective, this was a response to the question about the North Africans who are from Arabic descent. There are affinities here with Black Theology's definition of blackness. Still Farisani's exposition is not unproblematic. He uses permutations such as post-colonial and post-liberation era ambiguously. He avers:

We need to note that this research aims to develop an African theological paradigm relevant for our African context today. The theological paradigm proposed is reconstruction, renewal, and transformation. The ultimate goal of this theology in the post-colonial and post –liberation era is to equip us theologically to face the socio-economic, political, moral etc challenges facing our continent today (2002:60).

Our major concern is with the permutation “post-liberation.” At least if the liberation *leitmotif* is to be continued how “post” is his reconstruction to liberation? The obvious lacuna in his analysis emanates from the fact that Pan Africanism is a philosophy that originated outside the theological arena, albeit adaptable and meritorious. It is the development of African Theology itself which he ignores when he clearly intimates his objective to develop an African theological paradigm of reconstruction. Taking into account that there is already an African theological paradigm in existence, any attempt to develop one that fails to take into cognizance dialogues within African theologies deprives the new paradigm that is envisaged of credibility. The absence of Black Consciousness as a strategy of renewal in his exposition is hard to exonerate. Others who have looked at Mbeki’s Renaissance do not omit this dialogue (Gumede 2005:26; Meko 2000:73-83). The omission of Black Consciousness in his catalogue of renewal strategies inevitably results in the omission of Black Theology of liberation and thus, the engagement of reconstruction with Black Theology of liberation. Having also alluded to Pityana with reference to the ecumenical discussions of reconstruction, we argue that the altercations between orthodoxy and *orthopraxy* in the ecumenical movement cannot be omitted in assessing the use of the motif of reconstruction. In our view, Maluleke’s charge that the ground covered needs to inform new innovations holds water (1997a:23).

It is in this perspective that his dissatisfaction about the project of reconstruction is understood. Covering this ground is one matter. Occlusion of this ground is yet another.

About reconstruction itself Pityana says:

The book, then, (*A Theology for Reconstruction*)⁷, anticipated much of the debate in this study (*Pityana's work*)⁸. It, nonetheless, fails to achieve its declared purpose. Its methodology of interfacing with economics, human rights law and political science is conducted in an uncritical manner without regard to the fact that these very systems from which theological discourse was to draw were themselves flawed. In other words little attention was paid to the critical approaches to historiography and jurisprudence. Such an interdisciplinary effort lands on the laps of tight and unredeemed academic discourses which themselves need to be interrogated and deconstructed (1995:38).

Explaining this charge, Pityana says “reconstruction implies the presence of a structure” which may need renovation or rebuilding. Villa-Vicencio has not tested the building blocks on which his scheme must be founded and thus failed to attain the radical purpose of reconstruction which is metaphorically the fundamental displacing and replacing of presuppositions (1995:38). According to Pityana reconstruction should go hand in hand with deconstruction.

⁷ Words in brackets are ours for clarification.

⁸ Words in brackets are ours for clarification.

The ground that has been attained by liberation theologies including Black Theology constitutes the presence of a structure and building blocks of a particular brand of theology. Without testing this structure the expository work of reconstruction undertaken by Villa-Vicencio is secondary as Pityana avers. This is where the danger lies for us. If the foundational structure of the liberation paradigm is not tested well, the expository work that follows might be superficial.

Let us conclude this section by stating in a concise manner the principles that we have used in our dialogue with Villa-Vicencio's project of reconstruction. First, the fulcrum of our dialogue lies in the understanding that Villa-Vicencio's motif of reconstruction is a proposal for a public theology of some universal kind. This is significant not only for this chapter, but the whole of this dissertation as our purpose is to develop a Black Public Theology. Our contention is that the kind of public theology proposed by Villa-Vicencio is methodologically, not within the framework of liberation or at least Black Theology.

Second, we cannot dismiss Villa-Vicencio's representation of liberation themes in his work. He presents these themes well, but he fails to translate them into the new project due to a number of ambiguities that are prevalent in his project. Villa-Vicencio has not devoted adequate space to "deconstruct" the motif of liberation from which he purports the need to depart in order to "reconstruct" a new paradigm. By the same token he has not "deconstructed" the liberal building blocks of our new democratic dispensation to reconstruct the proposal for a public theology.

Third and last, the greatest failure of this proposal is to caricature Black Theology by association with liberation theology. This emanates from the quick charge that the whole constellation of liberation is based on “No.” Yet “No” is strictly not a paradigm, but a mode, a tone! We have indicated in the first Chapter that a prophetic mode is polemical while an apologetic mode is engaging. It is fascinating to observe how Boesak (1976:57) used the interfusion of “Yes” and “No” for Black Theology of liberation twenty years ago:

Black Power’s concern is the essential humanity of black people. Its concern is self-affirmation, self-respect, pride, participation in and control of black’s own human destiny. It says “Yes” and “No.” Indeed but “Yes” and “No” *to what?* It is in this choice that the fulfilment of black authenticity lies.

The significance of this quotation lies in the fact that the interfusion of “Yes” and “No” is a power matter for the essential humanity of black people. Most importantly, the whole constellation of liberation is not based on “No” but “Yes” and “No.”

In conclusion we contend that it is not the paradigm, but the mode that must be altered. This is where we think the potential for reconstruction lies if the motif of reconstruction signifies public theology as our thesis states. Indeed, it is the mode in which the interfusion of “Yes” and “No” must be sustained in the new dispensation to unleash the potential of reconstruction. The next chapter is thus devoted to the development of Black Public Theology to cast the interfusion of “Yes,” and “No” in a new tone as a response to the new situation that has arisen.

4.2.2. From Liberation to Reconstruction in J.N.K. Mugambi

We have introduced the subject of reconstruction by stating that Mugambi was the first to ponder this new paradigm for African Theology. Let us now turn to him to continue with our dialogue.

4.2.2.1. Mugambi's notion of Reconstruction

The germinal seeds of reconstruction in Mugambi's thought go back to the lectures he delivered in the United States of America as Visiting Professor. Mugambi (Getui & Obeng 2003 : i) himself says:

Theology of Reconstruction is a recent phrase in contemporary African theological vocabulary. It was coined in 1990, when Africa entered a new historical period ushered in by the end of three vicious systems of oppression – institutionalized racism, formal colonialism and cold-war tutelage. The significant event which sparked its coinage was the release of Mandela from life imprisonment in South Africa, on 11 February 1990. At the end of March that year, the All Africa Conference on Churches, whose President was Archbishop Tutu, invited me to reflect with Africa' church leaders, on the theological implications of the events which Africa was undergoing. This challenge plunged me into a critical appraisal of theologies of liberation and inculturation, which had shaped the progressive thrusts in African Christian theology during the 1980s.

In this context of a new historical period, Mugambi is motivated by rivalry in Christianity, which ultimately has adverse results on the peoples of Africa who are increasingly exposed to a range of cultural and religious traditions. He says Christians should convince those who are not Christians and not complain about the expansion of non-Christian values and traditions in Africa. Rehabilitation and reconstruction are contrasted with short-term relief and handling of emergencies. He writes:

In Africa, Christianity has been used for too long to destroy the cultural and religious foundations of African peoples. In the 1990's and beyond, African Christian theology (including Catholic, ecumenical and evangelical strands) should have a reconstructive function, comparable to the role of Protestant theology during the European Reformation and Renaissance; Africa deserves to celebrate its own Reformation and Renaissance. The churches should be the catalysts of this process, as they were in Europe at the end of the Medieval period. If churches become obstacles, other forces will push Christianity to the periphery, or bypass it altogether. Christianity, however, has the ingredients, entry points and opportunities for the process of social reconstruction in Africa (1995:xiv).

In this call for a reconstructive function of theology, the theology of the New World Order should not be truncated as the Old World Order was, Mugambi asserts. This theology of reconstruction should not be destructive, but reconstructive, not exclusive but inclusive, not reactive but proactive, not competitive, but complementary and not disintegrative, but integrative. According to Whitehead, he maintains, the end of one thing is the beginning of the other.

“Process thought is consistent with the theology of reconstruction, because it appreciates the perennial ebb and flow of human cultural and religious achievements” (1995:xv).

According to Mugambi, reconstruction is a sociological term, but has a multi-disciplinary appeal, hence there are similarities between his notion and Villa-Vicencio’s.

4.2.2.2. Liberation

Mugambi looks at Cone and Gutierrez. He presents very short accounts of these theologians and their schools, albeit with some measure of fairness, as backgrounds to his proposal for reconstruction. In his understanding of liberation we decipher the contrast he makes between “salvation and liberation.” He maintains that there has been a tendency among Christians to polarize themselves between those who support liberation and those who support salvation. He correctly says that the disjuncture between the two, namely, salvation and liberation, should not be perpetuated. Theological discourse in Africa should come to terms with the integral nature of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he argues. He also briefly looks at the attempts to synchronize theology with the culture of African people. He concedes that there is a synthesis between liberation and inculturation.

4.2.2.3. Liberation Theology as Reactive.

Mugambi takes issue with the fact that liberation theologies have been mostly reactive.

He says:

It is interesting to note that there was no corresponding ‘Association of First World Theologians.’ By launching EATWOT, the ‘Third World’ theologians were defensively endorsing a classification of societies which was more ideological than geographical. Some of the African theologians who attended the launching conference pointed out the shortcomings of this reactive stance, but their caution did not carry the day. At that time, the Centre-Periphery paradigm was dominant especially among the majority of the Latin American theologians, who strongly felt that according to the Marxian dialectics, the ‘Periphery’ must assert itself and eventually promote itself into the ‘Centre.’ This dialectical approach to theology became very controversial, and accelerated the polarization between liberational-salvational stances on the one hand, and the acculturation-inculturational approaches on the other. Now that the cold war has ended, this threefold ideological classification of societies in the contemporary world is no longer relevant (1995:11-12).

There is not much to explain in this rather crystal clear position. Mugambi sees ideology playing a pejorative, divisive role in theology. This role is out of place in the context of the globalizing world. Such ideological differences are at the roots of reactive stances taken and influencing the formation of EATWOT, he maintains. The formation of EATWOT, however, cannot be dismissed as easily as he suggests. That EATWOT is still operational today is significant and must be evaluated on the basis of the Agenda it is pursuing. The need for the oppressed and marginalized to come together and unite in their struggle cannot be simply equated to being reactive. In other words, the contribution that EATWOT made to theological thought is more than just reaction to First World Theology.

EATWOT also provided a platform for internal debate among the Third World Theologians to nurture their methodological approach to theology. We have recorded one such debate in the previous chapter of this work.⁹

One of the most important contributions of Third World Theologies or liberation theologies is the insistence that there is no theology that is devoid of ideology. Undergirding the polarization between what Mugambi refers to as liberational-salvational stances are ideological differences with which we must contend. The question is not whether it is good to avoid ideology or not, but that it is not possible to do theology without espousing an ideological stance. We shall say more about this matter, but for now let us bear in mind that even the current globalizing world is dominated by a particular ideology called the neo-liberal globalization. Surely this does not imply that Mugambi and others should not critique organizations such as EATWOT. However, solidarity of the marginalized is their strength in the quest for liberation.

During the struggle in South Africa, it became a maxim that nobody could be neutral. To claim to be neutral, it was argued, was to side with the status quo. Such a maxim still holds water even in the current order of the world. Mugambi's optimism about the end of the Cold War could be an expression of his ideological view of the current world order. Our point is that Mugambi's charge that liberation theology is reactive cannot be generalized as the main characteristic of liberation theology.

⁹ The debate between Mbiti and Tutu

4.2.2.4. Reconstruction

Mugambi says the terms reconstruction and construction are engineering terms (1995:12). He explains that reconstruction takes place when there is dys-functionality. However, in reconstruction the old aspects become part of the new. Accordingly, social reconstruction belongs to social scientists and involves the re-organization of some aspects in a given society in order to be more responsive to changed circumstances. He applies this image to Africa and asserts that Africa has been undergoing a process of social reconstruction during the past five hundred years (1995:13). “Nehemiah becomes the central text of the new theological paradigm in African Christian theology as a logical development from the Exodus Motif,” he posits (1995:13). In relation to this, he cautions that the transportation of the liberation theme into the Old Testament has led to some distortions of the theological message contained therein. He maintains that there are differences between Africa and Israel. There is a historical and cultural distance, there is a different religious heritage and ideological distance and moreover, there is a plurality of religions we need to contend with.

Given these differences, the parallels drawn between the Exodus and the process of decolonization have been rather contrived and far fetched. Moreover, the analogy between the Exodus and the struggle against colonialism does not fit very well, considering that in the Old Testament, the Israelites move physically over time and space, from Egypt across the Sinai to Canaan, whereas Africans remain in the same geographical space. Thus Exodus, when transposed to the African situation is over time, without any geographical movement (1995:14-15).

Here the motivation is to depart from the Exodus paradigm. He then goes on to say that the theme of reconstruction is made attractive by the fact that it highlights the necessity of creating a new society within the same geographical space, but across different historical moments. He then proceeds to apply the notion of the reconstruction paradigm.

We tackle the matter of the Exodus paradigm below. It is, however, proper to respond to a few assertions made by Mugambi regarding the contrast he makes between Exodus and reconstruction. As a social construct, the motif of reconstruction is important. Indeed, if Africa has been undergoing reconstruction for the past five hundred years, this means that there has been social intercourse for the past five hundred years in Africa. Social intercourse however, is not only unique to Africa. We could argue that reconstruction in that sense has been taking place in the whole world. We could also submit that there is a positive sense in which reconstruction as a social construct can be used. But surely, as Pityana (1995) has argued, deconstruction and reconstruction go hand in hand. The question of who becomes the object and subject of deconstruction or reconstruction becomes important to answer. Reconstruction is therefore not a neutral social construct in our divided and unequal world.

Briefly, in our South African experience, the question of land is central to the struggle of liberation. That the parallel between Exodus and the process of decolonization is contrived in so far as it evokes physical movement and occupation of space, while Africans remain in the same place is not convincing at all. It is a well known fact that blacks in South Africa shared only 13% of the land.

The rest of the land was in the hands of the minority, i.e. 87% of the land. Land reforms in South Africa involve physical moves by people to their previously dispossessed lands. This is also true of the Maasai in Kenya where the question of land is still at the centre of public discourse. While we do not dispute the fact that Exodus may be inadequate, Mugambi's argument is not solid because the question of land is central to the struggle of liberation.

Geography actually becomes a matter in the parallel drawn between Exodus and liberation. Public life is space, we contend. The world is the stage of public participation, professions and confirmations. In this regard, it is possible for us to employ the motif of Exodus in the contestations of differentiated publics. For example, there is a need for an exodus from tight and unredeemed discourses of political, economic and cultural spheres. We have already predicated that the Old Testament provides adequate testimony to view it as a discourse of landedness and landlessness, hence political, economic and cultural discourses are geo-spatial matters.

4.2.2.5. Critique

Mugambi's project of reconstruction is not carefully presented. Let us put this rhetorical question as our starting point, "How close is Nehemiah to Africa, in distance, ideology, religion, salvation and culture?" The Bible is not only a book whose writing was inspired by God. It is also a book that must be read with inspiration so that it becomes the living Word of God. The questions posed by Mugambi sound Biblicist.

He discounts the use of the Exodus motif on the basis of the geographical and cultural distance. Which of the books of the Bible will be transposed to the African situation and fit very well? It is crucial to recall that in the liberation tradition, biblical hermeneutics is a developed school. It has been said that if the Bible was the only thing left in the hands of the oppressed after their land was dispossessed, then the Bible should be used to claim back that land, meaning in the struggle for liberation. The choice of Nehemiah is not enough. There needs to be a clearly stated hermeneutical reading of Nehemiah that is liberative. The development of a hermeneutic of reconstruction is indispensable for the call to depart from a hermeneutic of liberation. It is hard to accept Mugambi's hermeneutical approach to scripture as it remains undisclosed.

It is also not logical that Nehemiah should become a central text of the new theological paradigm of reconstruction. In our South African case, there has been talk about wilderness in the South African Council of Churches associated with Maluleke.¹⁰ In other words, the search for the vision of reconstruction in the wilderness motif could easily follow logically from the Exodus motif. It is not the question of reconstruction *per se* that we seek to question, but the prescriptive dispensation of Biblical motifs to the motif of reconstruction we are questioning. To go back to Mugambi's own question, if there was no physical land traversed in Exodus, to which land are Africans returning in the reconstruction paradigm? Yet in crossing the Red Sea, we should also remember that some arrived on the other side before the others.

¹⁰ Personal notes taken at the occasion of the celebration of the decade of democracy when Maluleke was responding to the address presented by Frank Chikane. Later, Tsele used this metaphor in his report to the Central Committee of the South African Council of Churches.

Which means, other dimensions of the Exodus motif could be applicable when we pose the question: have we all crossed the Red Sea? Dedji (2003:50) charges that Mugambi seems to perceive his views in a dogmatic manner and in our view this accounts for the inadequate manner in which he presents the arguments for the reconstruction motif.

Mugambi is the first to make a call for reconstruction. How Villa-Vicencio omitted this fact remains an enigma, *ke kgagamatso!* The intensions for reconstruction are good as division in Africa, especially on religious grounds, is a lamentable fact. Frank Chikane once reminisced that while incarcerated in prison during the height of the state of emergency in South Africa, he was cautioned about the dangerous nature of the Bible. Dangerous it is and it should not be minimized and trivialized in the experience and horizon of Africa that salvation and liberation are cause for divisions in many parts of the continent. This caution is legitimate.

However, the motivation for reconstruction on these grounds is extremely problematic, because reconstruction does not promise to deal with these divisions nor will these divisions cease to exist simply because reconstruction is espoused as a paradigm. Villa-Vicencio locates his reconstruction paradigm within the tradition of liberation. How reconstruction will avoid the “Salvationist” discourse is difficult to comprehend if Mugambi locates reconstruction outside the mould of liberation. But salvation is liberation, we have argued in the third chapter of this work. Salvation without liberation is pie in the sky; it is the opium of the people. We have already argued that it is a deficient spiritualizing of the gospel and *ipso facto* a flawed soteriological view.

Indeed Mugambi ostensibly couches redemption and emancipation within the ambit of modern history of freedom by asserting Protestant, European Reformation and Renaissance as an inspiration of the function of reconstruction. Dedji (2003:45) makes an important point by tracing Mugambi's theological roots to Paul Tillich, Martin Buber and Karl Jaspers. For example, Dedji (2003:56) asserts that "the idea of re-interpreting obsolescent and irrelevant metaphors and idioms as an aspect of the task of theological reconstruction" is rooted in Mugambi's reading of Paul Tillich. The invention of new myths on the other hand is an influence that can be traced to Karl Jaspers (Dedji 2003:58). The issue is not the use of the Western scholars or their influence on Mugambi, but the inadequate engagement of such tools with the liberation tools even though Dedji explicitly argues that "they have not had a good influence on Mugambi" (2003:87). The contextuality of theological discourse in the understanding of Black Theology requires inspiration from the context of the interlocutor, in this case the African context as a starting point (Antonio 1999:67).

Kee's assessment of the Right Doctrine Protestantism (RDP) in this dialogue is crucial. It is imperative to grasp that critical reason and the alternative vision of liberation came to the scene at least in the last fifty years to counter Western scholarship and its attendant domination. The acquisition of the term liberation, proposed by Gutierrez and Cone in theological circles, emerged only in the 1960s. Roughly within that interstice, African states in huge numbers were gaining independence (maybe we should say: were being reconstructed), culminating in the transition period to democracy in South Africa and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

It is towards the end of this period of liberation preponderance that new strategies to counter critical reason and liberation were mounted. In the case of South Africa, it is not distant from our memories that the 1980s marked an era of Low Intensity Conflict, Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher dominating the global scene.

Terreblanche (2002) argues that the radicalization of black protest was met with strategies that devalued their labour power since the 1970s. What does this have to say regarding the reconstruction motif at hand? Reagan, Kee maintains, was put in power by the New Right Religious movement in America (1986:102). At that time, Kee reminisces, “Reagan owed two thirds of his victory margin to evangelical Christians, who switched their support from the born-again Jimmy Carter, to the not-so-born-again but conservative Reagan” (1986:103). George Bush is heir to this tradition.

The Right Doctrine Protestantism is a neo-conservative backlash which openly sets out to stem and reverse the direction taken since the emergence of critical reason and liberation. In these circles there is no talk about liberation and religion plays an important role in legitimizing this neo-conservative ideology. The ethos of the neo-conservative movement is identified as the will of God. To enter the RDP, one must be converted and saved. Well, Mugambi may say he is aware of this, but the problem we deal with is that “liberation” and “salvation” divide Africa and should not be allowed to do so. But liberation is an African acquisition. Inculturation is liberation. The *telos* of reconstruction should be liberation too.

Therefore the proposal for a departure from liberation to reconstruction must be tested against the backlash which openly sets out to stem and reverse the direction taken since the emergence of critical reason and liberation. Furthermore, if Mugambi charges liberation of ideological taints, how then is salvation immune to ideological taints? We cannot accept reconstruction as a neutral sociological device after more than five hundred years of the Europeanization of the globe, which was racist at the core.

To argue that reconstruction as a sociological term can be simplistically applied to social intercourse that obtained for over five hundred years is an anachronism. Still, if Mugambi refuses to accept the application of biblical motifs such as the Exodus in our context, he is guilty of the same charge in his application of a sociological device of reconstruction. According to him reconstruction is a sociological term, but has a multi-disciplinary appeal. For it to appeal to theology it cannot be neutral, but should be inspired by the conditions and context of the people it is applied to. Farisani levels the same criticism against Mugambi. The ideological contestations of the post-exilic paradigm need greater attention - something that Mugambi fails to address. Mugambi himself is cautious about ideology, yet he fails to address the ideological underpinnings of the New World Order, let alone the uncritical references he makes to Europe and Reformation. Let us briefly turn to the same approach we employed to diagnose Villa-Vicencio's paradigm of reconstruction.

4.2.2.6. A Reformulation of Mugambi's project of Reconstruction

We proceed from the same premise we averred in respect of Villa-Vicencio that some kind of public theology is implied by Mugambi too. We have already stated that Mugambi's is a proposal for a "proactive theology" (Mugambi 1995:xv; Dedji 2003:74). This proposal for a proactive theology is synonymous with a proposal for a public theology, hence, we reformulate Mugambi's project as such, a proposal for a public theology.

Mugambi, however, does not see the role that liberation theology can play in the reconstruction of Africa. The potential of liberation theology to be a public theology of its own kind is not taken into account by him. He welcomes the new order without looking at the ideology of the same new order. In other words he does not question the bourgeois public life that is fraught with the New World Order. Maluleke has raised this question too by pointing out that the "assumption that the end of the 'Cold War' has immediate significance for ordinary Africans and that the so-called 'New World Order' is truly 'new' and truly 'orderly' for Africans" (1997b:23) is just taken for granted by the project of reconstruction. How far will such an assumption go if the importance of ideology in theology that has been so eloquently demonstrated by Black Theology is taken into account? Mosala's legacy is a constant reminder about the inevitability of ideology in theology. Declaring assumptions and commitments is one cardinal lesson that Black Theology of liberation has hitherto emphasized.

Indeed, as we have already alluded above, for the past five hundred years Africa has been undergoing some kind of reconstruction. It is neither historically correct nor theologically precise to refrain from discerning the kind of reconstruction that has been at play. For some, Africa has been undergoing destruction for the five hundred years in its encounter with the European civilizations. The African core onto which reconstruction had to take place was being eroded, and Africa viewed as a virgin territory by the European colonizers. Developing slowly since 1652 Apartheid was ultimately declared a heresy as a pseudo-religious system. So, the reconstruction motif cannot be simplistically translated without taking these factors into account.

The dichotomy that is made between liberation and salvation causes concern at yet another level. We apprehensively concede the point made by Mugambi that there are divisions caused by the two camps of “liberation” and “salvation.” We, however, discount this dichotomy as not theologically valid as we have shown above. One of the arguments we must bring to this question is that dualisms and dichotomies in frames of thought have been influenced by the Greek thought patterns and modernity.

The African worldview is unitive and to fall into the trap of dividing Africans into camps is not authentic to their universe. It is important to understand that historically, there are similar distasteful dichotomies such as *Amakholwa* (believing ones) and *Amaqaba* (red-blanketed ones) which precipitated out of the Christianization of Africa. An analytical distinction between liberation and salvation is important.

We cannot however, turn a blind eye on the fact that such distinctions become pejorative when the worldviews that inspire them are not evaluated. Black Theology has advocated for the integration of the two, namely liberation and salvation. We contend that the project of reconstruction must take into account the world view of the Africans that is unitive. For public participation the comprehensive well being of the Africans is conditional.

Mugambi's failure to take ideology seriously reaches its lowest ebbs when he appeals to Francis Fukuyama without engaging him. He links his proactive theology to a particular ideology. "Fukuyamaism" is a triumphalist view of the success and domination of the capitalist order which claims that there is no alternative to capitalism and liberal democracy. Fukuyama argues that consensus concerning the legitimacy of democracy has emerged throughout the world (1994). He says " that liberal democracy may constitute the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the final form of human government, and as such constituted the end of history" (1994:xi). He argues that liberal democracy has conquered monarchy, fascism and communism. His understanding of history as "a single coherent evolutionary process" is crucial in our dialogue with Mugambi because it implies that having attained the end of history, there is no further progress in the development of principles and institutions. What then will reconstruction achieve? What kind of history does reconstruction advocate if capitalism and liberal democracy are said to have won?

Fukuyama says that “liberal democracy remains the only coherent political aspiration that spans different regions and cultures around the globe”(1992:xiii). We need to remember that Fukuyama’s scheme is Platonic to the core. One of the masters of the Greek patterns of thought we have alluded to above is Plato¹¹ who divided human beings into three: mind, body and soul. Following on Plato, Fukuyama predicates three parts of the soul, namely a reasoning part, a desiring part and a *thymos* part of the soul. Desire in human beings is controlled by this third part, the *thymos* part. At the helm of human actions is *thymotic* pride, a drive for recognition by human beings which explains their political, cultural, aesthetic and economic relations. According to Fukuyama, capitalism and liberal democracy satisfy this drive for recognition which could not be satisfied by communism, save in a flawed manner. In addition to this version of anthropology propounded by Fukuyama, his perspective of history is Hegelian, meaning that it is not materialistic as compared with Marxist historical materialism (1992:288). Furthermore, the religious undertones in Fukuyama’s thinking are important to note, such as, “the Gates of the Promised Land of Liberal Democracy;” “the Last Man” and others.

To return to Mugambi’s salvation-liberation dichotomy, the soteriological dimension of the reconstruction paradigm he attaches to Fukuyama sounds vastly enigmatic. The victory of human desire through capitalism and liberal democracy is symmetrically opposed to the kenotic victory of Jesus Christ. The design of the scheme is in direct opposite to the symbol of the Cross which demands the death of *thymotic* pride in favour of humility, selflessness and love, hence compassion for the salvation of humankind.

¹¹ We recall that in the Gospel According to John, the Gnostic elements portrayed to be in contestation with the salvific mission of Jesus Christ derive from Platonic categories. Salvation of the spirit as opposed to the salvation of the material is a notion that springs from these dichotomies.

That Fukuyamaism is redolent of the Right Doctrine Protestantism is so evident in that capitalism and liberal democracy do not only attain religious legitimation, but become a new religion in themselves to the Promised Land. The individualism that accompanies capitalism and liberal democracy is diametrically opposed to the African communal understanding of anthropology, let alone our Christian communal understanding of humanity.

Mugambi's appeal to Fukuyama is indicative of one of the serious flaws in the call he makes for reconstruction and not reconstruction *per se*. In our discussion of the current world order in the next chapters, we take this matter further. Suffice it to say that by appealing to Fukuyama, the call for reconstruction by Mugambi can easily become a flawed theological appeal for a particular ideological view of the world. Fukuyama does not respond to the expectations of the poor and the echoes of their culture.

The freedom it promises is the freedom we must be liberated from with the ecclesial symbols and culture of the oppressed shaping our reconstruction of public life in South Africa. We contend against the notion that "mankind has already reached the end of history" if reconstruction is a response to a new (*kainos*) and not recent (*neos*) thing that has happened. Our dialogue with Mugambi is intended to indicate that reconstruction must integrate with liberation in public life. In fact, if reconstruction is a kind of public theology in the new situation that has arisen, liberation should shape the design of that public theology.

4.3. The Exodus Motif

The motivation for reconstruction theology requires us to have a closer scrutiny of the Exodus motif. It is correct to argue that the Exodus paradigm has been a central and crucial metaphor in liberation theology. We need to examine the thesis (Villa-Vicencio 1999: 4; Mugambi 1995:13) that there is an exclusive dependence of liberation theology on the Exodus motif. Furthermore, as Dedji (2003:52-55) has aptly demonstrated, the obsolescence of the Exodus motif is supported by Michael Prior who demonstrates the exploitative and alienating aspects of the Exodus which contradict its popular use as a liberative motif. Dedji states that both Gutiérrez and Cone are charged for a partial reading of the Exodus motif by Michael Prior. It is thus crucial for us to examine the matter.

We bring to our dialogue a crucial contribution on the Exodus penned by Klaus Nürnberger (1999:20-61). Nürnberger argues that liberation theology in its elevation of the Exodus motif has a distinct focus, which distinguishes it from that of the conventional and Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical Schools that concentrate on concepts of covenant, law and grace. His thesis entails that “the Exodus motif did not play an emancipatory role, but rather defined the identity of the Israelites/Jews as the chosen people of God” (1999:20). While the liberative agenda should not be dismissed as immaterial for our context, Nürnberger suggests that “it only needs to be derived from another set of assumptions”(1999:20).

One of the central elements of the thesis propounded by Nürnberger is the notion of redemption. Redemption is central in clarifying the understanding of mission for Christians. God has a vision and from that vision follows God's mission. The question therefore is whether God saves souls for eternity or His salvation is meant to transform the oppressive social structures. Nürnberger thus poses a fascinating and penetrating question critically pertinent to the thrust of our dissertation:

The meaning of redemption again depends on the hermeneutical key to Scriptures. Is the "canon in the Canon" the justification of the sinner by grace accepted in faith, or is it the preferential option for the poor and oppressed? (1999:20).

We should allow Nürnberger to respond to the question before we engage him. He poses this question motivated by,

The apparent irrelevance of the Christian faith as a self-confessed redemptive project for the utmost urgent needs of humankind today: economic marginalization, ecological deterioration, population growth, the depletion of resources, the rise of conflict potential, increasingly destructive weapon systems, cultural dissolution, moral decay, religious relativity and spiritual anomie (1999:21).

Due to this apparent irrelevance of a self-confessed Christian project of redemption Nürnberger goes on to propose a four pronged soteriological scheme in the following manner:

- God's ultimate concern is the comprehensive well-being of all people in the context of the comprehensive well-being of their entire social and natural environments.
- God's immediate concern is any deficiency in comprehensive well-being, thus any need arising in any dimension of life.
- Transcendent needs (meaning, acceptability and authority) arise from immanent needs (psychological, physical, social, political, economic and ecological needs) and do not have an independent existence on their own.
- God's redemptive activity is mediated through earthly events and human agency (1999:21).

It will be very hard for us to dismiss this soteriological scheme. Stated otherwise, Nürnberger simply postulates that God's vision is the comprehensive well-being of humanity in every sphere of their existence, while his mission is to deal with deficiencies immediately impairing their sense of comprehensive well-being. Flowing from this, human understanding of God thus arises from concrete needs rendering God's redemption to be historical. This theory as postulated makes a lot of sense and our interest is to demonstrate how Nürnberger applies it with respect to the motif of the Exodus and its relationship with liberation. According to Nürnberger, Exodus is distinct from the Sinaitic *corpus* and did not play an emancipatory role, but rather defined the identity of the Israelites. It is to the covenant law tradition we need to accord prominence, as it is more fundamental to the Exodus-Conquest corpus. He presents a detailed account of this exegetical exercise and launches his critique of the liberation theological views on the Exodus motif.

One important aspect he raises is that the Exodus motif ceases to be a dominant paradigm in the Old Testament itself and does not also “leapfrog” into the New Testament. In fact, in the New Testament, the dominant paradigm is the Kingdom of God and not the Exodus, he argues. If identity was the deficient need that God was responding to in the Exodus Conquest, and not emancipation, according to Nürnberger, the fact that he problematized identity and its role in social cohesion logically follows. He avers that it is not only a Jewish problem, but a human problem to create in-group identity which results in numerous conflicts such as ethnicity, racism, tribalism etc. He then asserts that there is only one acceptable way, if we follow the New Testament, for outsiders to gain access to belonging to an in-group:

The New Testament introduced the fourth approach: unconditional suffering acceptance of the unacceptable. In Ephesians 2, for example, cosmic unity is made possible because God substitutes human achievement with divine grace as the basis of acceptance. Unconditional acceptance should not be confused with indifference. The ingroup is as convinced of its truth claim and as committed to its mission as ever. However, the right of all people to make sense of their world and conduct their lives in freedom of conscience is acknowledged. They are accepted and tolerated as they are. But due to differences and what is perceived to be the truth, such acceptance implies suffering of the other. Tolerance is derived from the Latin word *tolere* (bearing a burden). Suffering again produces the urge to overcome the causes of suffering. This means that unconditional acceptance brings about an intense struggle for the truth, as well as an intense desire to overcome evil. I believe that this is the authentically Christian way (1999:54).

This castigates “in-group” consciousness, and for us we should read Black Theology’s or liberation theology’s propensity to in-groups. This is quite closer to the point Dedji makes by appealing to Michael Prior about the alienating and dehumanizing strategies associated with the Exodus. The first implication therefore is that in-group identity can be castigated on the basis of the same Exodus motif it chooses as a theological paradigm, because it might exhibit the detrimental tendencies such as viewing others outside the group as the Pharaoh or the oppressed. This is because the Exodus is about the identity logic as opposed to the emancipatory one that was displayed by the Israelites. The solution is the “unconditional suffering acceptance of the unacceptable,” whose inspiration must be sought elsewhere and not in the Exodus paradigm. This is a product of grace (*charis*) which we freely achieve from God. Nürnberger castigates other forms of liberation associated with individualism, utilitarianism and hedonism on the same basis.

4.3.1. Critique

First, we accept Nürnberger’s argument that identity and not liberation should be associated with the Exodus motif. We concede that his argument is a solid one against an uncritical association of the Exodus with the revolutionary memory of the Israelites. In our view he does not in essence repudiate the paradigm of liberation as he states that there are other paradigms in the Bible which must be used to pursue the liberation paradigm.

The strength of his argument emanates from the fact that he executes his position exegetically by digging deep into the Exodus corpus to expose its inadequate association with emancipation and by this very fact, liberation. It is much more than a metaphorical and symbolic conversation with the Exodus, but a conscious engagement of the historicity of the Exodus corpus he offers in his argument. We also concede the point about the alienating and dehumanizing tendencies in the Exodus as Dedji has also argued.

Second, that there is a tendency of the liberation paradigm to emphasize liberation and ignore the significance of the identity need for Israel cannot be rejected. This might imply insensitivity to the situation of Israelite oppression. This is crucial, as the issue of identity is central to our public discourse in South Africa today. That he is also careful about the danger of in-group identity, which is not compatible with the liberation vision is pivotal, hence his proposal for a vision of inclusion through the notion of “unconditional suffering acceptance of the unacceptable.”

Third, we have employed his soteriological proposition in the previous chapter and did the same in this current discussion. His soteriological view is concrete. We can safely surmise that he does not reject the liberation paradigm, but actually applies it as indeed his proposition of unconditional suffering acceptance falls lock stock and barrel within the paradigm of liberation which privileges the plight of the suffering. So far we are in full agreement with Nürnberger and welcome his valid and cogent critique which cannot be overlooked by any serious exponent of liberation. This is the reason why we have brought his views to the fore.

Villa-Vicencio and Mugambi simply make a call to depart from the Exodus, but do not engage the Exodus motif to the extent that Nurnberger does. In the case of Dedji, it is Michael Prior and not Mugambi who critiques Gutiérrez and Cone.

Fourth, we need to engage the purpose for which Nürnbergger explored the Exodus motif, in the light of his clear conclusion that the Exodus did not play the emancipatory role, but rather defined the identity of the Israelites/Jews. This is important, because he explicitly states that his conclusion does not imply that the liberative agenda must be dismissed as immaterial. In doing so we shall be able to clear the ground for what might sound confounding in our dialogue with Nürnbergger given our noted convergences. He (1999: 20-22) explains his aim restated and reformulated in the following concise manner as:

- 1) To deal with the thrust of redemption that is vital for our understanding of God's mission. The problem here is whether God's mission is purposed for saving souls or transforming oppressive structures.
- 2) To find a biblically based soteriology of our times. In this regard, the Exodus is one of the central biblical paradigms of soteriology. The problem is that its interpretation and use vary widely.

The assertion we address is that if the Exodus becomes eclipsed by other paradigms, while it in itself constitutes an anchor for the biblical inspiration of the liberation paradigm, then the liberation paradigm must be eclipsed and be found somewhere else. The question that the liberation paradigm must be eclipsed is not however, proposed by Nürnbergger, but by Villa-Vicencio and Mugambi.

Our problem is that the call for a departure from the Exodus motif can be justified on the basis of the arguments advanced by Nürnberger, especially the fact that it is not liberation, but identity that is central to the Exodus motif. Similarly, the charge that the liberation icons Gutiérrez and Cone present a partial reading of the Exodus which conceals the alienating and dehumanizing aspects of the corpus can exacerbate the call to jettison the Exodus as a Biblical liberative motif. The convergence or tacit agreement between Nürnberger, Villa-Vicencio and Mugambi rests at this place, hence the pertinence of our dialogue with Nürnberger.

We contend that even though the Exodus motif does not have anything to do with the liberation motif, and does not re-appear in the New Testament, as Nürnberger states, the liberation motif is part and parcel of other Biblical motifs. Surely this is what Nürnberger suggests. If the post-exilic corpus is compatible with liberation does this not implicitly conjure the plausibility of the liberation *leitmotif* being applicable to all biblical paradigms? Our response is in the affirmative. We argue that while it is correct that the Exodus has been central to liberation theologies, other paradigms such as the creation motif and the Kingdom of God have equally been used as vigorously as the Exodus motif. In fact, Cone, employed Luke, as we indicated, as a liberatory Creed of Black Theology. The prophetic trajectory in the Old Testament has been poignantly used as a vital resource in Prophetic Theology and thus, the liberation paradigm. The fragmental view of Biblical paradigms is not normative for Black Theology of liberation and liberation theologies. The assumption that one section of the Bible or paradigm suits the liberative paradigm is a charge that mostly comes from outside.

The internal debates on the matter are often omitted or disparagingly excluded in these critiques. This is true of Nürnberger too. It raises a lot of curiosity that he does not specify any Black theologians in particular, who have employed the motif in his conversation so as to demonstrate specific flaws in their use of the Exodus motif. Dedji records that Prior does specify Gutiérrez and Cone as we have stated. For us this is important, taking into account the fact that here is a tendency among white South African theologians to develop a liberative perspective by focusing “elsewhere” at the exclusion of Black Theology of liberation.¹²

If the Exodus motif itself were not capable of making necessary connections with other paradigms in the Bible or “canons outside the Cannon” (tradition), the canon of grace is itself not in the Old Testament in the same way as the Exodus motif is not in the New Testament.¹³ This is said in the light of the assertion made by Nürnberger that liberation theology elevates the Exodus motif, while conventional Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical schools concentrate on issues surrounding covenant, law and grace (1999:20). Nürnberger’s solution of “unconditional suffering acceptance of the unacceptable” is based on grace as he explicitly says, “God substitutes human achievement with divine grace as the basis of acceptance.” The question is how is the notion of grace related to the Exodus if identity is the central question of this corpus?

¹² We have cited Kritzing (1990) in the previous chapter to make this point.

¹³ Recently in the Porto Alegre 2004, Otto Madurra in our working group openly expressed his ignorance of the notion of grace. In fact one scholar, a Brazilian, but originally from Korea who attempted to use the concept of grace in articulating liberation theology found it hard to respond to the plenary in a convincing way when asked to explain the reason why “grace” has not produced any grace in the Protestant churches of European origin in the context of suffering.

If grace is found in the Exodus even if the Exodus motif is centered on identity, then liberation can be found in the Exodus. The word “conventional” used by Nürnberger also needs to be challenged. It smacks of orthodoxy. In other words grace, as an orthodox convention is punted as the hermeneutical key of the Exodus. Ironically, the same use of liberation as a convention is repudiated without engaging both conventions of grace and liberation. If liberation and grace are both understood as conventions, whose convention must be accorded an elevated hermeneutical position? We do not leave these questions unanswered. Conventions are not devoid of presuppositions arising out of a particular worldview. In the same manner, they are not devoid of ideological taints. Cognizance of this fact is absent in the taken-for-granted conventional views propounded by Nürnberger.

At another level we must ask: what is the inspiration behind this exegesis? The question of identity in Black Theology of liberation is important. Liberation inspiration derives from the questions – deep questions of faith from the underside of history. In other words the question of the identity of the Israelites/Jews should be identified with the *praxis* of the poor not Protestant conventions invented in Europe such as “grace,” mostly used to exclude and not include the subaltern cultures.¹⁴

¹⁴ We need to state that we are not against the doctrine of grace *per se*. We however, bring it out as an uncritical subliminal text by Nürnberger. That he is able to appropriate the Exodus to conventions of grace, law and covenant, but appropriates liberation to an amorphous “elsewhere” is problematic. Liberation is linked with the preferential option of the poor. In his stated motive for the project of which the article in question is part, he omits this important question of the preferential option of the poor in the list of “most urgent needs of human kind today” (1999:21). Such urgent needs in our view need to be “identified” with the poor.

Nadar (2003), challenging the historical critical method of biblical interpretation, argues that the community that is placed before the text is an important dimension for liberating the text. About this matter Nadar says:

I submit therefore, that it is irresponsible for the Biblical scholar to ignore such readers since there is overwhelming evidence of the pivotal role the Bible plays in most communities of faith, particularly the working class (though not only the working class). In other words, I am arguing that the Biblical scholar who claims to be committed to liberation has to take into account the communities of faith who interpret the Bible and the way in which their interpretations either liberate or oppress them (2003:3).

We contend that a reading that is committed to liberation will be inspired by the communities of faith that interpret the Bible in pursuit of their liberation and freedom. Nürnberger's exegetical argument should take into account the manner in which the Biblical motif of Exodus identifies with the oppressed notwithstanding his valid critique. In short, the soteriological value of the Exodus motif is not denied because the deficiency of identity fits the paradigm of salvation he has offered with which we generally agree. It is logical therefore that as a soteriological paradigm, the Exodus motif can be identified with the soteriological vision of liberation and Black Theology of liberation. Yes, if grace is the basis of unconditional suffering acceptance of the unacceptable, we contend that liberation is the basis for unconditional suffering acceptance of the unacceptable. This is through identifying grace with the oppressed in line with the dictum of the preferential option of the poor.

In the discussion of the question of black identity, the concept of blackness to be specific, Boesak (1976:29) argued that “blacks look beyond the limitations of oppression and inhumanity to see the open possibilities of reconciliation and genuine community. This is grace and as such it can never be cheap.”

But the exegesis offered by Nürnberger is not the last word. Here is another exegetical view (Jacob 1998:380), to uphold the principle of *audi alter partem*:

The argument of Latin American and Black Theologians is that the basic message of the bible is liberation - total liberation. And they argue this using the Exodus as a paradigm for interpreting the Old Testament, and using the notions of Incarnation and the Kingdom of God to support their claims. Biblical criticism has shown that they are not incorrect to suggest that the Exodus conditions the Old Testament kerygma.

Such leading Old Testament scholars as Martin North, Claus Westermann, B S Childs, Ronald Clements, and Alan Cole agree that the Old Testament traditions have been edited in such a way that the Exodus forms the interpretative paradigm. North has suggested that the “guidance out of Egypt” is a primary and common confession of old Israel, the kernel of the whole subsequent Pentateuch tradition. Westermann suggested the first fourteen chapters of the Book of Exodus represent the “original promise determinative for the whole Bible” and Brevard S Childs reflecting on the Passover and Exodus emphasizes the political aspect of this event and its impact on the Biblical tradition.

He goes on as follows:

God's redemption is not simply a political liberation from an Egyptian tyrant, but involves the struggle with sin and evil, and the transformation of life...In spite of its ambiguity, the political overtones of Israel's deliverance are part of the whole biblical message...Liberation was achieved when God overcame the powers of evil in a struggle and invited his people joyfully to share in the event.

Our approach is not to implode the exegetical integrity of Nürnberger's work, nor is it to engage in another exegetical exercise. It is his exegetical approach that analytically divides the Exodus-conquest tradition from the Sinai tradition we elicit as our interlocutor. Nürnberger provides more than convincing evidence in his treatment of the Exodus narrative in its overall context. He argues that the Sinai complex is widely regarded as an originally independent cluster of traditions and that it is a soteriological paradigm of its own. For this reason it is distinct and independent of the Exodus-Conquest tradition (1999:23).

According to this therefore, the Sinai complex is more fundamental to the Jewish faith than the Exodus-Conquest tradition. In other words the Exodus-Conquest tradition is interpreted from the point of view of Sinai. We do not find this problematic at all. We do not also question the fresh insights it provides for the understanding of the nuances of the narrative as a whole. It is this statement, according to which the liberation *kerygma* must be apparently abandoned that we find excessively problematic:

The immanent structure to which (*Sinai*) responds centres not on political freedom (exodus) and economic sufficiency (land), but on a social contract (covenant and law).

The transcendent need to which (*Sinai*) it responds is that of one's right of existence, acceptability, or justification. In theological terms it formulates the foundational relationship between Yahweh and Israel, while exodus and conquest are concrete manifestations of God's commitment to this relationship. This insight is important for an assessment of the current standoff between liberation theologies and atonement centred soteriologies in the Christian fold (1999:22).¹⁵

Let us mark the analytical designations of “transcendent” and “immanent” in the quotation above. We have the full quotation of the soteriological scheme at the beginning of this section on the Exodus motif. The liberation nomenclature of “vertical” and “horizontal” dimensions of theology should come to mind here. Transcendent (vertical) needs and immanent (horizontal) needs do not have an independent existence of their own, Nürnberger has rightly asserted. Logically, there cannot be an independent existence of the Sinai and Exodus in spite of their differences. To our dismay this is what Nürnberger's interpretation suggests. Emphasis is laid on the independence of Sinai from Exodus. It is easy to demonstrate this. Accordingly, Sinai responds to the horizontal need of social contract (covenant and law) and the vertical need of meaning (acceptability or justification).

The question is: What is the interdependence between “social contract” and “meaning” because transcendent (vertical) and immanent (horizontal) needs cannot have an independent existence of their own?

¹⁵ Italics are ours.

In other words, how can political freedom and economic sufficiency (exodus) have an independent existence from social contract (covenant and law)? Is the foundational theological relationship between Yahweh and Israel independent of the concrete manifestations of God's commitment to this relationship? Furthermore, how is liberation independent of atonement? Is the soteriology of liberation devoid of atonement? The space between the Sinai complex and the Exodus-Conquest tradition cannot be a vacuum. The bridge for us is liberation. This is what the alternative reading we have provided from Jacob suggests for us, that the Exodus and certainly not to the exclusion of Sinai, conditions the Old Testament *kerygma*. The kind of "clinical" division Nürnberger makes between Exodus and Sinai complexes is rather pushed too far as Sinai would not have been reached without Exodus.¹⁶ The fragmental approach he espouses leads him to make a dichotomous distinction between nomads and born slaves (1999:27). He makes this distinction to assert that Israelites who were in Egypt were not born slaves, but were nomads culturally. Here the problem is the interdependence of identity and freedom that is obviated.

We insist that there are no born slaves including those who are born into slavery. Hence, the dichotomy between the transcendent need of identity and the horizontal need of political freedom is misnomer. To argue that nomads left Egypt because of the need for their identity due to "conflict that was built into the system," implies that departing from conflict is an act of liberation.

¹⁶ For example, in our African value system, when a snake bites a person in the fields and the person dies or survives, the experience does not become extricated from how the person left home before going to the fields. The event of salvation or death is not abstracted from home. Yes, analytical division is important. Fragmentation of events we reject.

To dichotomize the soteriological paradigm of Sinai from the soteriological paradigm of the Exodus-Conquest paradigm is theologically incorrect. This does not mean that they should also be conflated to disregard their distinctiveness. There is no evidence that Black Theology has conflated the two in its reading. How is social contract independent of political freedom? In his own thesis vertical and horizontal needs are not mutually exclusive. The liberation paradigm cannot be excluded on the pretext that Sinai is central to the faith of the Jews and does not entail political freedom but identity, no matter how valid the distinction is exegetically. It is hard to accept this when Exodus itself is not denuded of the immanent need of political freedom.

Moreover, the terms “social contract,” “covenant” and “law” are contested, yet they remain Nürnberger’s panacea in disqualifying the pertinence of liberation in the Exodus narrative in its overall context. We deal with the question of covenant extensively in the next chapter. Suffice it to say that “covenant” includes land, people, faith, work and God (Everett 1988b). In the New Testament use of covenant some of the components of the Old Testament concept of covenant are eclipsed. The Old Testament including the Exodus and Sinai traditions is needed to give content to a full, comprehensive concept of covenant. Liberation is this covenant, we have already argued. The canon in the Canon is liberation for us.

In conclusion, the problem is not exegetical but hermeneutical in our view. It is not hermeneutically tenable to exclude the liberation paradigm from the Exodus motif because identity is a liberation theme.

Is it not also hermeneutically tenable to exclude liberation from Sinai if liberation mediates and “kerygmatises” the relationship between God and his people. The strength of Nürnberger’s critique is exegetical, but the same exegetical strength can empower liberation instead of disempowering it by using the Exodus narrative in a *Gestalt* of liberation theology. The weakness of Nürnberger’s argument lies in the hermeneutical prognosis he offers, which is anchored on orthodox conventional categories that cannot inhibit the liberation paradigm from employing his exegetical work. On the whole, the view that the liberation paradigm must be abandoned in favour of the reconstruction paradigm is not accepted.

Such a charge cannot omit Mosala’s¹⁷ legacy, not even to mention the latter’s consciousness of the danger of reading Biblical texts uncritically as they may prey to the ruling classes, thereby maintaining the *status quo*. It is therefore unfair to subject the liberation paradigm to this critique when there is a sound awareness of the need to go behind the text in Black Biblical hermeneutics of liberation. We must also state that Dedji’s point regarding Prior’s caution against a partial reading of the Exodus is not ground-breaking as Mosala has long ago cautioned against the uncritical use of the Biblical text.¹⁸

¹⁷ We are aware of the fact that Mosala is now in government with many others like Chikane. The problem of Church-State relations is given attention in the last chapter of this work. In our view, it is simplistic to simply regard those that are in government and operating in power as being incapable to be agents of transformation. Most profoundly, the tradition of liberation is bigger than any individual and Mosala’s legacy is a profound contribution to Black hermeneutics.

¹⁸ Mosala ((1989) uses Boesak’s interpretation of the story of Cain and Abel to demonstrate the danger of appropriating Biblical texts that can equally be used to perpetuate oppression and alienation in his argument for the development of Black Biblical hermeneutics.

To find a biblically based soteriology and accepting the Exodus as one of the central Biblical paradigms of soteriology, black hermeneutics will respond to the problem of its interpretation and widely varied use in favour of the oppressed. The comprehensive soteriological view espoused by Nürnberger is linked to a specific interlocutor. The premise of the liberation paradigm is an all-encompassing, emancipatory message of the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a paradigm shift from orthodox theology. Villa-Vicencio and Mugambi fail to sustain this liberation paradigm in that they point to an alternative “elsewhere” and Biblical motif respectively, without extrapolating alternative liberative potentialities. Mugambi simply makes no effort to demonstrate the inadequacy of the Exodus paradigm. Reconstruction as a theme is not alien to the precepts of liberation necessarily. So is the Exodus and its prong of covenant. Yet the proponents of reconstruction must be congratulated for having made a contribution for new innovations that are necessary in our new situation. They have even inspired this work and the theme of reconstruction could not be easily omitted by liberation theology including Black Theology.

4.3.2. An Addendum on our Critique of Mugambi

Mugambi reviewed his earlier thoughts on the reconstruction motif in a later publication (2003). There is a huge difference between the 1995 project of reconstruction and the revised version that attempts to respond to a host of criticisms leveled against his initial call. While Mugambi makes important concessions in his revised work, his conversation with the liberation paradigm is still truncated in our view.

The fact that he views liberation as a theme for Christian theological reflection is one among other factors that accounts for the inadequacy of his call for reconstruction (1995:2) in our view.

First, the fulcrum of our conversation will be on his discussion on theological method. Mugambi makes a distinction between deductive and inductive methods in theology. He critiques Christian theology on the whole by making a comparison between inductive and deductive methods. The thread of his argument as we assess it is that liberation is an inductive anthropological theological discourse. He says :

In the *deductive method*, theologians discern the relevance to contemporary Christianity, of doctrines formulated in the early Church. The *inductive method* concentrates on the implications of the Gospel for the challenges facing the society in a particular social setting, at a particular time in history. The method that one chooses greatly influences the results that one may expect (2003:2).

Mugambi argues that the inductive method proceeds from the perspective of the believers or the respondents of the Gospel and argues that African theological anthropology, which focused *inter alia* on themes of liberation, gender and poverty is inductive as it responds to the Western Christian missionary enterprise. African theological anthropology is brought to bear on the perceived anthropological disequilibrium between the missionary and the African convert. Mugambi says that ultimately theological anthropology is not adequate and this is the basis for his call for a departure from liberation to reconstruction. Mugambi argues for method as a framework of collaborative activity.

He draws from Benard Lonergan who sees method not as a set of rules, but a framework for collaborative activity. Reconstruction is the most appropriate inductive approach that takes the context of the local people seriously, Mugambi avers (2003:25). Following this, reconstruction is theological introspection that calls for the cultural foundations of African theological thought. Culture is important as the foundation on which an African theological system can be built, he argues. Reconstruction is a call for an introspective and self-critical approach in African Christianity. He says that the Theology of Reconstruction is introspective in the sense that it takes off from the foundations laid by those who struggled for liberation in the preceding era and builds on a new consciousness that looks to the future with hope (2003:30). He takes issue with the dialectical method that dominantly informed the method of liberation (2003:165). He avers that liberation theology lost steam after the trial of Leonardo Boff and became a frustrated revolution because it did not involve the ordinary people (2003:148). Mugambi argues that the metaphor of the Exodus as a stance of liberation becomes obsolete in the “liberated zones.” Liberation does not fulfill the inductive approach that the reconstruction metaphor accords African Christian theology to the extent that African Christian theology needs to be rooted in African culture. He says:

Liberation and inculturation, as themes in African theological anthropology, will therefore be useful in laying foundations for an authentic African Christian theology only to the extent that they offer a critique of the role of social dynamics in the creation of ecclesial identity. So far, theological discourse on these themes in Africa has focused on overt action – liberation has focused on war against the oppressor, and inculturation has focused on domesticating the missionary brands of Christianity in Africa (2003:6).

Mugambi reiterates that the end of the cold war is the beginning of a new era in which African scholars could begin to reflect self-critically and introspectively without being branded with one or other label in the ideological contestations that characterized the cold war. Our point here is that Mugambi raises method to demonstrate the binary pitfalls of the liberation method.

Second, it is in his treatment of liberation and reconstruction as consecutive processes that his methodological differentiation between liberation and reconstruction attains some clarity. He seeks to explain how reconstruction can be distinguished from liberation (2003:61). He states that liberation and reconstruction are consecutive processes and that they are not mutually exclusive. Mugambi, having argued that liberation and reconstruction are consecutive processes, goes on to assert that reconstruction is inhibited by perpetuating a stance of liberation. In the liberation stance all efforts will always be directed to fighting the oppressor. Reconstruction, however, assumes that the struggle has been won and the effort is directed towards building a new society (2003:74). This point is crucial for us because Mugambi qualifies it in the following manner:

When partial liberation is achieved, part of the community's effort is directed towards reconstruction in the liberated zone, while the rest is directed towards liberation on the frontline (2003:74).

This point resonates with our thesis particularly the notion of “liberated zones.” We have conceded in this work that doing theology in the context of a legitimate state and the demise of Apartheid requires a change of mode from a polemical one. We agree that liberation has contours or zones as Mugambi puts it. Within the acquired liberated zone, it is the struggle for expression and the practice of liberation that should gain *agentive* vitality, while the rest of the struggle is directed towards liberation on the frontiers i.e. the frontline according to Mugambi. One of the progressive endeavours Mugambi makes with respect to reconstruction is that it is an “introspective approach” of theology. The motivation of reconstruction he argues, is an introspective approach to theology that requires “the re-casting of our thinking from the static to dynamic modes of thought, allowing ourselves to be changed by the circumstances in which we work, while we endeavour to influence those circumstances in turn” (2003:27).

This introspective approach is predicated on transforming the world and changing the status quo by harnessing and affirming our own experience, understanding, and knowledge. The task of Reconstruction is multi-disciplinary and requires the input of all members of the community to direct their energy and resources to rebuilding, vigilantly safeguarding the liberated zone. Reconstruction is the re-orientation of the strategies from fighting to rebuilding after the achievement of liberation (2003:74).

The following contrast between the pedagogies of Liberation and Reconstruction by Mugambi (2003:75) is vital for our conversation:

Pedagogy of Liberation

Concentration on war

Pedagogy of Reconstruction

Concentration on peace

Focus on the oppressor	Focus on the liberated agent
The oppressed as subjects	The liberated as subjects
The oppressor as the centre of power	The liberated as centre of power
Emphasis on destruction	Emphasis on rebuilding
Industry of weapons	Industry of implements and tools
Regimentation	Decentralization
Central command	Personal initiative
Hierarchical leadership	Horizontal leadership
Competition	Cooperation

Mugambi says that this contrast is neither exhaustive nor definitive more than pointing to the necessary re-orientation of strategies.

In empathy with Mugambi, we shall not implode the attempt to make the contrast save to warn that while it is useful as an illuminating endeavour, it nonetheless borders on the danger of dislocating liberation from reconstruction by making sharp dichotomies. It may defy the logic that Mugambi has asserted which entails that reconstruction follows liberation. It is questionable too as to whether certain elements of the Pedagogy of Liberation are presented with precision. For example, it is arguable that the focus of liberation is on the oppressor rather than the oppressed, the non-person. It is equally arguable that liberation fosters hierarchical leadership as Boff's *Ecclesiogenesis* is a masterpiece of the liberation challenge directed to hierarchical ecclesial structures, let alone the preponderance of Base Communities in Latin America.

Furthermore, it needs to be stated that the dialectical method is not representative of the whole of liberation theology. We have indicated this in our discussion of the phases of Black Theology of liberation. Most potently, Pityana's work (1995) is an attempt to construct a theological method in the Southern African transition and gives a *praxiological* method of contextualization a high premium, clearly inductive a method of doing theology in Mugambi's own explanation. We are also uneasy with his simplistic manner of comparison, because mediation as explained through the liberation paradigm and expressed in the notion of the hermeneutical circle cannot be equated with dialectics. Mugambi's argument, therefore, downplays a continuum he attempts to suggest in presenting reconstruction as a consecutive process to liberation. Kritzing (2002:19) portrays a continuum of the liberationist approach in this bulleted manner:

Liberationist/Activist

- Gaining credibility for the gospel locally
- Worldwide communal, structural emphasis
- Conscientization re justice
- Empowerment for transformation
- Prophetic confrontation
- This-worldly

Our point is that the notion of consecutiveness of liberation and reconstruction is promising and courageous, but the arguments and contrast made are hardly convincing. The argument of method is attractive. For us though, liberation is analectic and not dialectic as such.

Third, against the use of the Exodus, Mugambi says “when a social metaphor loses its cohesive value it loses its efficacy too and thus its usefulness as an ideological tool for social mobilization” (2003:169). He argues that the New Testament is “a monument of Reconstruction,” the Old Testament texts playing a role to reinforce reconstruction (2003:127). As a metaphor, reconstruction entails that the New Testament is a collection of reconstructive texts, Jesus being the leader of the movement of social reconstruction. The Gospel becomes a message of hope whereby reconstruction guides local innovators and implementers away from expatriate promptings and sponsors. Reconstruction in this manner plays a role in shaping social consciousness. In our view Exodus is not a social metaphor, but a Biblical one. Again our problem is precision, even though we empathize with the point that is being made about reconstruction.

Fourth, Mugambi further laments the advent of globalization and states that the synchronization of Africa with the economy of the free market should be brought under theological scrutiny (2003:7). In the same manner, Mugambi reiterates, the process of democratization must also be scrutinized. He argues that before the end of the Cold War rich nations favoured autocratization and supported autocratic regimes that served their interests. Mugambi argues that critical evaluation of the campaign for democratization is imperative as there is ample evidence to show that the support for democratization has more to do with economic and strategic interests of the Euro-American agenda in the post Cold War era (2003:9). Mugambi now insists that reconstruction should be a new paradigm of struggle against the Bretton Woods institutions.

In this sense the contours of liberation become clear, meaning that Mugambi identifies “un-liberated” zones in the reconstruction paradigm, hence, it attains a liberative dimension we have argued for in this work.

Fifth, Mugambi revisits the question of liberation and salvation and maintains that there is a connection between spiritual emancipation and the processes of liberation and reconstruction. He argues that wholeness of life is both a spiritual and socio-political question. He appropriates reconstruction as a movement led by Moses (2003:68) and maintains that without the inner spiritual motivation, there can hardly be any movement of liberation or reconstruction. He argues that Moses becomes spiritually emancipated when he encounters God at the burning bush. By the same token, Nehemiah becomes spiritually emancipated when he encounters God through the cries of his people. He (2003:68) says:

Theologically, the conversion experiences of Moses, Nehemiah and Paul are very instructive for the process of Liberation and Reconstruction. Moses reconstructs the collective consciousness of his people, and gives them courage to defy Pharaoh and proceed to the wilderness. In similar manner, Nehemiah reconstructs the collective consciousness of the disenfranchised people, and gives them hope to rebuild their society. Paul after conversion uses the same pre-conversion zeal to build the Church, and within a few years there are Christian communities throughout the Mediterranean region. Thus there is an intimate connection between spiritual emancipation and the processes of Liberation and Reconstruction.

The point asserted by Mugambi is that spiritual emancipation resonates with socio-political liberation. Last, it is interesting to note that Mugambi concedes that inculturation is not an alternative to liberation. He says that “as an aspect of liberation, inculturation is indispensable” (2003:72). While the process of liberation is incomplete without inculturation, inculturation does not necessarily yield to liberation, Mugambi maintains. “Cultural liberation is a sub-set of total liberation” Mugambi avers (2003:73).

We need to conclude this section by bringing Valentin Dedji (2003) in this conversation. His approach of reconstruction emanates from his conviction that the *raison d’etre* of African theologies is a search for new patterns of thought and approaches that will enable the deconstruction of Western forms of thought. Dedji (2003:2) is sensitive to the past achievements and failures of African Christian Theology and argues that reconstruction is about the African reality, while African Christian Theology is about the deconstruction of Western thought in Christian theology. Dedji’s Theology of reconstruction is based on two theses. First, he argues for a justice conscious culture. He sees reconstruction as a call for a shift from dichotomies. The overall evaluation of Mugambi’s reconstruction theology by Dedji is that Mugambi needs to be credited for his ecumenical vision in his proposal for reconstruction. Second, he sees reconstruction as a proposal for a proactive theology and here we make our connection with the assertion we have made namely that it is a proposal for public theology.

Our approach has been mainly on how Mugambi converses with liberation. As an introspective theology he seems to have focused on the reasons why liberation is no longer adequate. In doing so he degraded liberation to a level of a theme and not a paradigm. We concur with Dedji that a paradigm shift involves a fundamental transformation of concepts, methods and criteria, vocabulary and overall perspectives. Dedji cautions though that paradigm theory may foster relativism as there are really no ultimate norms and values higher than the assent of the relevant community. Our critique of Mugambi is that he does not adequately engage the concepts, methods, criteria, vocabulary and overall perspectives of liberation as a governing symbol of theology. Secondly, reconstruction having gained assent within the community of African theologians cannot be separated from liberation. The simple reason is that liberation is an acquisition of great assent by exponents of liberation and is not imposed from outside this paradigm of theology.

We also need to make a general note about the theology of reconstruction which is a permeating problem. African reality is not a paradigm. The question is what is the paradigm in which different African realities find synthetic theological interpretation? Anthropological pauperization gives Africa its theological agenda. This has created a need for a radical break in epistemology. We conclude by asserting our position in resonance with Duchrow & Hinkelammer (2004:157)

There is no neutral place for knowledge, ethics and action, along the lines of neutral scholarship. In every situation people are faced with the decision either to adopt the stance of the status quo or a critical, constructive position of liberation.

This would mean checking out what is compatible with life for all and the good of all (biblically speaking, the will of God –Rom. 12”If). It is precisely this approach which proponents of liberation theology try to bring out in the interdisciplinary exchange with economics, social sciences and philosophy. They do this both theoretically and practically against the backdrop of capitalist history and with an eye to the future of life on this planet.

4.4. Liberative Reconstruction: An Addendum to Black Theology

Liberative reconstruction is not our original term, but a product of a collective exercise on the continent in response to the proposal of reconstruction. We agree with this designation to include the reconstruction motif as an addendum to the agenda of Black Theology of liberation. It is in the spirit of the 2002 Conference on Theological Education and Ecumenical Formation held in South Africa. Within the same spirit, Emmanuel Martey (2005) discusses Reconstruction and Developmental initiatives by drawing our attention to the New Partnership for African’s Development (NEPAD) plan. He acknowledges that the NEPAD vision is an initiative of African Political leaders who have espoused the spirit of the Renaissance and therefore committed themselves to the eradication of poverty. About this he says (2005:8)

Presenting itself as a visionary and dynamic initiative seeking to reconstruct and develop the continent, NEPAD condemns the logic of credit and aid binomial that has underlined

African development efforts. This is an abnormal situation and there is the need for its reversal. It cautions against the continued marginalization of Africa from the globalizing process; and says, this constitutes a serious threat to global stability.

This plan in spite of its weaknesses has been hailed by both ecclesial and theological communities.¹⁹ NEPAD is a plan of reconstruction and development. It provides a new task for the church in a new global order and thus the world systems that have continued to impact negatively on Africa. The spirit is that of protest by Africans who “will no longer allow themselves to be conditioned by circumstances. We will determine our destiny and call on the rest of the world to complement our efforts” (Martey 2005: 8).

It is this spirit of protest that characterizes the liberative dimension of reconstruction and development. It is a refusal to accept the current world situation and to engage in full agency in reconstructing not only the African continent but the world itself.

Liberative reconstruction refuses to accept the current order of the world as the end of history. Kobia addressing the South African Council of Churches argued that NEPAD must encourage the current African leadership to reconstruct Africa from below (2003:6).

¹⁹ For instance in South Africa, under the auspices of the South African Council of Churches and under the Presidency of Bishop Dandala, a discussion on the NEPAD plan ensued and a number of responses were made which did not reject NEPAD *in toto*.

4.4.1. Change Analysis: Discerning the signs of the times

One of the tenets of liberative reconstruction is that of acknowledged change and thus the responsibility to discern the signs of the times. That the situation in the world changed was long acknowledged by Black Theologians, even though admittedly, very little was demonstrated in this regard. Maluleke's (1995a) conversation with Motlhabi is an example of the internal discourse on the evaluation of change and its implications for Black Theology of liberation.

Since this expressive interest to create a new South Africa, a number of suggestions have been made for theology to seek better ways of engaging in this context. Black theologians themselves began to sound alarms for the need to move away from the "oppositional mould," (Tlhagale 1993) to re-contextualize or engage in the process of "re-contextualization" (Khabela 1995) to signify a trans-historical process in the act of theological reflection. Indeed Khabela (1995:3) defines theology or theological reflection as "a traveler on the roadside with history alongside with God." The catalyst for theology, in accordance with the norms of liberation theology is the community in the struggle for authentic humanity. In this sense ecclesiology is a pilgrim straddling in history, merging together varied communities past and present out of which faith embraces claims and counter claims which then yield main clues to the task of the theological hermeneutical method.

These communities are assemblies, *iimanyano*²⁰, gatherings of the faithful. One of the key liturgical symbols of *iimanyano* is the notion of *invuselelo* meaning revival. This is a liturgical-ecclesiological symbol of renewal and reconstruction which we shall harness and explore in the next chapter. To revert to our metaphor of a journey of ecclesiology, *invuselelo* is a symbolic profession of reviving past communities in the present to embrace faith claims and counter claims for the task of the theological hermeneutical method. *Invuselelo* is *anamnetic praxis* of past and present communities straddling in history.

Our submission is that in this journey, some are left along the margins in the struggle for an authentic humanity. The struggle to merge faith claims and counter claims of the past and the present is a crucial task for theology. So, as the way is charted some are marginalized, others survive and revive and it is the task of theology to reflect on this as well. In every moment of history there will be echoes of change to which a liberative response to the need to organize the structure, scope and intensions of theology arises. Maluleke appears to have been the most cautious by vigilantly warning against an uncritical response to the changed situation (1995a:4). One work that has confronted change seriously is Jacob's (1994). He has devoted ample space in critically evaluating Black and Latin American Christologies with the view to formulating a relevant perspective for the current situation.

²⁰ *Iimanyano* is plural for what is designated as Church Association mostly in the so-called mainline churches. Women's *manyano*, men's *manyano* or *Amadodana* are common designations.

The important point he makes is that Black resistance has been influenced by African nationalism and Black Consciousness, while South Africa was in isolation from the international community to which it suddenly found itself exposed at the dawn of democracy. He asserts: “what is clear is that the mere repletion of previous theological positions will not do” in the transition. Jacob reckons that there is a sense in which we were confessional in the struggle for liberation. In other words, the liberation paradigm depended on certain Christian doctrines. When he evaluates the statements made by the Church in the struggle for liberation he finds most of them to have been Trinitarian.

Themes of Creation and Salvation he avers were central to the protest mode of theology. Jacob then moves on to suggest the limitations of this approach by making a claim that confession or apologia plays itself out to orthodoxy. One good example is the case we have made about the Exodus motif, particularly Nürnberger’s appeal to notions such as grace. In this confessional mode, principles become positive, but the theological mode becomes negative or polemical. Again, as indicated by the case study we have presented on the Exodus motif, a notion such as covenant attains a polemical mode if it is to be adopted as a liberating tool. The key point for us here is that “the confessional approach limits the value system and thus a precise *praxiological* response of Christianity” (1994:25). With this we fully concur. Jacob sees Black Theology, Liberation Theology and Kairos Theology having offered an alternative to the confessional theological mode by expanding the value system beyond the confines of confessional themes. For example, Black Theology expanded its contours to accommodate Black Consciousness and Marxist tools. De Gruchy (2004:48-51) tackles the matter aptly:

Permit me to return to personal reminiscences. At the same time as I was working on my dissertation, immersed in the “theology of hope,” in an office just above mine theologians involved in the Black Theology Project were busy at work digesting James Cone’s *A Black Theology of Liberation*. They recognized the importance of the *Message to the People of South Africa* but they were also critical of its failure to get to grips with the issues raised by Black Consciousness, especially the connections between ethnicity and poverty. This was related to the fact that the *Message* was written mainly by white theologians. If Barth, Bonhoeffer, and Moltmann spoke to us, Cone and Gustavo Gutiérrez spoke to our black colleagues.

The point here is that the value system was expanded and the appropriations of traditional theologies of Creation and Salvation were combined with Black Consciousness to provide a radical theology of Creation and salvation. What de Gruchy says above captures the sentiments expressed by Jacob. Outside the boundaries of orthodox Christian themes, the radicalization of the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ takes place.

Commenting on the transition Jacob says the transition depicted a volatile situation of “black on black violence.” Second, it would now be difficult and at best simplistic to talk only in black-white categories in our theological reflection in the new political dispensation. Third, ethnic, tribal, cultural status, class and material dimensions will need to be taken account of. Fourth, negotiation politics created politics of consensus or the need for conciliatory politics. Jacob then says:

The term liberation, if it is still to be used will have a different connotation from what it used to have. That is, it may no longer refer simply to the liberation of the black oppressed from the white oppressor. Sociological categories such as blackness will either need to take on a new meaning or be abandoned or replaced with more appropriate categories (1994: 35).

First, we surely must “pardon” Jacob for excluding “white” or “whiteness” in the sociological categories that must change if categories such as “black” will need to be changed. In fact “black” here is used as an example of sociological categories that may need to change, so he could have easily chosen to use “white” we believe, to make his point.

We have already argued that the term black does not need to be changed because it does not “anticipate” racism. The anatomy of blackness is the struggle for liberation and the anatomy of racism is whiteness. It is the power structure of whiteness that makes blackness necessary (Boesak 1976:57). Blackness does not analyze black people nor does it analyze white people, but black power in contrast with white power. It is not exclusion on the basis of race, but exclusion for the soul intent of subjugating and maintaining subjugation that racism entails. It is the maintenance of laws and institutions to maintain racial exclusion that is the question. There is no historical evidence of blacks maintaining laws and institutions to perpetuate the subjugation of whites. There is however ample evidence of the existence of the social ontology of whiteness (Yancy 2004:1-23). Racism anticipated in blackness is *Gestell*. Liberation expected from the affirmation of blackness is the restoration of the *Imago Dei* and a reconciled humanity.

Second, we concur with Jacob that the term liberation should have a different connotation. However, it is not the essence, but the mode or timbre that needs to change. Our third point is that we present Jacob to demonstrate that he engages Black Theology and Latin Liberation Theology. He does not simply make declarations about changes that must be made. His work is quite distinct from the bold calls to alter Black Theology of liberation without evident probity of the explicit contribution Black Theology has made. As he states his objective, he assesses the adequacy of Liberation Christologies to the South African situation with a view to formulating a relevant Christology for the new context. He reckons that the themes of Creation and Salvation, taken together by liberations theologies, offer a helpful way forward and states that it is not necessary to adopt the Exodus paradigm as the only paradigm (1994:400). He sees the Kingdom of God as an important concept for the new context.

He argues for a broader understanding of freedom as a goal of humanity as a whole and says:

Fourth, the concept of freedom is broader. It concerns not simply the freedom of a specific group from oppression but regards freedom as the goal of humanity as a whole. Further, freedom takes on a wider meaning in the South African situation than it did up to now – it includes salvation from sin, humanization, political liberation, reconciliation and reconstruction, and all South Africans become the subjects of this quest for freedom. While liberation theologies have acknowledged that sin is the root cause of social ills they do not in practice address adequately this dimension (1994:412-413).

We need to mark the dimensions of salvation proposed by Jacob, among them the need for reconstruction. We also need to mark that what he suggests are new emphases, but not new dimensions that were absent in the liberation tradition. We have already made the point that the notion of liberation suggests a comprehensive view of freedom in this work. Our aim here is to demonstrate that Jacob's work accomplishes a serious engagement of liberation theologies rather than repeat the arguments we have previously advanced.

The last point we must re-emphasize is the question of philosophical frameworks. Jacob posits, albeit correctly that in the search for an alternative Christology one's need to understanding that one will always have a personal operational philosophical framework is vital. Suffice it to say that he makes a crucial point, namely, that there is no single world view even in the Bible. For example, he posits that there should not be one worldview to interpret "ontological blackness" as it might be incongruous to adopt that line in the light of pluralities of categories and even races in the new context.

If Black Theology signifies an expansion of the value system of Christianity, so it is on account of liberation. Liberative reconstruction is an indication of this versatility and porosity of the liberation paradigm. By an acknowledged change of situation and therefore, social analysis, we attempt to make this point, that the paradigm is intrinsically expansive and inclusive. There comes a time when theology must focus on a different agenda not by neglecting or overlooking its heritage, but by engrafting upon the liberation theology concerns that newly require attention and emphasis.

4.4.2. Tentative Tenets of Liberative Reconstruction

The treatment of the emergence of liberative reconstruction was undertaken in the previous chapter to trace the acquisition and legitimacy of the designation. In this section, arising out of our critical dialogue with the proponents of reconstruction, we delineate broad strokes of the liberative reconstruction paradigm.

First, the notion reconstruction implies transformation and not *perestroika* as defined by Villa-Vicencio. Secondly, the programme of reconstruction must belong to all and not some. The fact that exiles are the key interlocutors in Villa-Vicencio is highly problematic. Building or reconstruction is communal, it is a programme of the *koinonia*. Third, the liberation paradigm itself should shape the framework and content of reconstruction. Reconstruction must take the preferential option of the poor as a point of departure. In this regard, it must demonstrate and create the necessary conditions for the optimization of agency. Reconstruction must take sides and place the black African *ecclesio-political* symbols in its centre because inculturation is both liberation and a strategy of liberation. It must also recognize the difference between the sinned against by destructive structures and the sinfulness of humanity that must be reconstructed. In other words justice should be an important component of reconstruction. Fourth, reconstruction in the liberative roots is a protest against fragmentation and Gestell in favour of a gestalt view of theological reconstruction. We devote to one of the tenets of liberative reconstruction a subsection due to its importance as arising out of this evaluation of the reconstruction proposal in this chapter.

4.4.2.1. A de-mystifying project

In a democratic dispensation contest is in the battle of ideas. Ideas are brought to open public for scrutiny. Sometimes due to power differences some of the ideas are marginalized making the contest unequal. In South Africa, it is hard to exonerate the reconstruction debate as an ideological onslaught against Black Theology of liberation. As indicated in the previous chapter, the term liberation has become “*polysemic*” in that it means a lot of things. We have also seen how naming continues to be the problem even in the current democratic dispensation. Could the acceptance or rejection of the designation liberation not be viewed within the frame of restlessness associated with naming in South Africa?

We have alluded to the fact that reconstruction should go along with deconstruction. Our preferred term is de-mystification: “the recovery of sight.” With regard to NEDAP, the SACC used the phrase “Un-blurring the Vision” and demystification is intended as a prism to maintain the vision of liberation. These are difficult questions. However, they need to be posed for the reconstruction of knowledge in theological discourse in South Africa. Society and intellectual traditions in South Africa are by and large dominated by “whiteness.” Nadar & Maluleke (2005) have sharply raised the same matter recently. They argue that the notion of agency has been mainly a White male intellectual affair demanding Black and female academics to be heavily invested in the discourse. For them agency is a coloured and gendered affair. This perspective for them will at least create the foreground for the discussions of gender, race and class. They ask:

As Black intellectuals, have we been unwittingly abducted by the White academy into joining a discourse which is meant to serve that academy to our own detriment? Hence our suggestion, partly borrowed from Jane Gallop that we function like alien fraudsters in a White academy. To paraphrase Spivak, we want to ask : Does an alien fraudster speak and if so, how, to whom and with what authority? But we want to take the matter further and refer to the pain and price of speech and agency. For marginalized Black and female intellectuals, agency and speech (*a la* Spivak) are dangerous and painful processes in the (attempted) execution of which many die - literally and metaphorically (2004:2).

While the matter is raised in the context of agency, the pertinence of the sentiments to our point of contention is easy to make. Are these notions of reconstruction at best such notions that have omitted the experience and expectations of the black masses and their agency and serve a detrimental discourse for the black people themselves?

Farisani's grasp of the ideological struggles in the reconstruction discourse of the Nehemiah and Ezra corpus is surely a reminder of the importance of ideology in theological discourse, a point we have made already. The identification of ideology in reconstruction or its discernment arises out of the fact that we need to dig very deep to understand the proposals that are made to contribute to the reconstruction of the South African theological turf. But as Biko warned, and we paraphrase, is the so often evaded term "Black Theology" even in a crucial work like Farisani's evaded? We have indicated that Farisani omitted the contribution of Black Consciousness in tracing strategies of renewal in Africa, yet the project is intended to be African Reconstruction Theology.

Villa-Vicencio similarly mentions only Tutu, and for that matter, once, when ultimately the reconstruction process will affect blacks who are the majority of the marginalized in this country. These problems are not innocent omissions, we contend. Liberative reconstruction will always dig down and very deep to demystify projects and themes of reconstruction and development for the empowerment of the marginalized. It will be “a constructively impatient” approach to demystify pseudo reconstruction agendas. Ideas that appear innocent must be bid farewell in liberative reconstruction.

4.5. On Liberation, Development and Reconstruction

The vision of our democracy was poignantly stated by Nelson Mandela in 1994 on the 24th May, when he said:

Our single most important challenge is to help establish a social order in which the freedom of the individual will truly mean the freedom of the individual. We must construct that people-centred society of freedom in such a manner that it guarantees the political liberties and the human rights of all our citizens...our definition of the freedom of the individual must be instructed by the fundamental objective to restore the human dignity of each and every South African. This requires that we speak not only of political freedoms...My government’s commitment to create a people-centred society of liberty binds us to the pursuit of the goals of freedom from want, freedom from hunger, freedom from deprivation, freedom from ignorance, freedom from suppression and freedom from fear. These freedoms are fundamental to the guarantee of human dignity.

The “freedoms” that is essential for the newly formed society impinge on our subject of development. These are freedoms from the “un-freedoms” of hunger, ignorance, deprivation, suppression and fear. Most importantly, political freedom is not adequate for the attainment of such freedoms. It is often stated that South Africa also needed the “RDP of the soul,” namely the reconstruction and development programme of the soul. Maluleke(1995a:4) once said:

Although the new government of South Africa’s Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) is aimed at the general upliftment of the country and all its citizens, the ‘reconstruction’ of structures and physical ‘development’ alone will not quench our cultural and spiritual thirst. On the contrary, the apparent heavy emphasis on the material and the structural may simply result in the intensification of Black frustration. We do not just need jobs and houses, we must also recover our own selves.

Reconstruction and development became key ideas that couched the promissory endeavours of the African National Congress at the advent of the first democratic elections in South Africa. NEPAD is also a call for reconstruction and development. For this reason, it is hard to evade the question of development and its relationship with reconstruction. The most compelling reason is that the concept of development has a direct bearing on the origins of the notion of liberation. Development theologies have now come around to define the development concept within the framework of the liberation paradigm. There are now strong assertions for notions of “developments from below” and “development from the point of view of the preferential option of the poor.” The current dominant theme in development is that of sustainable development.

This theme arises out of the definition given by the World Commission on Environment and Development:

Sustainable development is a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations (WCED 1987:46).

This definition of sustainability places human needs and aspirations at the helm of change. Max-Neef (1991) identifies about nine needs and postulates that we can deal with one of them and address the rest at the same time. This is what is called a synergy of needs. By placing human needs and aspirations at the helm of change, sustainable development unleashes a crucial challenge to notions of development we have hitherto come across. What we need to realize is that in development there are two main opposing approaches: technocratic and pragmatist approaches. A pragmatic approach focuses on practical rather than theoretical considerations, while a technocratic approach focuses on scientific knowledge first and thus ignores the role the people should play in matters of development. Values underlying development could include the following:

- Human rights, open society and social justice.
- The sociopolitical situation in South Africa and the Third World
- A pragmatic and human-centred view of development
- Development occurs when social forces are generated at the bottom of society.

Important to understand is that development is a subjective concept, each persons' view being influenced by his or her standing, life experience, view of the world and expectations of what the world will look like in the absence of poverty. Gutiérrez rightly says “development is a technical concept and a necessity for all countries” (1999:21). From this background then, we take a glance at two recent theses on development, particularly their link to ecclesiology.

4.5.1. Ecclesiology and Development

Jerry Pillay's thesis is that “the church has always had a notion of development and under-girding this is a theology of development that is not adequately embraced” (2002:3). The objective of this study is that the church must be involved in public life because it has a theological mandate to do so by espousing a particular conceptualization of development. Pillay pitches his work as falling within the genre of contextual theology (2002:8). This contextual methodology makes his approach to development to fall within the mould of liberation. He begins with an emancipatory interest grounded in the real material conditions of the oppressed local communities; in this manner, the conditions that define the knowledge of development are contextualized. Pillay defines development as comprising five dimensions and this sets the tone for his holistic view of the notion of development (2002:28-29). From this basis, he presents various approaches to the concept, thereby engaging the fundamental assumptions of the modernist paradigm of development which he dismisses as ignorant of the impact of colonialism and imperialism.

In dissecting the world view of the modernist paradigm he traces it from Durkheim and Weber who account for the linearity of this paradigm of development and contradistinctions it makes between traditional society and modern society. He runs through these models opting for the conceptualization of development that starts from needs with the emphasis on poverty eradication, self reliance and the social movement approach. This concept of development espoused by Pillay perceives development as transformation.

In examining the ecumenical debate on development, he reckons that this debate contributed towards a change of focus of development on production to people, hence the plausibility of the link of the concept of development with the preferential option of the poor was attained. Within no time, the ecumenical movement had gained a better insight in grasping the comprehensive nature of the notion of development, thereby evolving an integral human approach to development. This constitutes the locus for development to be viewed as liberation rather than gradual change. From this, Pillay strikes a relationship between mission and development in which development assumes the prong of social transformation. By transformation he posits that development flows from liberation. The cardinal point that Pillay makes is that the Kingdom of God shapes the purpose to which the Church is called to participate. Mission, understood within the context of the Kingdom of God is clearly about transformation, *ipso facto, metanoia*. We have already linked reconstruction in the previous chapter with *metanoia* so, in this sense there is a tacit convergence between development and reconstruction.

Pillay argues that the kind of development which should be engaged by the church should be informed by the preferential option of the poor. He devotes a chapter (Four) to the question of development and the poor and endeavours to state who the poor are in South Africa (2002:144-145). This kind of engagement of development is liberation. He says, citing Denis Goulet, “As one reflects on its goals, one discovers that development, viewed as human project, signifies total liberation” (2002:16). A transformational conceptualization of development is “ecological.” Pillay says:

“Development” in its ordinary usage deals strictly with improvements in and for human communities. But our ecological responsibilities include the protection of ecosystems out of respect for justice to the rest of the biota. Accordingly, there are moral limits to the development of human communities. Any morally acceptable concept of human development must be grounded on distributive justice, providing a fair share of scarce resources to all parties (2002:26).

Reverting back to the notion of sustainability we have alluded to above, the quotation above posits sustainability as an ecological, regenerative concept of development linked with a just distribution of well being between present generations and future generations. We must state that this understanding of development was not the case before. A number of other models have been used by the churches before. Pillay’s concept of development takes the question of women into account, hence it evokes the liberation tenets we have established in this work. Indeed, notions of renewal, re-establishment (*poiēsis*) and therefore the anamnestic *praxis* of African ethics find resonance with development.

First, his ecclesiology is liberational. He achieves this by making a connection between mission and development. He says that mission has as its ultimate goal the “comprehensive well being” of all human beings citing Nürnberger²¹ to make the point. Pillay says that this comprehensive wellbeing called *shalom* in the Old Testament and *soter* in the New Testament “is what we understand development and social transformation to be” (2002:61). We have argued that for us this is liberation. This means that his ecclesiological understanding of mission is in agreement with our formulation of the soteriological task of the church in our previous chapter. Secondly, the relationship of the Church and the Kingdom is crucial for this work. The notion of Kingdom places the liberation *Leitmotif* within the Biblical mould and the Kingdom notion is instructive for the ecclesiological symbols we require in shaping our ecclesio-political symbols for public life. The question we ask though is whether development, which is vividly a technical concept, should be a paradigm or theme within the rubric of the governing symbol of liberation. This is not the question that Pillay seems poised to answering. It is our question hence, we move on to look at development and freedom.

4.5.2. Freedom as Development

Cynthia Holder-Rich engages Amartia Sen’s thesis that “Development is Freedom” in a Christian dialogue to explore the implications of Sen’s ideas for the church and development. She appreciates the proposition of development as freedom and perceives the Christian focus on freedom as an entry point of engaging with Sen’s proposition.

²¹ Remember that we have used Nurnbege’s thoughts too in establishing the soteriological dimension of liberation

She dialogues with Sen around three key themes of agency, advocacy and empowerment. According to Holder-Rich, the key question raised by Sen’s seminal work is what the role of the church is in the promotion of freedom in society and the church itself. Holder-Rich says:

Sen starts with ‘development’; I turn this question around and start with ‘freedom,’ as freedom is, I believe, the central issue of the Christian faith. Among the many ideas Sen elucidates in his work that have special meaning for Christians, I have chosen three to address here: 1) the church as an agent of freedom; 2) the church as an advocate of freedom; and 3) the church as an empowerer (as an agent of empowerment) of all people for freedom, especially those on the margins of society (2001:92).

The church as an agent of freedom is a powerful ecclesiological symbol presented by Holder-Rich. Chapter five of her doctoral work is entitled: “Freedom as Development – Elements of a Liberating Ecclesiology (2003:208-273). Taking her cue from Sen, Holder-Rich defines an agent as someone who brings about change. She concludes that “work that leads toward freedom - for people within the church, for families, for communities and for societies - is part of the call of Christians (2001:93). Most importantly are the elements of a liberating ecclesiology that she delineates to which we must turn. First, Holder-Rich discerns the biblical element of freedom. Looking at Jubilee, she cites Maria Harris to make the point that “Jubilee is liberation – freedom, release, *deror*” (2003:211).

Among other Biblical themes, she also makes the point about the Spirit as Freedom (2003:218-225). She argues that the Spirit calls humanity to a new identity and that the Spirit justifies and gives life. In this sense, freedom is freedom to live. Within the Biblical motifs, she identifies remembrance as an important element of a liberating ecclesiology. The second element of a liberating ecclesiology is resistance. She uses the notion of Hidden Transcripts by Scott and draws from scholars such as Oduyoye to argue that getting to freedom requires resistance (2003:237). In our context we will recall the days of the “Church of the Struggle.” But, to state that resistance is an element of a liberating ecclesiology implies that refusing to accept the current order is in itself a form of freedom. The power of resistance is freedom. She says:

An important truth is highlighted here. When oppressed persons resist, they may do it at the cost of their lives. Njoroge states plainly that a spirituality based on resistance “will engender the struggle for justice, peace and reconciliation even if it means death in the hands of the authorities.” Njoroge understands this difficult reality as the “...meaning of baptism as a symbol of resistance to injustice” (2003:236).

Another key element she proposes for a liberating ecclesiology is the notion of “rebuilding.” In rebuilding freedoms, understood in terms of “the fullness, the abundance of life to which Christ calls us to work,” democracy becomes one of these “freedoms” for a liberating ecclesiology (2003:246). This point is germane to the central thrust of reconstruction and its link to democracy. The notion of “rebuilding” is reconstruction.

We can put it in this manner: a liberating ecclesiology requires the reconstruction of democracy. In the same manner, she lists economic freedom as a component of rebuilding. Yes, there are clear affinities between reconstruction and development in this sense. But also, freedom as development is elementary to a liberating ecclesiology, we conclude. The task of the Church in relation to development becomes one of liberation, resistance, rebuilding of democracy, rebuilding of economic liberation, empowering of women, re-awakening and advocacy in public life.

Now, advocacy is a mode of participation in public life. By advocacy, Holder-Rich implies participation also in influencing change in global bodies such as the IMF and WTO. The basic question for her is whether the church offers people a vision of freedom in the reconstruction of a new society. Her stance and understanding of advocacy is based on Jennings' (1987:132-150) approach of policy analysis. It is an understanding of policy analysis as hermeneutical. One of the South African theologians who has made a similar point before is Cochrane (1999).

Cochrane argues for an ecclesiology that draws from the history of the involvement of the church in the struggle for justice, including “a role in acting as the voice of the voiceless.” For the church's participation in policy making, Cochrane's argument is that public policy is thoroughly a hermeneutical process and himself draws from Jennings to make his point. Accordingly, Jennings focuses on the epistemological and methodological foundations of policy analysis according to perspectives drawn from social sciences and humanities.

He distinguishes three models of policy analysis: policy analysis as a science; as advocacy; and as counsel. Jennings scrutinizes the ethical and democratic dimensions of these models and favours policy analysis as counsel. This model of policy analysis views the practice of policy as social interpretation based on a hermeneutical, rather than the positivistic view of social science. Holder-Rich appeals to Jennings in our view to express a hermeneutical model of advocacy to be espoused by the church in its participation in policy making and its quest for rebuilding freedoms in the reconstruction of a democratic public life.

She asserts that, “Freedom can be, and I believe, must be, the basis of development, if the church is to engage in this work,” (2001:95). She appeals to Galatians, a celebrated Pauline book of freedom, seen also as one of the New Testament edifices of the legitimization of the symbol of liberation (Jacob 1994). Freedom as development evokes elements of a liberating ecclesiology. A liberating ecclesiology, to use her words, engages in “constructive impatience” as a mode of participation in public life. “Freedom and the gift of life” is one such pertinent theme, and “the kingdom and the abundant life given by Jesus our Lord.” The last chapter of this dissertation draws on all these views to argue that democracy is life giving.

Our point at this juncture is that Holder-Rich offers a definition of freedom as development, which evokes ecclesial liberating elements. Freedom as development provides the function of rebuilding (reconstruction) for the church in a hermeneutical mode of advocacy described as “constructive impatience.”

Holder-Rich reverses Sen's thesis and starts with freedom to make her point that freedom is development. We start with liberation and insist that liberation is the starting point of development.

4.5.3. Development as Freedom

Our examination of development is not enough without some brief introduction of the seminal insights offered by Amartia Sen, an economist from Asia. While we live in a world of unprecedented opulence, the paradox is that we also live in a world with remarkable deprivation, destitution and oppression, Sen inveighs. The persistence of poverty coupled with unfulfilled elementary needs is appalling. Sen sees the role of freedoms of different kinds to be central in countering the afflictions of poverty and unfulfilled needs of the human beings. Accordingly, individual agency becomes central in addressing the deprivations mentioned above. What needs to be recognized is that the freedom of agency is inevitably constrained and qualified by the social, political and economical opportunities that are available in a given situation. Individual freedom, Sen proposes, must be seen as a social commitment.

Following this, freedom is expanded to assume the primary end of development and thus the principal means of freedom as development. To remove substantial "unfreedoms" constitutes development. "The linkages between different types of freedoms are empirical and causal, rather than constitutive and compositional"(Sen 1999:xii),he argues. Sen delves into an integrated analysis of economic, social and political activities to argue the point.

Different spheres of public life are investigated to establish their contribution to the enhancement of freedom - the substantive freedom of individuals who are supposedly active agents of change.

In postulating that development is freedom, Sen defines development as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy (1999:3). According to this definition, freedom depends on other determinants such as social and economic arrangements.

The removal of un-freedoms such as poverty, tyranny, poor economic opportunities, and systematic social deprivation, is a *quid pro quo* for development as freedom.

For example, in tackling the economic dimension of development, freedom of exchange and transaction (Adam Smith) is a basic liberty to be valued. The freedom to exchange words, or goods, or gifts does not require justification because all these are part of the manner in which human beings live and interact with one another in society. The rejection of the freedom to participate in the labour market keeps people in bondage as the freedom to interchange is stifled. The crucial challenge today, he inveighs, is to free labour from explicit or implicit bondage that denies access to the open labour market. Freedom to participate in economic exchange is basic for social living. Beyond this, the persistence of deprivation among huge segments of people needs to be examined. Sen assumes an approach that is broader and more inclusive in examining the markets than is frequently invoked in either defending or chastising the market mechanism.

There are five types of freedoms from an instrumental perspective and we only list them hereunder: political, economic, social, transparency guarantees and protective security. All these freedoms help enhance the general capability of an individual and the enhancement of agency. The gap between an exclusive concentration on economic wealth and a broader focus on the lives we lead is central for the conceptualization of development in Sen (1999:14). The value of wealth lies in the things that it allows us to do. According to Aristotle “wealth is merely useful and for the sake of something else,” Sen retorts.

Let us also list forms of un-freedoms: famine, under-nutrition, lack of health care, gender inequality, and lack of political liberty and civil rights. Sen makes a connection between dictatorial countries and famine. Sudan and North Korea for example, have plunged people into disastrous proportions of famine. We should ask if Zimbabwe is not to be included in the list. We should also ask as to whether the tyranny of the modern democratic state and its values cannot plunge ordinary people into a state of famine too.²² Sen argues that process and opportunities are important. Unfreedom can occur as a result of inadequate processes or inadequate opportunities. Process and thus procedure is freedom as much as opportunity is freedom. We should avoid confining attention only to appropriate procedures (libertarians) or only to adequate opportunities (consequentialists) according to him.

²² This question has been heightened by the link made by the retired Judge Arthur Chaskalson between democracy and un-freedoms. Making this point in his address to the National Executive of the South African Council of Churches, his interpretation of law and the constitution of the country by appealing to Sen was a seminal and perhaps novel perspective. The threat to democracy according to him was not the absence of the rule of law but the “unfreedoms” that are not adequately addressed and arising out of the quest for liberation which was struggled for. This is the liberation expectancy we advocated in the first chapter. (Personal Notes as there was no formal paper distributed. The SACC had invited him to a farewell dinner on the occasion of his retirement.)

We have taken this route to establish central tenets that are central to our dissertation. Reconstruction as a theological paradigm necessarily and legitimately signals the need for the church to contend with new spaces and contours of society that are brought about by change. In responding to this new thing that has arisen, the sacrifice should be liberation, it has been proposed. Against this we have attempted to maintain the liberation paradigm without trivializing the changes that have taken place by arguing that in subtle ways public theology, which has been developed elsewhere is being posited to define the contours of theology in the new situation.

Developmentalism is an old rival to the liberation school of thought. As liberation theology was developing, development schools were also developing together with dependency theories (Gutierrez 1999:22-23; Duchrow & Hinkelammert 2004:143-145). With its themes of agency, empowerment and participation, development now cannot jettison liberation. In fact, the formulation by Holder-Rich is radical, freedom as development signifies in our preferred term that liberation is development. Development is liberation in following Sen's terms. Reconstruction cannot be divorced from liberation, much as development can no longer deject liberation. Reconstruction and development, on the other hand, converge as processes intended for liberation in a mode of constructive impatience or, insurgency in the new situation of democratization.

Let us conclude this section by citing Steve de Gruchy when he says:

It is clearly difficult for an institution like the United Nations or for national governments to be always concerned about local development initiatives when they are charged with legal and institutional frameworks for wider policy. And yet they should be attentive to the fact that development is not something that comes ‘from above,’ but rather finds its deepest meaning in initiatives that emerge ‘from below,’ and that give confidence and courage to the marginalized. This would seem to be the vision of another kind of development promoted through thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi, Julius Nyerere, Paulo Freire and Steve Biko. This is a process of development in which the marginalized seek to become subjects of their own history rather than objects of someone else’s story (2001:75)

Biko’s vision under-girds the vision of Black Theology of liberation. Our vision of reconstruction and development is liberation. The themes of reconstruction and development are an addendum to the project of Black Theology. This addendum calls upon Black Theology of liberation to extend its contours as a Black Public Theology of liberation. It is the mode that changes and not the essence and vision of Black Theology.

4.5.4. The Relationship between Reconstruction and Development

First, by arguing for liberation to be a governing symbol of reconstruction and development we imply that the notions of development and reconstruction are not in themselves liberative. What they do is to provide a timbre that interfuses the “Yes” and “No” of liberation and Black Theology of liberation in a new situation. Defined as freedom, development acquires a reconstructive mobility that allows flows and convergence with reconstruction.

Second, development has its own history and independence as a motif. It is a complex notion that has evolved its own theoretical assumptions since its emergence in the 1950s. It is an ambiguous concept though usually restricted to the poor (Haddad 2001:6-9) and there is no consensus on what it means (Regan & Ruth 2002: 23). The name development does not derive from the poor people to whom the ideals of development are directed and makes the notion to be a political notion. At best it is a technical concept.

Naming, we have asserted in this dissertation is a power game. Indeed, at the end of the World War I in 1918 a mandate system was created, after a major redistribution of power between America and Europe, to hold certain territories in trust under the supervision of an international agency. The League of Nations was created in this context. One of its founding articles states that territories inhabited by peoples,

...not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations and that the character of development should differ according to the state of the development of the people (Reagan and Ruth 2003:25).

Surely this posits the notion of development within the context of colonization and thus a particular view of the world that is divided between the “advanced nations” and the developing ones. Hence, the controversial terms such as “underdeveloped,” “developing,” “development stages,” “growth” etc. The coherent use of the term came about after the Second World War and the formation of the United Nations. In this context, the modern vision of the world cited above had to be carried by the Bretton Woods institutions which were formed in 1944. The Bretton Woods institutions include the International Monetary fund (IMF) and the World Bank with their ramified structures today. Since this time, different approaches to development evolved. Theories such as “modernization” “dependency,” “self-reliance,” until the emergence of “the people-centred” approach in the 1990s can be delineated within the auspices of the school of development. Indeed these approaches to development provide a thread of assumptions linked to the notion of development. In this sense development has its own bio-theoretical sphere as a school distinct from other schools and disciplines.

Third, reconstruction, which has also been our conversant, is presented here as a theological innovation associated with Villa-Vicencio, Mugambi and others. We do not need to restate this history, save to repeat that it is a notion that gained currency in the ecumenical movement.

It does have sociological origins as we have noted, but it remains a new acquisition at least in theological circles as compared to theologies of development that have now grown as distinct fields. As we have attempted to synthesize these notions through the liberation *Leitmotif*, it is fascinating to observe that they have shared some socio-political affinities to which we now turn.

Last, the socio-political use of the terms development and reconstruction together is an intriguing aspect we need to highlight. What we commonly call the World Bank was instituted as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (Regan & Ruth 2002: 28). It is however, in the South African context that there is a clear affinity between reconstruction and development. The socio-political plan of intervention espoused by the ANC was designated as the Reconstruction and Development Programme. This suggests a symbiotic relation of the two notions. What interests us further is the notion of the reconstruction and development of the soul enunciated by Nelson Mandela. It seems there is a symbiosis of the two however, we cannot view them as the same notions as we have already indicated above.

Failures associated mainly with development have necessitated a re-thinking on the notion since the 1990s. We can note three types of failure in particular namely, apathy, internal and external colonization (Montgomery 1988: 98-99). Rethinking on the subject has seen some come up with the strategies that are Habermasian such as “A dialogical intervention strategy of development” by Norma Romm (1988). This makes the way for Critical Theory as a way to understanding development.

Out of this, suggestions to democratize development have been made as democracy pleads for discursive forms of relationship (Romm 1988:214). In this sense development assumes a mode of uncoercive interaction on the basis of communication free of domination. This is pertinent for us in our democratic dispensation. Rebuilding is reconstruction and re-thinking assumes open democracy. Yes, in the process of re-thinking the idea and notion of development, our notion of development as a rebuilding of freedoms albeit with constructive impatience and insurgency, underscores the symbiotic relationship between development and reconstruction which must be carried through in the re-making of public life in South Africa, a subject for our next chapter.

4.6. Conclusion

It is not necessary to redefine the symbol of liberation as a major goal of Black Theology in order to make it more applicable in the present South African public life. It is the mode that needs to change hence, reconstruction and development become symbiotic addenda of Black Theology and do not re-invent the wheel. We arrive at this conclusion by reformulating reconstruction as signifying a public theology of some kind. By engaging the notion of development, we do not only draw affinities between reconstruction and development, but also demonstrate that viewed as freedom, development must hold the vision of liberation.

Development and liberation are not the same, and in the light of the acquisition of the term liberative reconstruction, development that holds the vision of liberation is liberative development. Our re-expression of liberation must include motifs of reconstruction and development; hence the dissertation opts for liberative reconstruction and development. If these motifs however, suggest a particular kind of public theology, can Black Theology of liberation be public? The dissertation takes on the challenge for Black Theology to be expressed as public in the next chapter.