

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONTOURS OF A NEW UNDERSTANDING AND PRAXIS OF RECONCILIATION

I wish we can incorporate these things without losing the core.

(Daniel Ngubane, 2004)

My motivation for this study was fourfold. I wanted to find new ways to understand reconciliation for myself and my ministry to replace the traditional models of Western Christianity and especially Anselm's objective model. I was also looking for reconciliation myths and metaphors that would be suitable and understandable to all South Africans to aid the ongoing reconciliation process in our country. In doing so, I hoped to discover something of Africa's unique contribution to the worldwide debate on what reconciliation is and should be. And I was looking for ways to translate these new myths into useful liturgical elements. I was thus hoping to find new ways of communicating the message of Christ's reconciliation to twenty-first century South Africans, and to convert the work of the TRC and other reconciliation bodies into repeatable rituals and liturgies that can be used in churches and Christian meetings.

7.1 Africa's Contribution to the Study of Reconciliation

7.1.1 Central theses

7.1.1.1 This-worldliness

African religion and African theology are humane and practical and as such offer refreshingly undogmatic and relative views of reconciliation. To the African mind reconciliation is decidedly this-worldly, and addresses the problem of evil and strife from a

human perspective and has the intention of offering solutions and explanations for humans. Therefore there is little use for extra-contextual myths and models to solve the problem of evil. Rather, evil and strife are described from below and human answers and rituals are sought. This should empower its adherents (Bediako, 1995:101; Du Toit, 1998:393).

Mulago explains (in Bediako, 1995:101):

To gain a proper understanding of [the] African primal world view, we must set aside the dualistic dialectic which [often] characterises Western thought whereby the exaltation of man would entail the rejection of God. On the contrary, [the] African primal religious viewpoint has as its two fundamental notions and vital centres: God and man.

Traditional Western Christianity is more otherworldly inclined (Bosch, 1989:142). That is why, according to Zygmunt Bauman (1998:59), Christianity had to encourage people to focus on their posthumous fate; put more crudely, Christianity had to produce consumers for its product. Michel Foucault (in Bauman, 1998:59) wrote that:

... all those Christian techniques of examination, confession, guidance, obedience, have one aim: to get individuals to work at their own 'mortification' in this world. Mortification is not death, of course, but it is a renunciation of this world and of oneself: a kind of everyday death. A death which is supposed to provide life in another world.

Bauman (1998:63-69) suggests that our society has undergone a "anti-eschatological revolution", whereby human beings are more concerned and insecure about their human identity, existence and everyday problems, and less interested about their posthumous fate.

Unlike the ontological insecurity, identity-focussed uncertainty needs neither the carrot of heaven nor the stick of hell to cause insomnia. It is all around, salient and

tangible, all-too-protruding in rapidly ageing and abruptly devalued skills, in human bonds entered *until further notice*, in jobs which can be taken away without *any* notice, and in the ever new allures of the consumer feast, each promising untried kinds of happiness while wiping away the shine of the tried ones.

(Bauman, 1998:68)

Christianity should not try to change the insecurities and insufficiencies of human beings, but rather address their real needs. Modern humans' problems are this-worldly: Christianity should give people this-worldly answers. African religion shows the way.

7.1.1.2 Connectedness, ecology and holism

African religion offers a worldview of connectedness where all the elements of creation are woven together. This qualifies the human prominence and also emphasises the human community, the ancestors, nature, spirits and God. Humans, their morality and their needs, cannot be separated from this wider community. This basic view of connectedness determines African thought on sin and guilt. Wherever this community is disturbed, there is sin; whenever the community is restored, forgiveness. God is also part of this larger community. As such, God is also touched by humans' actions towards creation, and vice versa. Both sin and reconciliation have as much to do with the physical as the spiritual dimensions – the physical body and the spiritual being (Adeyemo, 1998:374; Crafford, 1993:176; Kobia, 2003:95; Thorpe, 1991:123).

This differs significantly from the Western mentality which, according to Daneel is:

... conditioned by a dichotomous, dualistic anthropology which divides man into two separate entities – “soul” and “body”. This view concurs neither with Scripture (nor) with the African's traditional conception. Both Pietism and the Social Gospel are products of this dualistic approach...

(Daneel, 1989:251)

A beautiful example of the African holistic worldview is the tendency of all-for-one. While both Western and African models have scapegoats which serve as “one-for-all” propitiatory sacrifices, it is sometimes turned around in African religion (e.g. dance) so that a community may take the affliction of one person upon the whole community. Instead of one-for-all, it is all-for-one! This may be a useful kind of reconciliation in an individualist, modern society of personal isolation. If individuals feel isolated, not only from other people, but also from God, an all-for-one kind of myth might be revolutionary.

The idea of connectedness has ecological consequences. Du Toit (1998:398) calls it a kinship with nature in which animals and plants, like human beings, have their own spiritual existence and place in the universe as interdependent parts of a whole: “African ontology considers God, spirits, humans, animals, plants and inanimate creation to be one. To break up this unity is to destroy one or more of these modes of existence, and to destroy one is in effect to destroy them all”. This idea of the interdependence of all creation is increasingly accepted in the Western worldview and cosmology (Du Toit, 1998:392; Thorpe, 1991:120).

7.1.2 Reservations

This African worldview may produce exciting possibilities for reconciliation, but may also stifle it. I will in time highlight these. Of course, my view of African religion is positive and admiring and I will pay more attention to the new possibilities. This study is meant to be idealistic and one-sided – I want to compare the best of African religion with Christianity. But I will point out some possible dangers of exaggerations.

7.1.3 New emphases on existing ideas

Part of Africa's contribution to the study of reconciliation lies in the unique emphasis that Africans have placed on seemingly universal ideas of reconciliation. The following ideas are also to be found in mainline Christianity, but Africa adds its own nuance.

7.1.3.1 Sin is conditional

I have noted that Africans see sin as a breach of or a threat to the community. Kgatla (1995:126) explains that "sin is inherently the destruction of the group's solidarity, so that a person sins, not against God, but against others". Thus sin is conditional – determined by the context, the actors, time and place, etc (Nolan, 1988:192; Theron, 1996:118-119).

This conditional view of sin not only makes more sense to religious people who want to avoid sinning, but reiterates Kruger's requirements of sound religious beliefs.

Kgatla adds that the African view of sin is similar to that of ancient Israel:

In ancient Israel sin in life could not be separated from the notion of the covenant relationship. This means that the relationship between Yahweh, and individual and the rest of the community should never be disturbed by actions which were forbidden by law. Any behaviour which threatened the natural carrying on of life in the community was considered as a sinful deed.

(Kgatla, 1995:126)

This view has significant implications for traditional theology. If sin is indeed conditional, Christian theologians will need to revisit a concept like "The Fall". James Miller calls for a postmodern theology to do just that:

If we are to speak in an illuminating way about evil in the universe, or, more particularly, about pervasive evil in human experience, then we need new stories

which account for the reality of our experience of sin, stories which do not assume that the contemporary experience of evil is in some way a mechanical consequence of the act of a prehistoric ancestor.

(Miller, 1989:17)

7.1.3.2 Sacrifices

Probably one of the most predominant ideas of reconciliation is that reconciliation requires some kind of sacrifice. Exactly why this sacrifice is called for is explained differently by different religions. Traditional Christianity often taught that God demands it in order to restore his honour, or variations of this idea. Some would say, as Africans sometimes do too, that Christ was God's sacrificial lamb who carried the expelled sin of humanity to hell. In this sense Christ can even be seen as a sacrificial messenger.

The use of sacrifices to bring about reconciliation is problematic. I have set out Girard's ideas on sacrifices and scapegoats, and showed that the Bible rejects and objects to the use of scapegoats and that Jesus death was an exposure of the evil pattern of scapegoatism, rather than an endorsement. Huber (1990: 42-43) likewise sees reconciliation as liberation from the scapegoat mechanism. When Jesus commands us to love our enemies, we are "... liberated from the constraint to see in others only what is bad and to see what is bad as the exclusive property of others". In the same way as God loved sinful humanity, we are called to love our enemies and in doing so take part in God's triumph over enmity. In the same tone, Hubert called for human beings to take responsibility for their lives and those of others (Girard, 1982:221; Huber, 1993:581).

These insights make it quite difficult to justify sacrifices – especially propitiatory sacrifices – as a means for reconciliation. But some African sacrifices do not depend on scapegoats. Through a communion and reconstruction sacrifice, African religion hopes to

achieve something completely different. Such a sacrifice re-establishes and restores the God-ordained order in creation. The fire, smoke and meat bring together all the elements of the wider community and put everything in its rightful place. It creates a new, purified relationship, as Magesa (1997:203) explained earlier, instead of focussing on retribution.

7.1.3.3 Expulsion and Cleansing

The African rituals of expulsion and cleansing are not so unique either. Christians also believe that evil was beaten once and for all in the work of Christ, and thus expelled. But while Christianity claims that this reconciliation was achieved once and for all, Africans are set free by these rituals over and over again. Christians do celebrate and remember the historical once-off event, but Africans actually repeat the event itself. And these often repeated rituals probably do have a bigger impact. While the Christian idea seems so much more final and effective, it is probably less effective (at least) on a human level. These rituals are so useful that they are employed in many different ways in the community. This practical way of dealing with pent up anger and injustice help both the offended and the offender.

On a different level expulsion as a means to reconcile can be a problem. Inus Daneel (1987:278-279) found in his study of AIC's that sometimes the notion to expel (or exorcise) evil can result in persons not taking responsibility for their own weaknesses or misdeeds: "Here the great danger is that sin will be substantiated in the other person and not sought within one's own heart. Such an approach leaves no scope for repentance. Sin is never what one has done oneself, but rather what someone else has done to one" (1987:278-279). This reiterates Huber and Girard's earlier concerns. Still, the exaggeration need not disallow the helpful applications of the expulsion model, as I will show.

6.3.3.4 Community

Desmond Tutu (1996:xiii) wrote with his characteristic sense of humour:

Adam was having the time of his life in the Garden of Eden. He enjoyed his work as the primal gardener. The animals loved him and lived in an idyllic, undisturbed harmony. Everything was lovely in the garden. No, not quite. God looked on his human creature and was concerned, for his life was not all unalloyed bliss. God said, "It is not good for man to be alone." And so God asked Adam to choose a mate for himself among the animals which paraded before him in procession. God would ask his human friend: "What about this one?" Adam would reply: "Not on your life! No, thank you!" And so God decided to put Adam to sleep and produced from his rib that delectable creature, Eve; and when Adam awoke he exclaimed: "Wow! This is just what the doctor ordered."

Tutu explains that the story of Adam and Eve relates a fundamental truth about humans – that we are made to live in a delicate network of interdependence with one another, with God and with the rest of creation. According to Tutu, a solitary human being is a contradiction in terms: "A totally self-sufficient human being is ultimately subhuman. We are made for complementarity. ... We need each other to become fully human" (1996:xiv).

All religions emphasise the importance of the community. Abelard's model of the atonement teaches that communal behaviour, as illustrated by Christ, can bring about reconciliation. According to African religion the presence of community itself constitutes reconciliation. The community can heal the human sense of estrangement from God (as illustrated by the Zulu myth of the mischievous young man). Thus, all efforts to create, recreate or restore the community boils down to reconciliation with both the members of society and with God. African thought rightly sees that the relationship with humans and the relationship with God are inseparable.

The all-importance of the community also implies that even the offender's wellbeing is an important part of reconciliation. It is only once the offender's dignity is restored, that reconciliation can take place (Ndwandwe, 2000:214).

This emphasis on community may be more needed than we might think. According to Thorpe (1991:120):

Loneliness may well be one of the most devastating diseases of modern people. The Western emphasis upon individual rights has swung the pendulum so far off-centre that many people are no longer able to recognise the fact of their right to belong. ... [A] concept of belonging to a community, to a tribe, to a family group, may go a long way towards combating the disease of loneliness which threatens to destroy many Westerners.

(Thorpe, 1991:120)

In Africa, every member of society is closely linked with the community. This creates a chain that binds each person horizontally to the other members of the tribe, and vertically to the ancestors and the coming generations. Individuals cannot exist alone – they are because they belong (Crafford, 1993:176; Shenk, 1995:93; Thorpe, 1991:120).

There is a broad consensus among theologians that traditional Western Christianity can learn a lot from the African focus on the community (Daneel, 1989:272; Crafford, Boshoff & Daneel, 84:48). Setiloane states that: "Christianity could be enriched immensely if it were to learn from African tradition about community, that is, of the very essence of being" (Setiloane, 2000:57).

Of course even the closest community should allow its members to take responsibility for their actions. Huber's concern for accountability and collective accountability should never be ignored for the sake of a community (1993:574).

7.1.3.5 Communion

Related to the idea of community, is the African view that communion or solidarity with God can mean reconciliation. Jüngel expressed a similar view when he said that in Jesus:

... the divine Word came to a worldly expression, and the resurrection reveals God's self-identification with the Crucified One whose death for others integrated his whole life of selflessness. In the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the being of God was realised historically as a unity of life and death in favour of life.
(in Veldsman, 1998:60)

Van de Beek formulates the idea of numerous African theologians by saying that: "God himself comes to share our bad being and ... take us as sinners into his communion" (2004:43).

7.1.4 New ideas

Some African ideas are quite unique to Africa and resemble typical African (or at least non-Western) thinking. These were the surprises!

7.1.4.1 This-worldly

The African emphasis on this world and on human beings as the principal actors, is a corrective of much of Western Christianity's theological over-emphasis on the otherworldly. This has caused some theologians (like Adeyemo, 1998:372) to label the African worldview as utilitarian. This can possibly be true when this-worldliness is exaggerated. Nevertheless, religion and especially Christianity as the religion of the Incarnation should be incarnate and human (Crafford, 1993:176; Meiring, 1975:116).

Manas Buthelezi (1976:177): wrote in the 70's that Christians made a "false unbiblical dichotomy" between human life and Christian life:

This explains the present anomalous situation in which sometimes those who profess to be concerned with spiritual regeneration often harbour blind spots in their conscience when it comes to questions of human rights and racial justice. In the United States the Southern "Bible Belt" has for many years been at the same time a haven for the Ku Klux Klan and other professing racial bigots. In our own country the national Christian zeal to keep the Sabbath holy is not deemed contradictory to the parliamentary knack for creating discriminatory legislation that subjects black human beings to indignity.

I have earlier showed that while African reconciliation models display both vertical and horizontal dimensions, the focus is on the horizontal. This this-worldly starting point makes more sense, especially when it concerns reconciliation between humans, which is more urgently needed at this time in history (Bosch, 1989:142).

The same can be said for the so-called "shame conscience" as van der Walt (2004:2-15) typifies the African inclination. The Western guilt conscience often rests on the acceptance of certain absolute norms that easily become detached from society. If norms or moral codes do not directly influence or touch the community, what good are they? How do they make sense? Within the context of Christianity, many norms are ascribed to the untestable will or benefit of God. But is it not true that God wants what is best for the community or at least creation? Shouldn't all norms be tested as to their usefulness for the community? And then, isn't a shame conscience more sensible – if not more biblical? I believe that because a shame conscience is contextual, it is better.

7.1.4.2 Acceptance

The idea, that evil and strife can be tamed and accepted into the community is the exact opposite of what the Christian response would be. Christianity traditionally sees the world in such a dualistic way, that acceptance of evil is beyond conception. But while Africans would often try to expel evil, accommodating that evil is always another option. I have shown that some people groups in Africa are prone to witch-hunting, while others opt to try to incorporate or tolerate the witches. Through the Chihamba cult troublesome ancestors are given their own descendents and have their own special huts built. Although this kind of thinking goes against my Western instincts, Africa may have a point. Some kinds of 'evil' should probably be accepted and dealt with, rather than denied. This reflects the postmodern view (as I have shown earlier) that suffering and death are natural phenomena and should not be treated as a moral dilemma (Herholdt, 1998a:227).

I have quoted Zulu (1998:192) as saying that in African religion efforts are made to forgive and rarely to punish the guilty; while recognising the guilt Africans attempt to remove the consciousness of guilt through rituals. Zulu argues that this corresponds with the biblical priestly, prophetic and wisdom literature which all seem to indicate the fact that reconciliation benefits peace and harmony; the sins are covered or blotted out to bring about a new order, a harmonious community ... and there is nothing to be paid, for all that has been done is enough. Venter also made the point that the Old Testament (or at least Leviticus) emphasises God's forgiveness above anything else (2005:26). Desmond Tutu considers the New Testament:

There is a movement, not easily discernable, at the heart of things to reverse the awful centrifugal force of alienation, brokenness, division, hostility and disharmony. God has set in motion a centripetal process, a moving towards the Centre, towards unity, harmony, goodness, peace and justice; one that removes barriers. Jesus

says, “And when I am lifted up from the earth I shall draw everyone to myself,” as He hangs from His cross with out-flung arms, thrown out to clasp all, everyone and everything, in a cosmic embrace, so that all, everyone, everything, belongs. None is an outsider, all are insiders, all belong. There are no aliens, all belong to the one family, God’s family, the human family. There are no longer Jew or Greek, male or female, slave or free – instead of separation and division, all distinctions make for a rich diversity to be celebrated for the sake of the unity that underlies them. We are different so that we can know our need of one another, for no-one is ultimately self-sufficient.

(Tutu, 1999:213-214)

Daneel (1989:326-329) also values the African notion of acceptance, but cautions that it may at times obscure evil or wrongdoing. Sometimes the easy acceptance may not acknowledge that someone is being hurt or that some practices may be bad. On the other hand, an African theologian like Tutu consistently emphasises justice as a prerequisite for reconciliation, but then, restorative justice (1999:51).

Huber (1990:43) adds that reconciliation demands change on both sides of the conflict. In his reflection on the parable of the prodigal son, he shows that not only younger son had to change but so did his father and older brother. They both had to accept the younger son. The reconciliation model of acceptance especially calls for change in the (supposedly) innocent party or community.

7.1.4.3 Rebellion

The rituals of rebellion seem strange and offensive to the traditional idea of harmonious and structured reconciliation. These rituals challenge the norms and break down structures and disturb the peace and quiet of society. But this may at times be necessary to achieve true reconciliation. Other cultures may have had the same idea; the similarity between the rituals of rebellion and the Roman Saturnalia festival or the cult of Dionysius is obvious, and so is perhaps even the annual dethronement and enthronement ceremony

of the Babylonians. The idea is that power should at times be tempered and established society confronted in order to find reconciliation. In the West we have the principles of democracy – but these speak only to the realm of politics and do not impact on our religiosity (Smart, 1969:319-320).

Reconciliation by way of rebellion certainly represents the view of Black theology which views Christ as the one who overcomes all obstacles. These obstacles not only include physical ills such as blindness and leprosy but also social ills like poverty and powerlessness (Kiogora, 1998:337).

This view of reconciliation requires the confrontation of racism:

Black Theology contends that that it is as people candidly face the racial factors that breed alienation and conflict that they will be open to the transformative power of the gospel, which will lead Whites and Blacks to acquire qualitatively new ways of becoming human in their relationships with one another.

(Maimela, 198:117)

African Women's Theology adds that reconciliation means being freed from structures that hold vulnerable members of society, and especially women, in bondage. Achievement of reconciliation would then require challenging all power structures, prejudices and social norms (Oduyoye, 1998:363).

7.1.4.4 God's initiative

I have treated the story of !Kaggen creatively and may have read too much into it. Still, this faint strand in traditional African thinking suggests that God can also simply restore and heal the human condition of his own accord, by simply forgiving people and restoring harmonious relations. This is the only African reconciliation model from "above", but it

makes more sense and does more justice to the sovereignty of God than some of the Christian models.

Reconciliation of this kind seems to disregard a number of prerequisites for reconciliation, among others the demands for equal participation and justice. Still, this may be a valid and biblical reconciliation model. Huber (1990:42) explained that reconciliation is usually seen as a process between equal parties which implies that only when a conflict is symmetrical and equal can there be any chance for reconciliation. He challenges this view and relates how the Cross represented a unilateral reconciliation by God in an asymmetrical conflict. Likewise, the Sermon on the Mount also calls for unilateral reconciliation.

7.1.4.5. Solidarity

African theologians, along with other liberation theologians from the Third World, strongly emphasise the idea that reconciliation entails solidarity with the oppressed or suffering: "... Jesus is the friend who stands in solidarity with the marginalised..." (Oduyoye, 1998:362).

This is what Dirkie Smit (2002:108) and Wolfgang Huber (1993:590) has in mind when they call attention to the importance of anamnestic solidarity: "This solidarity has to be oriented toward the destiny of the weaker, to the suffering of the victims. A preferential option for the victims instead of for the heroes is the appropriate way to deal with history" (Huber, 1993:590). According to Daniël Veldsman,

... this idea was also espoused by Moltman who said that through the cross, Jesus identified himself with the present reality of the world in all its negativity. The cross represents solidarity.

(Veldsman, 1998:61)

It is evident that Africa's traditional emphases and ideas help us to understand the message of Christ better than we can do without them. I will deal with this matter a bit further on.

7.1.5 Participation and rituals

One of African religion's (and African theology's) contributions has to do with participation and rituals. Africans have managed to engage individuals in reconciliation through rituals in which people can participate. So too has African theology stressed the importance of symbolic theology (Mbiti, 1998:148; Sundkler, 1961:181).

Bauman (1998:69-71) argues that postmodern people are not impressed or affected in a personal way by the accounts of revelation and ecstasy of saints, hermits and monks, but, as sensation gatherers, want to experience this for themselves. In African religion, the whole community participates and experiences the rituals and dance. This can be a guide for Christian churches that want to share the experience of ecstasy with all its members (Daneel, 1987:273; Crafford et al, 1984: 48).

Daneel describes how congregants in an AIC participate:

Sermons are interspersed with prophesy, confession, testimonies to joy or grief, laying on of hands, faith healing and exorcism. Thus the need of the individual is shared and carried by the church. During exorcism the beleaguered soul is tied with sacred cords, and this symbolic act is accompanied by rhythmic song. The demon is then addressed, cursed and expelled by means of numerous symbolic acts. It is all deadly earnest, but if the exorcism should suddenly sound funny, people will laugh and delight at the rebuking of the unwelcome spirit – without in any way marring the seriousness of the situation.

(Daneel, 1987:273)

7.1.5.1 Rituals

African religion also contributes to our understanding of reconciliation in its stress on participation. The majority of reconciliation models involve rituals in which human beings can act out and participate in the reconciliation. It makes reconciliation something concrete and tangible.

Thorpe (1991:121) explains that rituals are an important part of African life. These rituals often take the form of dramatic presentations. By means of objectifying their inner fears and perplexities, the people are enabled to deal with them in a more meaningful and constructive way. In relatively recent times this approach has been utilised in Western cultures as well, for example by psychiatrists working with people in therapy groups.

Rituals help to structure and thus give meaning to human life. Individuals need this structure lest their lives become totally aimless. When structure breaks down, psychological disaster looms.

(Thorpe, 1991:121)

6.3.5.2 Symbolism

Closely related to the benefits of rituals, is Africa's abundant use of symbolism. According to Thorpe (1991:122; c f Vosloo, 2004:141),

Western people have become increasingly obsessed with a multiplicity of words – printed pages abound more and more and speeches are disseminated world-wide via the television screen. Instead of being powerful vehicles to carry meaning from one person to another, words have lost their meaning more often than not and fall, at last, on deaf ears.

African Christians express their faith by making abundant use of symbols. Art, sculpture, dance, drama, rituals, colours, numbers, forms of worship, dress, and decorations all

express their beliefs. This is even more obvious in the African Initiated Churches, whose members can often be recognised by their clothes. This is a contextual kind of theology in a context in which many are illiterate (Mbiti, 1998:148).

If there is a disease that rivals loneliness in our world, it is the lack of communication among people. Words alone – because of their multiplicity – become meaningless. It may be time to look for new symbols that will enable people to interpret and give meaning to their lives. African religion and society is rich in symbols. Taboos on certain words, masks and rituals, and communal meals are highly symbolic and express a community solidarity (Thorpe, 1991:122).

Crafford et al (1984:54) agreed that traditional churches can learn a lot from the African use of symbolism because it speaks to its participants on an existential level.

7.1.5.3 Sacrifices

I have thoroughly considered the concerns and qualifications involved when dealing with sacrifices. Evaluated simply as rituals, sacrifice involves all the senses and makes for a spectacular and memorable experience. Even when it offends onlookers, it makes a deep impression on everyone who sees it. It is quite easy to make a sacrifice and anyone can sacrifice something: even a cup of beer or a handful of maize can be sacrificed. Sacrifice opens the mediating or priestly office to every member of the community and can be done as frequently as needed.

In the mainline Christian church we sometimes frown upon the repetition of rituals. While some rituals such as Holy Communion are meant to be performed regularly, others, for

instance Baptism, should happen only once. And with good reason – the fact that we are baptised only once reminds us that Christ accepted us into the community of believers even before we could choose or merit it. And to repeat this ritual could compromise our theology causing us to doubt Christ's sufficiency. But if theology is constructed from below, and all rituals are intended to strengthen the faith of believers, why could baptism – or a similar ritual – not be repeated as often as required? While Christian rituals as we know them are certainly consistent with Christian theology and our view of God, African religion's disregard for metaphysical correctness for the sake of serving its adherents, adds a new dimension to recent discussions on Baptism in the South African theological community.

7.1.5.4 Medicine

African reconciliation models and rituals are usually accompanied by the use of medicines. Although the medicines can in themselves constitute a new and restored community (as I pointed out), they surely also help the people who use them. Ritual medicines once again, are something to touch or drink or rub into your skin. It makes reconciliation more true and lasting.

7.1.5.5 Gifts

Libations, sacrifices and gifts are as real as medicines. Africans will feel the gift that they give to God and possibly experience a lack thereafter. Christianity spiritualised the offering of gifts to such an extent that few churchgoers ever feel their offerings and rarely feel that they have given God a gift as much as they feel they have done towards their friends at Christmas.

7.1.5.6 Expulsion and cleansing rituals

The rituals of expulsion and cleansing are likewise experienced by their performers. When two enemies share such a ritual, it constitutes a powerful symbol of their reconciliation that will not only make an impression on them but on all who witness it. Whether it is anger that is spit out with a mixture of herbs, or truth that is milked out of a palm leaf, reconciliation is made authentic through participation.

7.1.5.7 Dance

Dance as a physical activity once again involves the senses and the resulting weariness is probably still felt the next day! But reconciliation rituals consisting of dance have additional advantages. Through the activity of dance people can achieve an experience of trance and the feeling of union with God. Dance also binds the individual into the community of dancers in a powerful way. Likewise, the dancers can share the affliction of one person in an all-for-one framework (Hay, 1998:136).

7.1.6 Coherent myths

Another of African religion's contributions to reconciliation and reconciliation models is that the myths behind Africa's models are still understood and coherent. In Christianity we have a lot of practices that were once underpinned by imaginative myths, but the myths have since been lost, and all that remains are unintelligible practices and even the more unbelievable attempts to justify them. The idea that God could somehow demand a human sacrifice to appease his anger is one example.

Krüger (1995:125) explains that there are three kinds of religious cognition, namely mythic cognition, conceptual cognition and mystic cognition. Western culture places an overwhelming emphasis on the conceptual cognition (Krüger, 1995:126). In African religion the mythical cognition is still in tact, and it offers a way of redressing the Western imbalance. Thus, African rituals and models still make sense because the myths have survived. Another reaction to an overemphasised conceptual cognition is mysticism – the rise of which should be interesting to follow the religions and religious ideas of reconciliation in South Africa.

7.1.6.1 Blood

Some African reconciliation models also call for blood. But in some of these cases, the bloodiness is motivated by coherent myths. African religion teaches that blood symbolises the life force that permeates creation. Thus, blood can give life to the spirit of an ancestor and in a sense summon him or her to the place of worship. Once the ancestor is made present, the natural order is restored and reconciliation is achieved.

Venter (2005:26) found a similar myth in Leviticus. He argues that the blood involved in these Old Testament sacrifices is based on the myth that blood represents God or alternatively, life.

The myths in these examples attempt to justify sacrifices through coherent myths. They may not be convincing in our context, but at least offer more coherence than some of the traditional Christian reconciliation models that demands that blood be shed for no other reason than to appease God's anger.

7.1.6.2 Medicine

The use of special medicines is not the result of simple superstition but an acting out of the myth that the (wider) can community bring about reconciliation. The medicines represent different elements of creation and the use of one can put right a diagnosed deficiency.

When a patient burns a piece of plant material or animal skin or bone, his or her relationship with the natural world is restored.

7.1.6.3 Connectedness

Even the idea of connectedness itself is based on a myth. I have dealt with this in a previous chapter, but even more simply put it goes like this: God created the world and the world in turn resembles something of God. If this created order is maintained, godliness is achieved or sustained. Furthermore, this order is dependant on right relationships between the different elements of creation. Thus, relationships, connectedness or community holds the key to all.

7.1.6.4 Acceptance

Behind the African option of acceptance is the myth that evil can be tamed or converted. Even troublesome spirits and witches can become wonderful ancestors and contributing members of society if they are accepted into the community (which will make them godly in turn). No one is beyond salvation; there is always the possibility that a good dosage of community will work healing wonders.

The myths behind acceptance are simple, consistent and coherent. It offers a logical framework wherein Africans can seek reconciliation.

7.1.7 Possible exaggerations

It emerged that not every African idea is beyond suspicion. Although African religion offers Christianity and the church wonderful new possibilities, some African models and myths are less useful. It may be because these models came from a different world that no longer makes sense in our context, other ideas seem flawed in any context. The biggest problems lie in exaggerations. Any model taken to the extreme presents dangers and one-sidedness (Tutu, 1996:xiv). I summarise some concerns.

7.1.7.1 Times have changed

A good example of the changing context concerns the use of medicines, dance and sacrifices. While many African people still use these models of reconciliation regularly, many will find it increasingly difficult to do so. Urbanisation and Western medicine may cause African people to have less faith in their traditional culture and remedies, which limits the use of a number of reconciliation models.

7.1.7.2 Exorcism

Reconciliation models that call for the exorcism of evil can be quite harmful. These create unequal power relations where exorcism experts have all the power to determine the source of evil and to expel it, while those people who are not considered to be experts are at their mercy. It often creates an atmosphere of mistrust, suspicion and can even lead to

reprisals. In addition, exorcism may conceal or fail to reveal the real source of a problem. It may cause persons to have unnecessary feelings of guilt or conversely, to give up their personal responsibility.

7.1.7.3 Justice and Mercy

An extreme and unqualified application of the acceptance model can deny justice. There may come times or circumstances when an evil cannot be simply accepted or an injustice accommodated. Reconciliation depends on at least some kind of justice. Likewise, when models of expulsion are used excessively, there may be little evidence of mercy, which is as important a part of reconciliation as justice. These opposite models must be used sensibly and contextually.

7.1.7.4 The actors: God, humans and magic

African reconciliation models are mostly from below. As such, they emphasise the human contribution toward the reconciliation process. This may leave too little emphasis on God as an actor in the relationship between God and humans. Christians hold that God is the primary source and inspiration for all acts of reconciliation. Similarly, when reconciliation is achieved through the ritual use of medicines and the like, it can also emphasise the mechanical role of magic too much, and deny the contribution and responsibility of humans.

7.1.7.5 Suffocating community

For me as a South African of Western descent, the African emphasis on community seems refreshing and wonderful, but sometimes a bit frightening too. Surely individualism is not all bad, and the priority of community all good? Just as Western individualism can be both destructive and creative, the all-embracing emphasis on the community can also become harmful if the wellbeing of the community is demanded to the detriment of the individual (Lawuyi, 1998:186).

7.2 New liturgies and rituals

As I have noted above, African philosophy and religion is always expressed and enacted through rituals. New Christian reconciliation models should also be cast in this form. Dirkie Smit (2002:100) believes that liturgy holds the key to the development of theology and that new theological insight relies on creative liturgies that reflect the lives and faith of believers. Therefore, I will try to turn the new insights I have acquired into suggestions for new rituals and liturgies, drawing inspiration from Africa as well as different parts of the world.

7.2.1 Requirements for new liturgies and rituals

The TRC failed to come up with national rituals of reconciliation. According to Antjie Krog (1998:14-15) the TRC lost some wonderful opportunities to organise national rituals of reconciliation. She believes that a fundraising for the victims could have been one such ritual:

If then a Sunday or some particular day had been identified as a day when all the churches, all religions, would officially accept money (as compensation) for the victims who had testified, then I think a lot of people would have reacted positively because they felt they had to do something. Sadly, that never happened.

Another lost opportunity was 16 December 1997, Reconciliation day. There was talk of a big signing of a Book of Reconciliation on that day, but it failed as almost nobody knew of this book's existence and only fifty-two people signed it (Krog, 1998:15).

It is now the responsibility of churches (and other religious bodies) to make their own traditional liturgies of reconciliation available both to their own members and to others (Connor, 1998:109; Krog, 1998:16).

Previous studies have spelt out some requirements for new liturgies and rituals. The South African Catholic Bishops Conference has explored and experimented with "inculturation liturgies", liturgies devised to inculturate typical Christian liturgies into an African idiom. In these inculturation liturgies you could for instance use salt water, chyme, plant material and soil from ancestral graves, instead of traditional Christian symbols. In this study I want to go a bit further, in that I do not simply want to use African words or symbols to express Christian ideas, but rather take African ideas and beliefs seriously. I am looking for religious ideas that are absent or neglected in Christianity.

But the Bishops' work is nonetheless valuable. They set out sensible requirements for their inculturation liturgies, which apply to my undertaking too. According to their guidelines, new liturgies should be based on a thorough knowledge and understanding of African culture. A liturgy should be clear and make sense. The myth must be coherent and understood by all. Lastly, any liturgy is useful only in as far as the community accepts it. New rituals and liturgies must be accepted and also involve the members of the

community (Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference 2002a = SACBC 2002a:18-19; Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference 2002b = SACBC 2002b:9-20).

In addition, Karl Dortzbach (2002:90-91,100) identified five elements that are necessary for healing to take place within an African context. The elements are meaning or mental healing, emotional healing, physical healing, volitional healing and social healing. These five elements also apply to reconciliation (as an eminent form of healing) and give us some clues in our attempt to define and elaborate new liturgies and rituals.

Buti Tlhagale (s a) has developed a number of African liturgies and rituals. These are mostly inculturaltion liturgies, but they can form the basis for further investigation. I will proceed to investigate his liturgies according to the myths underlying them, and point out new possibilities. The Bishops' requirements will be used as guidelines, as will other requirements and perspectives worked out in this study.

7.2.2 Liturgies based on the community

Collective guilt ... should be dealt with within the liturgy of the Christian community. It is through *koinonia* that we can really listen to the stories of the past. It is not the task of the church to cultivate guilt and grudges, but to transform guilt through the festive liturgy of *koinonia*.

(Louw, 1996:394).

6.4.2.1 Funeral rite with spilling of blood

Tlhagale (s a:24-25) worked out a ceremony wherein the ancestors are acknowledged and called up through the sprinkling of blood. He states emphatically that the ancestors are

not worshipped but that their presence are meant to (re)establish the community: “In this ritual, the sacrifice to the ancestors is not meant to be a sacrifice in the true sense – true sacrifice is reserved for the redemptive work of Christ – but rather a kinship affair – no more and no less” (Tlhagale, s a:27).

The liturgy starts when blood is sprinkled on a shrine or poured into a hole in the ground and an invocation is made to the ancestors:

You, our ancestors, receive this warm gift of life.
We, your descendents look upon you for help
for support, for protection, for strength.
We speak to you in this fashion
because this is how our fathers
spoke to you.
We ask a favour from you not only
because you have begotten us, but
also because you are in the world of
the Spirits. Plead then our cause with
the Almighty Father of all mercies.
We too, in our feeble manner,
as we recall the saving mysteries
of our Lord Jesus Christ, the first to rise
from the dead, we ask Him to
welcome you into His royal kraal, where
we too, at the end of time, hope
to share in the feast prepared for all those
who believe.
You, our ancestors, arise and kindly receive our prayer.
Amen.

I have pointed out how important the African idea of community is, and that it should surely be made part of our bigger South African and Christian beliefs. This liturgy expresses the African myth of the community in a typical and coherent way. But the problem is that few people who are not African, will feel comfortable with this imagery. While African theologians will understand exactly what the role of the ancestors are, many others will wrongly see such a ritual as that described above as ancestor worship. The potential for misunderstanding limits this liturgy.

7.2.2.2 A community liturgy from the Psalms

Still, the idea of the importance of the community is too important to be neglected. If a liturgy or ritual could be developed to express this idea in more neutral terms, and possibly include our community with nature (which is very much part of the African myth), it would be very useful. Perhaps a text like Psalm 148, that calls all creation to praise the Lord, could be used to also express the African idea that all creation is in community and should be so:

Praise the LORD .
Praise the LORD from the heavens,
praise him in the heights above.
Praise him, all his angels,
praise him, all his heavenly hosts.
Praise him, sun and moon,
praise him, all you shining stars.
Praise him, you highest heavens
and you waters above the skies.
Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for he commanded and they were created.
He set them in place for ever and ever;
he gave a decree that will never pass away.

Praise the LORD from the earth,
you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,
lightning and hail, snow and clouds,
stormy winds that do his bidding,
you mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars,
wild animals and all cattle,
small creatures and flying birds,
kings of the earth and all nations,
you princes and all rulers on earth,
young men and maidens,
old men and children.

Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted;
his splendour is above the earth and the heavens.
He has raised up for his people a horn,
the praise of all his saints, of Israel,

the people close to his heart.

Praise the LORD .

(Psalm 148)

This text emphasises both the traditional Christian belief of God's exultance over the creation and it substantiates the African view that God permeates the natural world (as life force) as much as God is above it – a totally valid (panentheistic) view of God.

7.2.2.3 A community liturgy from the Western Church Tradition

The beautiful Taizé text “Ubi caritas” expresses the idea that God is present in loving human relations. This certainty echoes the African sentiment:

Ubi caritas et amor
Ubi caritas, Deus ibi est.
(Where there is charity and love
Where there is charity, there is God).

(Taizé:49)

7.2.2.4 Reflections on Wholeness

Archbishop Desmond Tutu wrote a moving litany of wholeness that echoes African thought and makes use of Christian theology:

Busy, normal people: the world is here.
Can you hear it wailing, crying, whispering?
Listen: the world is here.
Don't you hear it,
Praying and sighing and groaning for wholeness?
Sighing and whispering: wholeness,
wholeness, wholeness?
An arduous, tiresome, difficult journey
towards wholeness.
God, who gives us strength of
Body, make us whole.

Wholeness of persons: well-being of individuals.
The cry for bodily health and spiritual strength is echoed from person to person, from patient to doctor.
It goes out from a soul to its pastor.
We, busy, “normal” people: we are sick.
We yearn to experience wholeness in our innermost being:
In health and prosperity, we continue to feel un-well
un-filled, or half-filled.
There is a hollowness in our pretended well-being:
Our spirits cry out for the well-being of the whole human family.
We pride ourselves in our traditional Communal ideology, our extended family.
The beggars and the mad people in our streets:
Where are their relatives?
Who is their father? Where is their mother?
We cry for the wholeness of humanity.
But the litany of brokenness is without end.
Black and white;
Rich and poor;
Hausa and Yomba;
Presbyterian and Roman Catholic:
We are all parts of each other,
We yearn to be folded into the fullness of life – together.
Life, together with the outcast,
The prisoner, the mad women,
The abandoned child;
Our wholeness is intertwined with their hurt,
Wholeness means healing the hurt,
Working with Christ to heal the hurt,
Seeing and feeling the suffering of others,
Standing alongside them.
Their loss of dignity is not their loss:
It is the loss of our human dignity,
We busy, “normal” people.
The person next to you: with a different language and culture,
with a different skin or hair colour –
it is God’s diversity, making an unbroken rainbow circle –
our covenant of peace with God, encircling the whole of humanity.
Christians have to re-enact the miracle of Good Friday:
the torn veil, the broken walls, the bridge over the chasm,
The broken wall of hostility between

the Jew and the Gentile.
The wall between sacred and secular?
There is no wall
There is only God at work in the whole;
Heal the sores on the feet;
Salvage the disintegrated personality;
Bind the person back to the whole.
For without that one, we do not have a whole.
Even if there are ninety-nine:
Without that one, we do not have a whole.
God, who gives us strength of
body, make us whole.

(Tutu, 1996:110-113)

7.2.2.5 Re-enactment rituals

In Sydney, Australia, united Christians dressed in period costume gathered near the Opera House to remember the violent mass rape of female convicts by male convicts shortly after the arrival of the first fleet. An account was read publicly, and Christian men asked forgiveness from their countrywomen and then escorted them ashore with the affection and dignity that they should have experienced the first time. “Now whenever the first story is told, the action of Christians in the 1990’s must be told with it, thus sowing a healing memory into the story of the land” (Dawson, 2001:244).

This kind of re-enactment ritual restores and recreates the community. Perhaps South Africans can re-enact a scene like the Battle of Bloodriver (Battle of Ncome), complete with a new vow, encompassing the commitment of all South African Christians.

7.2.2.6 Other considerations

The restoration of the community also presupposes **justice and reparation**. Liturgies and rituals that include reparation would bring about a physical healing (Dortzbach, 2002:117-118; Van der Merwe, 2003:277-279).

In New Zealand, Christians tried to further justice and reparation by organising Justice Action Forums that work with government agencies dealing with injustices in land use and the tribal claims that have been ignored. “If there are unjust laws in your city”, asserts John Dawson, “Christians cannot remain silent” (2001:245).

Reparation can take on many forms. During the time of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, “...nearly everybody wanted information. ... [Others] requested that photographs and other personal possessions confiscated at the time should be returned, or that the mortal remains of a husband or a child be brought home for re-interment. Some requested gravestones” (Meiring, 1999:26).

In California, a large suburban church bussed its members over to a struggling African-American church. They surrounded the building and surprised the Sunday morning worshippers when a delegation entered the service and presented a \$ 25,000 gift for the building fund. This is a very good example of what a ritual of reparation could look like (Dawson, 2001:244).

Another way to restore the community is through ritually restoring the dignity of people. During the TRC hearings, this was ritually done in a clever way. Before a hearing would start, the commissioners entered the hall quietly and unannounced and took their seats. After a while they would stand and ask everybody else to stand. Then the victims were led to their allocated seats. In this way the victims were made the most important persons in the meeting, instead of the commissioners or the dignitaries. This restored their dignity in the community (Krog, 1998:10).

7.2.3 Liturgies based on propitiation and the transfer of guilt

7.2.3.1 Cleansing rite using a goat

The possibility of transferring guilt to a sacrificial animal is popular in African thought.

Tlhagale used this kind of ceremony to transfer the sins of the past on a goat.

With hands outstretched over the head of a live goat, the minister says the following prayer:

Upon the head of this animal I put all the sins of division among us.

Christ have mercy.

We promoted division based on the colour of our skin.

Lord have mercy.

We despised, suspected, hated and even persecuted those who differed from us.

Christ have mercy.

We discriminated on the basis of language and culture and even taught our children to do likewise.

Lord have mercy.

We conducted witch-hunts, harassed and even killed those whose political preferences differed from ours.

Christ have mercy.

With our lips we claimed to be members of the Body of Christ but denied it in our actions.

Lord have mercy.

We now ask for forgiveness and reconciliation.

Christ have mercy.

We ask for strength not to indulge in the wrongs of the past.

Lord have mercy.

Let this animal carry away our wrong-doings.

Christ have mercy.

May we experience again the mercy of God.

Lord have mercy.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The goat is let out of the Church.

(Tlhagale, s a: 112-113)

This ceremony directly addresses the South African context and South African sins and feelings of guilt. It also closely resembles the Old Testament practice of the Azazel goat. But even though it is not clear whether the goat is slaughtered afterwards, or merely chased away as is the case with Azazel, it is still an unwilling sacrifice and guilt is placed on an innocent victim. I have argued that such sacrifices are not only offensive to some and incoherent to others, but reinforce the pattern of scapegoatism and of not taking responsibility.

7.2.3.2 Sacrifice liturgy from the Psalms

If we really want transcendent liturgies and rituals in South Africa, rituals of sacrifice should be self-sacrifices in which people are taught to take responsibility for their actions, rather than place the blame or guilt on other persons or things. Perhaps this liturgy can be modified so that congregants can ritually take the guilt on themselves – as Jesus Christ did, rather than lay it on an unfortunate scapegoat.

Instead of ritually slaughtering goats to carry away our guilt, I propose a text or liturgy more in tune with Psalm 32:

Blessed is he
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.
Blessed is the man
whose sin the LORD does not count against him
and in whose spirit is no deceit.

When I kept silent,
my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
For day and night
your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was sapped
as in the heat of summer.

Selah

Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, "I will confess
my transgressions to the LORD "-
and you forgave
the guilt of my sin.

Selah

Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you
while you may be found;
surely when the mighty waters rise,
they will not reach him.
You are my hiding place;
you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.

Selah

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you and watch over you.
Do not be like the horse or the mule,
which have no understanding
but must be controlled by bit and bridle
or they will not come to you.
Many are the woes of the wicked,
but the LORD's unfailing love
surrounds the man who trusts in him.

Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous;
sing, all you who are upright in heart!

7.2.3.3 Other texts

If the stories of voluntary scapegoats are told, it can bring about mental healing and a new sense of meaning (Dortzbach, 2002:120). Isaiah 53, which is often used (wrongly) in the context of propitiation, actually emphasises Jesus' voluntariness, and this beautiful text can also be used to great effect. Outside the church, stories such as the stories of Queen Iden, the diviner Eleguru and even Moremi can be used to inspire and instruct South Africans so that they will understand and further this kind of reconciliation.

7.2.3.4 Symbolic acts

Mass gatherings can be organised as rituals of confession and as opportunities to take responsibility for the past. In Hawaii 27,000 people gathered in a stadium to worship and to seek forgiveness and reconciliation over the way elements of society had wounded one another in the story of the islands. Similar gatherings could surely also be conducted to good effect in South Africa (Dawson, 2001:244-245; Van der Merwe, 2003:277-279).

7.2.4 Liturgy of prayer

I have found two African prayers that address reconciliation in a typical African fashion.

7.2.4.1 We Kneel Before Thee

The first, from the DRC, comes out of a Christian community that is nonetheless thoroughly African. It asks God to remove sin and guilt, and to protect his people from evil:

O thou Chief or Chiefs, we kneel before thee in obedience and adoration. Like the bird in the branches, we praise thy heavenly glory. Like the village sharpening stone, thou art always available and never exhausted. Remove, we pray thee, our sins that hide thy face. Thou knowest that we are poor and unlearned; that we often work when hungry. Send rain in due season for our gardens that our food may not fail. Protect us from the cold and danger by night. Help us to keep in health that we may rejoice in strength. May our villages be filled with children. Emancipate us from the fear of the fetish and the witch doctor and from all manner of superstitions. Save the people, especially the Christian boys and girls in the villages, from the evil that surrounds them. All this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ thy Son.

(Tutu, 1996:105)

7.2.4.2 O Sun, As You Rise in the East

The second is not Christian in origin. It likewise asks God's protection, but interestingly also petitions God to bring about personal change:

O sun, as you rise in the east through God's leadership,
Wash away all evil of which I have thought throughout the night.
Bless me, so that my enemies will not kill me and my family;
Guide me through hard work.
O God, give me mercy upon our children who are suffering;
Bring riches today as the sun rises;
Bring all fortunes to me today.

(Abaluyia, in Tutu, 1996:120)

7.2.5 Liturgies based on expulsion and cleansing

The African idea of expulsion and cleansing is used widely in Christian liturgies in the mainline churches, Pentecostal groups, and especially in the Zionist churches. These African Initiated Churches see reconciliation mostly as healing, and their rituals underline this expulsion and cleansing focus. They often use holy water, ashes, ropes, staffs and whips to drive away evil (Anderson, 1998:406; Ashforth, 2000:144-145, Hayes, 1998:170).

Hayes (1998:170) reports:

The method of healing may vary, but almost always includes prayer with the laying on of hands. Blessing with a holy stick, and drinking holy water are also common. The holy water is sometimes mixed with other substances, such as ash. Baths are sometimes prescribed. Enemas and emetics are also sometimes used. Ash is sometimes used on its own, either sprinkled over the patient or around the house as a protective device. ... [Anointing] with oil, sometimes in the form of petroleum jelly) is also used.

In line with this, Tlhagale (s a: 112) has composed a variety of liturgies to be used on different occasions to bring about social healing (Dortzbach, 2002:105). The first is intended for reconciliation in our country:

7.2.5.1 Cleansing rite using bile/gall

Lord God,
With this bile anoint the wounds brought about
by division among us.

Christ have mercy.

Let this oil soothe away the pain that has left us haggard
and wasted

Lord have mercy.

With this oil let our faces become radiant with hope

Christ have mercy.

Project us from the evil spirits that nearly destroyed
your image in us.

Lord have mercy.

With this oil heal us, strengthen us.

Christ have mercy.

Anoint our joints, weary from fighting futile battles.

Lord have mercy.

We wish to raise our hands in prayer to you Lord.

Christ have mercy.

Anoint our legs so that we be nimble and carry your gospel
of Good News and Healing,

Lord have mercy.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The myth is that bile or gall can both exorcise evil and pain, and (as a symbol of oil) can heal and anoint our brokenness. The duality of the bile or gall seems a bit confusing, but African people do not have a problem with it. They often use water in the same way – to symbolise the exorcism of anger and to symbolically cool off the participants – as illustrated in the next liturgy (Tlhagale, s a:110).

7.2.5.2 Cleansing rite with water

The minister holds a basin of water in front of him/her, saying:

With this water, cool our hands, our bodies from the heat of the sun.
With this water, kindly remove the heat of the heart.
With this water, soothe our injured feelings, remove the anger of yesterday
Cleanse us from true and false accusation
Cleanse the stain left by our own wrongdoing
Wash away the blood stains of those who died unjustly
Purify our hearts and mind.
Remove any trace of suspicion.
With this water, give us a fresh start to build a new community.
With this water, fill our hearts with your clean spirit.
With this water, prepare us to be reconciled to Yourself through Christ
And through one another and to one another.

The fact that this liturgy makes use of water instead of bile or gall obviously makes it more accessible and therefore useful in the bigger South African context. Water is also used in the Bible as a symbol of cleansing. In my opinion, this particular liturgy is very helpful: it is simple and coherent, and acceptable to a large number of people. While it utilises a commonly held association of water with cleansing, it transcends culture and makes a difference for the better. This liturgy can be used on national days of reconciliation, but also in smaller ecumenical events.

7.2.5.3 Ritual of the Aloe

The next set of rituals has more to do with our reconciliation with God, but in a typical African way, implies human reconciliation and community as well. The ritual of Aloe accompanies a funeral and as such deals with reconciliation at a time when people are confronted with their own mortality:

We accompanied our deceased brother/sister
To the border between heaven and earth,
We bade him/her farewell and pray for his/her
peaceful repose. Cleanse him/her Lord with your
precious blood so that he/she may enter the gates
of your heavenly kraal.
We who accompanied him/her to the crossroads of life
and death, we who have seen the depth of the grave;
We have stared death in the face;
We have touched the soil of the dead.

So tainted we are that we have now become part of the dead.
With this water cleanse us from the stain of death. Restore to us the gift of life.
Rekindle the hope in us;
Renew our faith in the rising of the dead.
Wash our hands so that we may participate in your meal. We ask this through
Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Tlhagale, s a: 111)

7.2.5.4 Cleansing rite using fire

The second ritual is set in the context of human conflict (in South Africa), but asks God to change the hearts of the conflicting parties:

Participants momentarily place their outstretched hands over fire while praying:

With this fire cleanse the stains on our soul
With this fire burn down the walls of division among us
With this fire purify us so that your Word
may find a clean abode in us.

With this fire test our feeble faith and do not find us wanting
With this fire inspire us with courage to embrace the truth,
drive out fear from our hearts
With this fire let us feel each other's warmth,
drive out the ghosts of the past
With this fire light our path, rekindle our fervour,
set our hearts aflame,
renew the zeal in us to build a new South Africa.
We ask this through Christ
our Lord. Amen.

(Tlhagale, s a: 109)

Both aloe juice and fire would seem acceptable to most if not all South Africans. While water has the connotation of cleansing, aloe juice and fire burn away our guilt and sin. The use of fire can even link up with the Christian symbolism of fire, which symbolises the Holy Spirit. The ideas of reconciliation and cleansing are close to the Christian understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit.

7.2.5.5 Nigerian prayer of expulsion

This prayer is simple and practical:

God in heaven, you have helped my life to grow like a tree. Now something has happened. Satan, like a bird, has carried in one twig of his own choosing after another. Before I knew it he had built a dwelling place and was living in it. Tonight, my Father, I am throwing out both the bird and the nest.

(Tutu, 1996:44)

7.2.5.6 Deliver Us from Fear of the Unknown

This Nigerian prayer deals with the problem of fear:

O Lord, we beseech thee to deliver us from the fear of the unknown future; from fear of failure; from fear of poverty; from fear of bereavement; from fear of loneliness; from fear of sickness and pain; from fear of age; and from fear of death. Help us, O Father, by thy grace to love and fear thee only, fill our hearts with cheerful courage and loving trust in thee; through our Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

(Akanu Ibaim, in Tutu, 1996:104)

7.2.5.7 Expulsion through the Eucharist

Desmond Tutu composed a litany of expulsion that makes use of the symbols of the Eucharist:

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Our God, our God, why have you forsaken us?
My God, our God, my Father, our Father
When will we ever learn, when will they ever learn?

Oh when will we ever learn that you intended us for
Shalom, for wholeness, for peace,
For fellowship, for togetherness, for brotherhood,
For sisterhood, for family?
When will we learn that you created us
As your children
As members of one family
The human family-
Created us for linking arms
To express our common humanity.

God, my Father
I am filled
With anguish and puzzlement.
Why, oh God, is there so much
Suffering, such needless suffering?
Everywhere we look there is pain
And suffering.
Why must there be so much killing,
So much death and destruction,
So much bloodshed,
So much suffering,
So much oppression, and injustice, and poverty and hunger?

I am dumbfounded
I am bewildered
And in agony-

This is the world
You loved so much that for it
You gave your only begotten
Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to hang
From the cross, done to death
Love nearly overwhelmed by hate
Light nearly extinguished by darkness
Life nearly destroyed by death-
But not quite-
For love vanquished hate
For life overcame death, there-
Light overwhelmed
Darkness, there-
And we can live with hope.
In the Eucharist as we offer the bread
That bread is all that bewilderment, the anguish, the blood, the pain, the injustice,
The poverty, the hate, the anger, the fear, the death,

The war, the bombs-
And we offer it all together with
The perfect all self-sufficient sacrifice
Of the Lamb without blemish
For peace,
For transfiguration, for compassion,
For Bush, for Hussein, for soldiers,
For civilians, for peace, for Shalom,
For family, for togetherness-

Oh my God, our God, oh my Father
When will we ever learn?
When will they ever learn?

(Tutu, 1996:87-92)

7.2.5.8 Other symbolic ways to expel evil

In the TRC process people's terrible memories were ritually exorcised by allowing them to tell their stories. It appears that any ritual that allows people to share their stories and fears constitutes a ritual of expulsion. Perhaps churches should provide more opportunities for their members to speak and recall their hurtful experiences, rather than just letting the clergy address the congregation all the time (Krog, 1998:11-12, Van der Merwe, 2003:277-279).

Bernard Connor (1998:109) suggests that a traditional ceremony be used as a ritual of expulsion. Holy Thursday, the day when a gathering of people usually wash one another's feet, can easily be used to indicate and generate a willingness to let go of all the dirt and attitudes of superiority assumed in the past.

7.2.6 Liturgy of Acceptance

The first is the African model of acceptance. Africans believe that evil can be overcome by simply accepting it into the community. The myth behind this model suggests that when a

bad person or spirit is brought into and becomes part of the community, that person or spirit will change. I have suggested that this idea can be very valuable in South Africa, and that we need to accept one another with all our baggage and faults, and create a new society where there is a place for everyone.

In the Chihamba cult the participants built new huts for the ancestors pestering them, and created a new set of descendents to honour them. Perhaps South Africans can build new monuments to honour our new and free society, monuments which could and would play an important role in emotional healing (Dortzbach, 2002:101).

7.2.6.1 Freedom Park

The erection of the Freedom Park monument, which acknowledges the fight for freedom by all South Africans, is a step in the right direction. This kind of structure should represent the shameful, as well as the proud moments of all South Africans, and not only one part of society. While most other monuments, like the Voortrekker monument or the Apartheid museum, importantly remembers the experiences of one sector of society, reconciliation monuments should unite all South Africans.

At South Africa's Freedom Park, a new history is being created by reinterpreting South Africa's tumultuous past during the 19th and 20th centuries as a time of nation building.

Seleti ([2004]:7) explains:

It might be appropriate to interpret the various activities by the different role players as motivated by the desire to build nations. To this end the political activities referred to as the Mfecane, were also wars of nation building. These wars of wandering triggered off nation-building activities across the entire southern Africa. Many nations emerged out of this process, the Zulu, the Sotho under Moshoeshoe,

Swazi under Sobhuza I, the Pedi under Sekhukhuni, the Ndebele States in South Africa and Zimbabwe and many more.

The Freedom Park also represents a new South African ethic of non-racism, non-sexism, and a commitment to a new society and an exorcism of past evils. This is further strengthened by the Memorial Declaration ([2004]:19):

We, the undersigned organisation/party hereby declare our commitment to break with the past characterised by the legacy of moral decay and the wounded spirit of our nation as a result of the colonial and apartheid systems, in the struggle against which heroes and heroines were created, who fought as freedom fighters in the conflicts/events that occurred in our land. Those events included pre-Colonial Wars, Genocide, Slavery, Wars of Resistance, Anglo-Boer/South African Wars, World War I & World War II and the Struggle for Liberation.

We, therefore rededicate our loyalty to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and unconditionally devote ourselves to live and be guided by its founding values of human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedom: non-racialism and non-sexism: supremacy of the constitution and the rule of law: universal adult suffrage, a national common voter's roll, regular elections and a multi-party system of democratic government, to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness. We do so as a living testimony and monument to remind current and future generations that never, never, ever again will our province and country experience the bitter past which, today, we are burying at this site: ashes of the past with which we collectively cement a future of a better life for all. We further re-affirm that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity, and we honour and remember all those who suffered for justice, peace and freedom in our land.

The Freedom Park is thus aimed at creating a new shared national identity and patriotism (Seleti, [2004]:6). Although the ideals of the Freedom Park have not yet been achieved, and very few South Africans have visited the monument so far, it has the potential to become a living ritual of acceptance.

7.2.6.2 Prayer of a dying man

A Dinka prayer from the Sudan hints at the new possibility of acceptance:

And though I behold a man hate me,
I will love him.
O God, Father, help me, Father!
O God, Creator, help me, Father!
And even though I behold a man hate me,
I will love him.

(Tutu, 1996:101)

7.2.6.3 Collect of Poplarville

In 1959, the African American priest, Pauli Murray, wrote a prayer that was included into the Episcopal Church's "Book of Common Prayer". This prayer, called the "Collect for Poplarville", highlights the idea that reconciliation by acceptance can also mean that a person can win his or her enemies over through goodness and love.

Although this prayer comes from a very different context, it gives us an idea of what a prayer of acceptance could look like:

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord;
Teach us no longer to dread
hounds yelping in the distance,
the footfall at the door,
the rifle butt on the window pane.
And by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night;
Give us fearlessness to face
the bomb thrown from the darkness,
the gloved hand on the pistol,
the savage intention.
Give us courage to stand firm against
our tormentors without rancor-
Teach us that most difficult of tasks-
to pray for them,
to follow, not burn, thy cross!

(in Caldbeck, 2002:60-61)

7.2.6.4 A Prayer for Africa

From Ghana comes an accepting prayer, written specifically for Africa, which is very applicable to the South African situation:

O Lord, o Ruler of the world,
O Creator, O Father,
this prayer is for Africa.
For our brothers in the South,
for our brothers in the North.
You know
that the white brothers have made their black brothers
second-class people.
O Lord, this hurts us so much.
We suffer from this.
You have given us a dark skin
so that we may better bear
your strong sun.
Why have our brothers done this to us?
They are not better than we,
and we are not better than they.
What comforts us is
that you always love most
those who suffer most.
We call ourselves Christians on both sides.
But we go to different churches,
as if there were also different heavens.
The white men
still have power in parts of Africa.
Help them, to use their power wisely
and accept us as brothers.
Take the mistrust out of their hearts and minds
and make them share with us,
for this is our continent,
or, more truly, yours;
and you have marked us for this continent
and them for the North.
We also pray for ourselves.
O Lord,
keep our hearts free from hatred.
And let us also be grateful for what
missionaries have done here
and others too, for government and for the economy.
Let us become brothers again,
as it should be among your children.
You have died for all,
and risen,

Halleluia!
We praise you, our Father,
who are greater than Europe and Africa;
who loves where we hate;
who long ago could have destroyed us.
But you love us so much
and we have not deserved it.
Praise be to you, O Lord!
Amen.

(Tutu, 1996:101-103)

7.2.6.5 Family metaphors

Christian teaching offers helpful resources to create a new family. The earliest Christian believers saw themselves as a new people, who were defined by their religious beliefs instead of their language or culture. Bosch (1982:30) writes:

In this community there was room for simple fishermen from Galilee, for erstwhile Zealots such as Simon and one-time tax-collectors such as Matthew, for erudite Pharisees such as Paul, for members of the nobility such as Manaen who had been brought up with Herod, for Jews and Greeks, for Blacks from Africa such as Simon called Niger, who served with Paul as an elder at the church in Antioch, for the slave Onesimus but also for his owner Philemon, for prisoners but also for members of the imperial guard and for a captain in the Roman army.

These early Christians' metaphors and images can be used to great effect both inside and outside the churches. There are numerous Biblical texts that describe the new family.

Paul writes of this:

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace.

(Ephesians 2:14-15)

7.2.7 Liturgy of Rebellion

This reconciliation model states that the seemingly harmonious establishment may at times be the biggest threat to reconciliation. Some sort of ritual rebellion must confront this “harmony” in order to achieve reconciliation.

It will be quite a challenge to find a way to re-enact this ritual in our present society.

Traditionally, participants ran around, breaking taboos and insulting passers-by. This will probably not work in our volatile society. What we need is some sort of structured way in which people can vent their anger and pent-up feelings and bring about volitional change (Dotzbach, 2002:115).

Perhaps dance and other art forms can provide an answer. Through participation in the arts, persons can release their feelings and call attention to their grievances in a powerful but less threatening way. Through music, drama and the visual arts we can move closer to reconciliation (Hay, 1998:136).

Huber (1993:590) anticipates more monuments for the victims of suffering. He believes that: “Humankind needs memorials like the Hiroshima Peace Park or Yad Vashem more urgently than it needs columns of victory”. Such monuments could symbolically challenge society and its power structures.

7.2.7.1 Rebellion text from the Psalms

In Church, the writings of someone like Luke or the prophets will provide the beginnings of new liturgies. Texts modelled on the Magnificat (Luke 1) and Jesus’ inaugural sermon

(Luke 4) will challenge the order of things. The Psalms offer a wealth of possibilities, for example Psalm 82:

God presides in the great assembly;
he gives judgment among the "gods":

"How long will you defend the unjust
and show partiality to the wicked?
Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless;
maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.
Rescue the weak and needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.
"They know nothing,
they understand nothing.
They walk about in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

"I said, 'You are "gods";
you are all sons of the Most High.'
But you will die like mere men;
you will fall like every other ruler."

Rise up, O God,
judge the earth,
for all the nations are your inheritance.

7.2.7.2 Symbolic actions

Ndungane (2003:104-105) writes that Jesus Christ subverted traditional power structures by washing his disciples' feet and by befriending undesirables and outcasts. To wash each other's feet is a common ritual in churches, especially during the time of Lent, but it is usually explained differently. The same ritual can be used as a ritual of rebellion, as a challenge to the power structures. Ndungane suggests that the ordination of women should be a big priority for the church. I believe that the unsanctioned ordination of women (and other marginalised people) would also be a ritual of rebellion that confronts the current injustices.

Albert Nolan (1988:158-159) believes that singing and dancing was the “most visible and most characteristic manifestation of the struggle”. He suggests this as a powerful ritual against oppressive structures and explains that singing and dancing expresses a hope for a new world and is a celebration of solidarity and unity.

7.2.7.3 Extract from Confession of Alexandria

The Confession of Alexandria is a call for struggle and thus a liturgy of rebellion:

We have spoken against evil when it was convenient. We have often avoided suffering for the sake of others, thus refusing to follow His example (1 Peter 2:21). We have preferred religiosity to what the Holy Spirit might be whispering to us. We have struggled against colonialism and many other evils and yet have built up again those things which we had torn down (Gal 2:18). We confess that we had often condoned exploitation and oppression by foreigners. When we have condemned these evils we have condoned the same things by our people. We have turned a blind eye to the structures of injustice in our societies, concentrating on the survival of our churches as institutions.

We have been a stumbling block for too many. For these and many other sins, we are sorry and ask God to forgive us.

A full understanding of this forgiveness leaves us no choice but to continue the struggle for the full liberation of all men and women, and their societies.

We accept that political liberation in Africa, and the Middle East, is part of this liberation. But the enslaving forces and the abuse of human rights in independent Africa point to the need for a more comprehensive understanding of liberation. Liberation is therefore a CONTINUING STRUGGLE.

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or conceive, by the power which is at work among us, to Him be the glory in the Church of Christ Jesus from generation to generation evermore!
(Ephesians 3:20-21)

(Tutu, 1996:49-50)

7.2.7.4 Belhar Confession

The Belhar Confession was drawn up in 1982 by the Dutch Reformed Mission Church with a view to providing a Christian response to the injustices of that time. It was later accepted

as a fourth confession in the Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa (URCSA), and is at present being studied and hotly debated by the Dutch Reformed Church as part of the process of unification with the URCSA (Botha, 1998: 23-24).

It is also a liturgy of rebellion that challenges the unjust structures in society. The liturgical version of the Belhar Confession can be used to great effect:

We believe in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Who gathers, protects and nourishes the church
from the beginning of the world to the end.

**The church is one.
The church is holy,
The church is universal.
It is the community of God's children,
called together from the whole of humanity.**

We believe that the reconciling work of Christ
gives birth to a uniting church,
because church unity is a gift from God
and a goal we need to strive for.

**The unity of the church must become visible
so that the people around us can see
how separation and hatred are overcome in Christ.**

We believe that the genuine faith in Jesus Christ
is the only condition for membership
in this Christian church.

**So we reject the suggestion
that colour, class, gender, or culture
should determine who belongs to this church.**

We believe that God has entrusted to the church
the message of reconciliation,
and that the church is called to be the salt of the earth
and the light of the world

**So we reject the belief
that the gospel encourages separation of people
on the basis of race, gender, class, or culture.**

We believe that God wants to bring about

true justice and lasting peace on earth;
We believe that God is, in a special sense,
The God of the suffering, the poor and the downtrodden.

**God gives justice to the oppressed
and bread to the hungry;
God sets captives free
and makes the blind to see;
God protects strangers, orphans and widows
and obstructs the plans of the wicked.**

We believe that the church is the property of God
and that it should stand where God stands:
against injustice and with those who are wronged.

**So we reject every policy that causes injustice
and every teaching that allows injustice to flourish.**

We are called to confess and do all this
in obedience to Jesus Christ, our only Lord;
even if authorities or laws oppose this;
even if punishment and suffering are the result.

**Jesus is Lord!
We will follow him!
To the one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be honour and glory for ever and ever!
Amen**

(URCSA Melodi Ya Tshwane, s a:1-2)

7.2.7.5 May Anger and Fear turn to Love

It is important that liturgies of rebellion clearly define the intended struggle, and that the struggle and rebellion will stop when it has achieved what it set out to do. The following prayer (written by Capetonian Margaret Nash when thousands of young people were jailed without trial during the Apartheid era) serves as a conclusion to a struggle and ends in an expulsion of anger:

O God
whose Son in anger

drove the money-changers
from the temple
let the anger of Nkwenkwe Nkomo
and his fellow detainees
be to the cleansing
of this land.

O God
I hold before you
the anger
the rage
the frustration
the sorrow
of Mrs. Nkomo and all black mothers
who demand for their children
the same chance to grow up
strong and tall
loving and unafraid
as any white mother
wants for her children;

In penitence
I offer you
my own mixed-up anger
that it, with theirs,
may be taken up
into your redemptive will
in which the clash
between anger and fear
oppressed and oppressor
can give way
to the incomprehensible action
of agape-love
bringing about reconciliation
the embrace of the other
the alien
the enemy
creating the festival of shalom
in which the wolf shall lie down
with the lamb
and the whole of life on earth
shall rejoice
in the splendour of your glory.

(Margaret Nash, in Tutu, 1996:45-46)