

COLLECTIVE SIN IN AFRICA

A MISSIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE AFRICAN CRISIS

by

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Summary

This thesis does not attempt to castigate Africa for its collective sin. The focus on collective sin in Africa does not suggest that collective sin is limited to Africa, but simply that Africa is suffering from this sin. It is regrettable, but indeed a reality, that collective sin has impacted negatively on Africa. The influence of sin on African theological thinking has had far reaching consequences and has also affected the culture of Africa in general. Sin has also completely permeated social and political arenas in Africa.

This thesis identifies three kinds of collective sin: cultural sin, social sin and structural sin. It points out that, unfortunately, sin has strongly influenced the collective existence of the Church throughout the world. The conclusion is reached that the mission of the church always therefore remains to counter sin and its origin, whether this is original, individual or collective sin within the church or in the community.

The argument begins by setting out the conceptual framework to this study and outlining the methodology. Thereafter, it provides a clarification of the terminology used. Chapter Two presents an understanding of collective sin in African traditional religion by situating the discussion within an anthropological, historical and ideological frame of reference.

Chapters Three and Four, respectively, explore the three categories of collective sin in depth and explore collective sin within a specific tribe – the Baluba tribe. A systematic treatment of collective sin follows in Chapter Five. This involves providing a full theological and biblical explication of sin.

Chapter Six discusses collective sin, more generally, in Africa; attempts to identify the causes of the crisis; and begins to proffer some tentative solutions. These latter solutions are more fully articulated in Chapter Eight, by

identifying the true mission of church. The penultimate chapter places collective sin within a global and a church context.

An annotated Harvard system has been used for notation and bibliographical references.

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DEDICATION

To my father, Tshilenga Wabenda who will not be privileged to read this thesis.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

1.1 ORIENTATION

1.1.1 Research Problem

As the title indicates, this thesis attempts to examine the phenomenon and the theology of collective sin. Large numbers of Africans, in practically every African nation, do not have enough food to live on. More than seventy million (Timberlake, 1995:224) has abandoned their homes and farms in search of food and water; many have abandoned their countries because of war, a destroyed environment, or bankruptcy of different kinds. The crises of Africa are economic, political, cultural and religious.

Political scientists, economists and other analysts have made and continue to make the crises of Africa the subject of their study. In many respects, the history of Africa is tragic involving such horrors as enslavement in United States of America and elsewhere; colonisation for some 120 years; and neo-colonialism today. The African knows all kinds of suffering, discrimination, alienation, humiliation, poverty and sickness, and the like. This tragic situation has led to many studies in a variety of fields.

The need to make a theological and missiological study is obvious. The question is to know whether something has gone wrong between God and the African. Is it possible to have a bad relationship between God and a specific race? Can one culture, one structure, one social group be more sinful than another? What is the mission of the church in this respect? These are the problems to be discussed in this thesis.

1.1.2 Conceptual Framework

An important question to be addressed at this stage is: why is this theme being dealt with in missiology and not in systematic theology? A study of collective sin would, under normal circumstances, be a contribution towards the theology of sin, which should be part of systematic theology. That is why the topic is dealt with in a systematic way, and specific reference is made to the work of systematic theologians in one of the chapters. However, the focus of this research is missiological. This means that an attempt is made to define the mission of the church in terms of collective sin. The systematic treatment of collective sin and the missiological theology of sin thus become part of the theory and theology of mission, and the strategy developed to address the problem of collective sin enriches the practice of mission.

The significance of this study is therefore motivated from within the context of mission, although one of the aims is actually to emphasise the missiological dimension of the issue of sin.

1.1.3 The Aim, Purpose and Objective

The objectives of this thesis are:

- to provide an exposition of collective sin;
- to restore an awareness of this in theology and in the church;
- to show that every culture, human group, tribe, clan, nation, in short, every collection of people, usually has its own characteristic collective sin; and
- to show African sin, and specifically Luba sin, as a way of life.

All the above are considered in the light of the mission of the church, while a new way of struggling against collective sin is also proposed.

In order to deal with these objectives, it is necessary to distinguish between the various types of collective sin. Within a missiological framework, the researcher seeks to establish, *inter-alia*, the following:

- Does collective sin exist? The researcher endeavours to argue the case for this through interdisciplinary insights.
- If it does exist, how can the church work against it? The research attempts to contribute to a solution of the pastoral problem of collective sin, specifically African collective sin.

1.1.4 Hypothesis

Some theologians may find it difficult to believe the following assumptions:

- ❖ that collective sin is a social, cultural and anthropological reality;
- ❖ that collective sin has a biblical foundation;
- ❖ that collective sin is a theological category; and
- ❖ that the mission of the church must be to take up this challenge.

These assumptions are explored in this work.

1.1.5 Delimitation of the Study

Although collective sin is not only an African problem, but is universal, this study will focus on only one tribe, namely the Luba. This case study will be used to understand the birth and growth of collective sin, which can also be called social or cultural sin. The Luba tribe is part of the nation of Congo, so the history of this country will also be relevant.

1.2 METHOD OF RESEARCH

1.2.1 Documentary Study

A study was made of the relevant literature in order to prepare a theoretical background to the investigation. These sources dealt mostly with theology and cultural anthropology, but also with African history, African literature, the Luba, medicine, and the like. The theory and observations drawn from these sources served as an invaluable base against which to test the fieldwork.

1.2.2 Fieldwork

The researcher himself comes from the Luba tribe, so the necessary contact with and observations of the Luba people were easy, and backed by personal experience. All believers and non-believers, Christians and non-Christians, old people as well as the young were included in the study. Many valuable observations were gleaned from these informal, unstructured interviews. These observations added to the validity of the feedback obtained by means of formal interviews.

1.2.3 Research by interview

Questionnaires were circulated. The interviewers probed the Baluba people to get them to think about themselves, and to consider whether they saw and accepted their special sins. The interviewers delved into the history of the Baluba to determine how they became such a proud group. Further interviews were conducted with members of other tribes living around the Baluba. They were probed about their perceptions of the Baluba. Still more interviews canvassed other African tribal people, asking which sins of the Baluba were recognised by themselves or other tribes.

1.3 CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY

In the following section, the more recurrent terms, which have been associated with the concept of collectivity, and which give us the adjective 'collective' are explored. An attempt is made to clarify why this adjective, collective, and not 'communal', 'tribal', 'national', 'ethnic', or 'clan' has been chosen.

Some terms create confusion because they are almost synonymous in certain contexts. That is another reason why it is essential to distinguish between terms and to clarify the terms chosen. Specialised terminology is defined and explained in the appropriate chapters in which it is used, but at this stage a preliminary explanation is necessary. The main terms are:

- ❖ community,
- ❖ group,
- ❖ mutuality,
- ❖ association,
- ❖ society,
- ❖ ethnic group,
- ❖ clan,
- ❖ tribe,
- ❖ race,
- ❖ nation,
- ❖ state,
- ❖ collectivity, and
- ❖ collectiveness.

1.3.1 A community

This term is defined as:

- joint or common ownership, liability, and so on,
- identity of character, common qualities,
- life in association with others,
- a body of people organised into political, municipal or social unity,

- a body of people living in the same locality; of common race, religion, pursuits, which are not shared by those among whom they live,
- a body of people living together and practising community of goods (*Oxford Illustrated Dictionary*, 1962:163).

An example of this could be the community of Congolese people in South Africa. They are characterised by a common origin and identity, and share the same difficulties of life in a foreign country, even if they do not live in the same locality.

1.3.2 A group

A group is understood as ‘a number of persons or things regarded as forming a unity, on account of any kind of mutual or common relation, or classed together on account of a certain degree of similarity’ (*The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. IV, 1961:459). A group is visibly together. A mass of people or a crowd may be examples of groups.

1.3.3 A mutuality

According to the dictionary ‘mutuality’ means:

- a quality or condition of being mutual; reciprocity,
- a law. A condition of things under which two parties are mutually bound to perform certain reciprocal duties,
- a system of organising conditions of work by agreement between the workmen involved and the employer; and also mutuality systems (*Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. X, 1989:155).

In a mutuality the people are not necessarily together, but they are linked by the law of their organisation. They do not even meet. The insurance firm *Old Mutual* is a good example in South Africa.

1.3.4 An association

This is merely defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as ‘a personal connection or link’ (Vol. IV, 1961:139). A soccer club is an example of an association.

1.3.5 A society

At this stage, only a preliminary definition of society is given, but more extensive definitions are given when the problem of social sin is treated. Ellwood provides two definitions: 'The word *society* is used popularly to designate a variety of more or less permanent human groups' (1943:3); and: 'Using *society* in a concrete sense, then, we find that a society is any group of individuals who carry on a common life by means of conscious interactions' (1943:4). The South African society is an illustration of this.

1.3.6 An ethnic group

The word derives from the Greek word for nations (peoples – *ethnoi*). According to the dictionary the term is used 'pertaining to or having common racial, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics, designating a racial or other group within the larger systems, hence ethnic group' (*Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. I, 1989:979-980). A South African example is the Nguni ethnic group. It does not claim descent from a common ancestor, but represents peoples who have a great similarity in racial, cultural and linguistic characteristics. The isiZulu, Swazi, Ndebele, and even the Shangaan are tribes belonging to the Nguni ethnic group. Another example is the ethnic group called the Sotho, which contains three tribes, who can be distinguished in different areas, but because of their cultural similarities can be called one ethnic group. These tribes are the Northern, Southern, and Western Sotho (or Tswana).

1.3.7 A clan

A clan is simply understood as 'a number of persons descended from the same ancestor and associated together' (*Oxford Illustrated Dictionary*, 1962). The clan is the major subdivision of the tribe. The *Bakwa kalonji* is a clan that is part of the Baluba tribe.

1.3.8 A tribe

The definition of a tribe poses a number of difficulties. A first definition is from *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Vol. IX, 1961:339) which defines tribe as 'a group of persons forming a community and claiming descent from a common ancestor'. That makes a tribe the same as a

clan, or a family, or a community of peoples having the same surname (*ibid.*). Another definition of a tribe is: 'a local division of a primitive or barbarous people' (*The New Century Dictionary and Encyclopaedia*, Vol. X, 1911:6465).

The *Oxford English Dictionary* speaks of a tribe as 'an aggregate under a headman or chief', while *the New Century Dictionary and Encyclopaedia* asserts it to be a division 'united into a social or political community'. An important qualification is that: 'In some cases the tribe can hardly be otherwise described than as a group of men subject to some one chieftain' (Hodge, 1910:815). The Baluba is a tribe, because it claims descent from a common ancestor, and it has one chief.

1.3.9 Race

Race is understood as: 'a way of naming the difference between members of a particular collectivity and the "other", the alien. Race established a boundary between those who share certain biological or physiological characteristics which may or may not be seen to be expressed mainly in culture or life-style, but are always founded on the separation of human populations by some nation or stock or collective heredity of traits' (Montserrat Crubernan, 1996:85). The notion of race calls to mind the ideas of phenotype. Black, White, etc. are examples of races.

1.3.10 A nation

Another term, which is closely related to tribe, is nation. The etymology of this word 'nation' helps us to understand why it stands so close in meaning to 'tribe'. Derived from the Latin *natus sum* (past participle of *nascor*: to be born), it suggests a common origin, a major connotation of tribe. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989:237) explains that a nation is 'an extensive aggregate of persons, so closely associated with each other by common descent, language or history, as to form a distinct race or people, usually organised as a separate political state and occupying a definite territory' Crubernan defines nation as 'a human group conscious of forming a community, sharing a common culture, attached to a clearly demarcated territory, having a common past and a common project for the future and claiming the right to rule itself. Thus, the nation includes five dimensions: psychological

(consciousness of forming a group), cultural, territorial, political and historical' (1996:47). A nation usually occupies a state, and is the subject of the state. It consists of different ethnic groups, races, language and cultural groups.

Even greater difficulties are presented by the term nation. In the English language, nation, as well as its derivatives such as national, nationality, nationalism and nationalisation, are used to denote concepts intimately connected to the state. Thus France, the United Kingdom, the Republic of South Africa and The Democratic Republic of Congo as examples of nations.

1.3.11 A state

The state is a country seen from the perspective of being governed. The state is the government and constitutions established in a country. The state consists of the political mechanisms to govern, the political organization, which is the basis of civil government (either generally or abstractly or in a particular country): Hence, the supreme civil power and government vested in a country or nation is the state (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989:554). The state refers to the boundaries and territories as recognised in terms of international law. We speak of the State of Israel, or of Russia, for example, are spoken of. Treitschke defines the state as 'the people legally united as an independent power' (1914:8). Weber also sees the state as 'a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory' (1948:70).

1.3.12 A collectivity

The *Oxford Dictionary* provides three senses of a collectivity, namely:

- 1a) a collective state or quality, collectiveness; or
- 1b) the whole taken collectively; to aggregate, sum, mass;
- 2) a collective ownership; collectivism in practice; and
- 3) a collective body of people forming a community or state (Vo1.1:621).

This term is usually used as the adjective 'collective', which is frequently used in the definition, which follows, because all the examples given above are also examples of collectivities.

1.3.13 Collectiveness

This adjective means ‘formed by a collection of individual persons or things; constituting a collection; gathered into one; taken as a whole; aggregate, collected (as opposed to individual...)’ (*ibid.*: 621). In this variety of terms, there is much resemblance as well as differences or variance between them. All terms have something in common, a common sense or idea, an idea that is the opposite of individual. However, in the list of terms, there are different nuances. Certain terms are so close that they sometimes cause confusion. Without using all the meanings of the terms, only the differences and special nuances have been illustrated.

A further illustration may help to give clarity. The Congolese community in South Africa is the people from the Congo who are living in South Africa. These people do not live together, but are still one community, because they belong to each other. They share the same history and culture. This community lives within South African society. When this community decides to live together, it becomes a society, because the permanence will characterise this community, and this community will inevitably make certain rules for living. They may decide to see President Mbeki together; then they become a group. When they start to ask for contributions for insurance, or for funeral expenses, they become a mutual institution.

When the people are expected to adhere to one organisation, they became an association. This is not a tribe, clan or ethnic group, because they belong to different tribes, clans and ethnic groups. They may also belong to different races. But they are a community living in a foreign state and nation.

To summarize, a variety of ideas are found in the different terms as suggested below:

- ❖ In community, the idea of common qualities and identity of character are found.
- ❖ In a group, there is the idea of presence.
- ❖ In mutuality, the idea of reciprocity is found.
- ❖ In association, the idea of membership is involved.
- ❖ In society, the ideas of permanence, continuity and law and order are found.

- ❖ In tribe, clan, ethnic group, the idea of a group, which has the sentiment of belonging to a common ancestor, and also the idea of culture, are found.
- ❖ In race, the idea of biological collectivity and the idea of phenotype are prevalent.
- ❖ In state, there is the notion of legality.
- ❖ In nation, the ideas of culture, territories and history are important.

In all these diversities, “collective” is seen as the umbrella term. It is the term, which encompasses all of these others. It is a generic term. That is why this term has been chosen for the title of this work. Communal sin, group sin, mutual sin, associative sin, social sin, tribal sin, clan sin, racial sin, state and national sin are included. All of these sins exist, but “collective sin” is the general term used for all these sins.

This leads to the following classification of the concepts:

Sociological Concepts	Cultural Concepts	Structural or Institutional Concepts	Psychological Concepts
Family	Religion	State	Crowd
Ethnic Group	Language	Government	Mass
Clan	Literature	Empire	
Community	Civilisation	Country	
Nation		Province	

This offers four varieties of collective sin: social, cultural, structural and momentary grouping or psychological sin. All questions will be discussed in later chapters. The first logical steps, however, to trace and discuss African sin and African traditional religion. Other terms will be defined in their respective chapters.

The concept of sin is dealt with in Chapter Five. It is preferable to merely the working definition of sin. Sin is conceived of everything that is against the will of God. These things can be acts, thoughts, feelings, words, silence, behaviour, customs, cultures, and so forth.

CHAPTER II

COLLECTIVE SIN

IN

AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS

2.1 THE AFRICAN VIEW OF LIFE: COMMUNAL AND HOLISTIC

Anybody who wants to approach African culture will have to understand the centrality of the common life and communal life in these cultures. Setiloane says: 'The well-known changing of the Descartian [*sic*] dictum by Mbiti is right, when he says: I belong, therefore I am'. Setiloane himself adds: 'It needs to be stated clearly that this African sense of community extends to the family, the clan or the tribe' (Setiloane, 1986:10).

This confirms the fact that 'the key to a proper understanding of the Bantu customs and institutions would thus appear to be the fact of an existing community which symbolises the unity of life. Life itself is furthered by the relations among the members of the community' (Mulago, 1955:143, own translation).

About his own tribe, Kenyata says: 'According to the Gikuyu way of thinking, nobody is an isolated individual, but rather, his uniqueness is a secondary fact about him; first and foremost he is several people's relative and several people's contemporary' (Kenyata, 1965:297). And he declares: 'The spirit of collectivism was (so) much ingrained in the mind of the people' (Kenyata, 1965:297).

Mbiti writes: 'In traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone, only corporately. Man owes his existence to other people, including those of a past generation, as well as to his contemporaries. He is simply a part of the whole. The community must therefore make, create or produce the individual; for the individual depends on the corporate group' (Mbiti, 1969:106). Donders also confirms that: 'Furthermore, solidarity and brotherhood are fundamental aspects which characterise Bantu relationships: 'solidarity and brotherhood make the network of life in the community'. (Donders, 1985:150). He adds that

fecundity, procreation and prosperity in life are not seen in terms of the individual, but with reference to the whole community (Donders, 1985:150). With Senghor, one can say 'ours is a communal society' (Senghor, 1965:93-94). Ethnologist Delafosse (1925:84) describes African society as 'collectivistic in its nature'.

The principle in Africa is that: you cannot be human alone. '*Motho ke motho ke batho*' (Sesotho). '*Bakufinga bantu ka bakufingi nsona*' (Tshibula). It means that the building of life is done with and through human beings, and not with materials. 'Our humanity finds fulfilment only in community with others' (Setiloane, 1986:46).

Collectivism in Africa is not only a custom that can be observed within society, but it also affects and determines the whole concept of life. The perception of life is collective. The African has a communal life, a communal conception and orientation of life. Communalism is internalised. In Africa everybody lives, thinks and views everything from a communal perspective.

"Ubuntu" is a term used by the African to denote this integration of a human being into society; it signifies collective personhood. Lovemore Mbigi and Jenny Maree (1995:1) state that 'Ubuntu is a metaphor that describes the significance of group solidarity on survival issues that is so central to the survival of African communities, who as a result of poverty and deprivation have to survive through brotherly group care and not individual self-reliance'. They also add: 'The essence of Ubuntu is a collectively shared experience and collective solidarity' (1995:109). They emphasise that 'the concept of Ubuntu... is collective solidarity of the poor on survival issues' (1995:3).

Mbigi adds additional elements. He says:

Ubuntu (or *unhu* in Shona) is a literal translation for collective personhood and collective reality. It is best expressed by the Xhosa proverb, "*muntu ngumuntu ngabantu*" which means "I am because we are". We have to encounter the collective "I". I am only a person through others. Ubuntu is not just an abstract concept. It permeates every aspect of our African lives. It is expressed in our collective singing, dancing, efforts in work, story telling, funerals, expression of grief and wailing, respect and acceptance, sharing and compassion, hunting, initiation and war rites (toyi

toy), celebration, rituals, worship. If we are going to build a competitive developed nation, competitive institutions as well as organisations, the unmistakable collective solidarity in African life should find its expression in our modern forms of business entrepreneurship, business organisations and management (Mbigi, 1995:2-3).

He adds:

We have a right to celebrate who we are, our collective being, including our collective communion with our ancestors. In African solidarity communities and institutions, learning is a collective social process facilitated by collective rituals and ceremonies as well as collective dancing and singing. The collective learning endeavour is facilitated by both mentors and colleagues.

Life is not divided into compartments such as social life, economic life, political life and religious life, as in the Western concept. For an African, life is interconnected. The vision of life is holistic in nature. 'The most pervasive and fundamental collective experience of the African people is their religious experience. It is integrated into all aspects of their lives on a daily basis' (Lovemore Mbigi, with Jenny Maree, 1995:2).

This fact has led to the concept of African Traditional Religions.

2.2 AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS (ATR)

2.2.1 The Major Themes in ATR

There has been extensive discussion about African Traditional Religions (in the plural) and African Traditional Religion (singular). For the purpose of this study, the plural term is preferred. Nevertheless, this debate is not of great importance for this present work, that is the reason for the immediate concentration on this topic.

There are many aspects of ATR that can be dealt with, such as God; the divinities and the spirits; the ancestors; the mystical powers of witchcraft, sorcery, and animism; the practices around circumcision, birth, marriage, and death; the specialists (medicine men, diviners, rainmakers, prophets, priests and herbalists) and their prayers; sacrifices; taboos; rites and rituals; the concept of time; symbolism; sacred ceremonies, and so forth. The great debate, however, centres around questions about God and the spirits (that is the name of God, the

meaning of the African names for God, their use and origin, for instance; the difference between the gods, divinities, spirits and ancestors, including the hierarchy among the divinities, spirits and ancestors); the question of ancestor “worship” or “veneration” (Is not worship for God only? Are the ancestors mediators?) Further: are the powers, mysticism, witchcraft, sorcery and fetishism indeed a reality? What is the African understanding of life after death? Is animism a correct and suitable title for the African religions?

There are indeed many topics to be discussed with regard to ATR, which unfortunately cannot be undertaken within this present study, but all these discussions lead us to note one thing for sure: the idea of communality is central. God is accorded a communal title. The divinities and spirits belong to the family, clan or tribe. Although the ancestors have left the community where they used to live, they still protect it and in a way still live within it. For this reason they are called: ‘Those who have left death’. This will be discussed at a later stage.

The powers of mysticism, witchcraft, sorcery and fetishism are linked to specific families, clans or tribes. These powers fulfil the function of either protecting or destroying the community. The function of initiation is to integrate the youth into the community. Circumcision fulfils a similar function, as it is done to members of the community in preparing the younger members of the community for marriage, for giving birth to children, and to enlarge the community. Birth is linked directly to the community. The children are its wealth, power and means of survival. Marriage is not an individualistic matter. It is in fact a family, tribal and/or communal matter, from the preparation for future marriages (the giving of a dowry by the man’s family, and the acceptance by the wife’s family) to the marital life. Everything is conducted by the community, for the community. A man does not marry a wife only, but the whole of her family as well. The same goes for the woman, for she does not marry the man only, but also the whole of his family. Rites, rituals and ceremonies take place within the community. They strengthen tribal tradition. The symbolism is understood by the tribesmen and builds the unity of the tribe. Taboo is also tribal and fulfils the function of protecting the community against evil.

The sacred is salutary, protective, symbolic and functions as an entity to unite the tribe. (These ideas are fully developed in my Masters dissertation on sacredness [Tshilenga, 1988:40-41].) One idea repeatedly comes to the fore: everything is for the benefit of the community, and for the purpose of living collectively.

2.2.2 Early Western approaches and attitudes

European and American missionaries, anthropologists, sociologists and students of comparative religion in general could be characterised by their a negative attitude to and a misconception of the African traditional religions. Negative attitudes are expressed in terms such as "primitive", and the misconceptions by using words such as "animism", which was introduced by E.B. Tylor (1871). This term was used for African traditional religions, in contrast to other religions of the world. It is still used. The principal idea was that, in African traditional religions, people would consider every object as having its own soul.

These earlier studies observed phenomena, but failed to understand them properly. Every object does not have its own soul, but every object has religious value according to the tenets of African belief. There are many such misunderstandings about African traditional religions, but they cannot be dealt with in the framework of this study.

2.2.3 Later studies

The difference between these and the earlier studies lies in the change of attitude, as well as in a different approach. Later studies refuse to engage in any kind of condemnation. The authors write in full sympathy with disparate ideas. The first writer in this category was Temples, whose study helped to change the attitude of the following writers.

The name of Temples's book is *Bantu Philosophy*. This was the beginning of the transformation in the approach and attitude towards African studies. John V Taylor represents the same attitude. Among these sympathetic studies Mbiti distinguishes three categories: (a) systematic studies, (b) those concentrating on the religion of various tribes of

individual peoples, and (c) single-subject studies among a specific group. African scholars, such as Mbiti himself, who are often concerned with studies among their own peoples. Thus Mbiti classifies himself and his approach as ontological.

These later studies also seems to emphasise two elements: the first is the fact that African life centres on the community, and secondly, the central fact that for Africans all life seems to be religious.

The attitude and position of Mbiti may be considered as an example. His works are some of the most important religious studies, because of the fact that they extend to black Africa as a whole, and that he himself is familiar with and is part of African culture. He (1989:117) claims that,

We see now how both birth and childhood are a religious process, in which the child is constantly flooded with religious activities and attitudes starting long before it is born. A child not only continues the physical line of life, being in some societies thought to be a re-incarnation of the departed, but becomes the intensely religious focus of keeping the parents in their state of personal immortality. The physical aspects of birth and the ceremonies that might accompany pregnancy, birth and childhood, are regarded with religious feeling and experience - that another religious being has been born into a profoundly religious community and religious world

In writing about the African, Mbiti confirms that he is a religious man living in an intensely religious universe (1969:106).

Mbiti shows how African religion is found in the rituals, ceremonies and festivals of the people, the shrines, sacred places, religious objects, arts, symbols, proverbs, riddles, the wise sayings of the people, as well as in the myths and legends, beliefs and customs. He concludes that African religion is to be viewed in all the aspects of life and in its influence in all areas of life (1975:19-27). Thorpe confirms the same when she writes: 'Religion in African societies has been perpetuated by an almost unconscious process: through the communal religious life of the tribe, the repetition of myths and legends, and participation in the cult. For Africans religion is all embracing: agriculture, social life, the political structure, economics - everything is imbued with religious significance' (Thorpe, 1991:107).

In her book on the primal religions world-wide, Thorpe (1992:3) states: 'In primal cultures, religious alignments are regarded by all in the group as indispensable to social harmony and satisfactory adaptation to their immediate environment. Religion is an integral part of life itself. All aspects of life are interconnected, implying that there is little differentiation between the sacred and the profane'; she adds: 'The solidarity of the community is a pronounced feature, not only of African traditional religion, but of all primal cultures' (1991:119).

Testifying to a specific tribe of Africa, Maimela writes: 'The Zulu life view is far more holistic than that of western oriented societies, where religion, work and home are often compartmentalized. The Zulu world is integral, with a supernatural dynamic power pervading all aspects. Therefore all human actions, personal as well as social, are responsible actions imbued with religious significance' (Maimela, 1991:34-35). Another writer speaks about the country of Chad, saying: 'The social domain and religious domain cannot be analysed separately when one speaks about the population of Chad. Religion goes beyond the individual. In reality, for the person who is born there, there are not two domains, but only one, as society and religion are actually one thing. Social behaviour is determined by belief, and religious behaviour has resulted from social pressure' (my translation of Jean Chapelle 1980:126).

2.3 AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

To speak of African Philosophy is to speak of African Traditional Religion.

One of the first people to write about African Philosophy was the Belgian missionary Placide Temples in his well-known book *Bantu Philosophy*. Five criticisms have been leveled against Temples's book and his discussion of African philosophy.

- 1) One cannot have a philosophy without a philosopher. An anonymous philosophy does not exist. Hountondji (1987) makes this point.
- 2) Philosophy cannot be collective. Temples's construct is less a philosophy than a description of culture. This culture is the result of traditions, myths, magic,

cosmogonies, proverbs, and the wisdom of the aged. Such oral traditions cannot be regarded as philosophy.

- 3) Temples's analysis is specific for the Luba tribe, but does not fit all African tribes.
- 4) Other critics feel that Temples worked in the context of Christian adaptation theology, as well as Eurocentric ambition and interest. They argue that he just wanted to dupe Africans into ascribing to a certain philosophy. This criticism is also voiced by many African thinkers, for example, Césaire (1970:33-34; 37-39); Eboussi (1968:1977); Towa (1982); p'Bitek (1963); Elungu (1984); Ngal (1994); Okonda (1986); Ndaw (1979); and Hountondji (1987). In the framework of this particular study, it is not necessary to go deeper into the motives of these writers.
- 5) The last criticism concerns the methodology used by Temples, an issue that is outside the scope of this study.

As the main concern of this work is to reveal the collective nature of African philosophy, the last two points mentioned above are not relevant to the argument. The first three criticisms, however, are strongly refuted. As Kwame Gyekye (1987) points out:

African traditional philosophical thought has been described by several scholars as 'collective', either because it is supposed to be the product of all or most of the members of the community, or because it is supposed to be accepted by the whole community; whereas when we talk of Greek philosophy, we usually mean the philosophical ideas of individual thinkers, and the same goes for German philosophy, British philosophy, Islamic philosophy, and all other kinds.

In Africa there has indeed been an absence of philosophers, who could be identified as individual thinkers, and accredited with having started specific philosophical schools, the originators of specific doctrines. But nevertheless, individual wise men created the African 'collective' philosophy.

This view is attributed to the so-called ethno-philosophers, of whom Temples and his book *Bantu Philosophy*, has already been mentioned; but there are also, Kagame in *Philosophie Bantu Comperée*, and Mbiti in *African religion and philosophy*. However, Hountondji (1987) rejects the possibility of collective philosophy based on recollections of oral traditions. He insists that this is a misconception. There cannot be an African philosophy, because it is communal or collective thought, and is unwritten. Sgun Gbadegesin (1991:8) retorts: 'Why

can't communal thought, in virtue of its being communal, not be a philosophy?' It is at least not a self-evident truth that philosophy must be individualistic. Even if it is true, historically, that western academic philosophy has been individualistic, it should not be forgotten that such individualised philosophising has always taken place in the bosom of communal traditions. These presuppositions and ideas can then be traced to an individual. The fact that we are all children of our tradition should not be denied - try as we may to fantasize about our individuality.

In line with Kwame Gyekye (1987:24), Hountondji's characterisation of African traditional philosophy as a myth is rejected. He says it is a myth that there is a philosophy to which all Africans are supposed to adhere. Philosophy is undoubtedly the product of a culture. It would indeed be instructive and rewarding to examine the philosophical doctrines of individual thinkers in the west and east against their cultural backgrounds. 'It is precisely because a philosophy has - and must have - its roots or basis in the culture of a people, that we are justified in referring to the philosophical ideas of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle as Greek Philosophy; of Locke, Berkeley and Hume as British Philosophy; of some un-nameable individual wise men in Akan Society as Akan Philosophy; and so on' (Gyekye, 1987:25). 'I believe', Gyekye continues (1987:25), 'that philosophy is the product of a culture'. In answering a critic of ethno-philosophy, Hebga (1982:123) declares: 'In being a daughter of the *ethos* all philosophy is unavoidable ethno-philosophy'. Diagne (1981) believes that all critics of ethno-philosophy are Euro-philosophers.

It is necessary also to answer the third criticism mentioned above. This philosophy is not only for one ethnic unit, but for all of Africa. African philosophy is collective, conceived and transmitted collectively and for the well being of collectivity. This philosophy is part of a whole, which is African religion. This African traditional religion is very strong and deeply imbedded in Africa, such that the change of country and religion will not lead to the abandoning of this basic philosophy. Mbiti (1975:13) confirms this; 'Since African religion belongs to the people, when Africans migrate in large numbers from one part of the continent to another, or from Africa to other continents, they take their religion with them'. They have no other way of living than within their religious context. Even if they are converted to

another religion, like Christianity or Islam, they tend not to abandon their traditional religion completely or immediately; it remains with them for several generations and sometimes for centuries. 'When Africans are converted to other religions, they often mix their traditional religion with the one to which they are converted' (1975:13).

The main purpose of African traditional religion is the protection of life. Olupona (1991:173) states: 'Perhaps the most central and pervasive concern of traditional African religions is the maintenance of life as the integral interflow of relationships'. Chappelle (1980:126) testifies about the people of Chad, saying: 'Everybody is in fear of many dangers, from possible visible as well as invisible attacks, and so get help from the support group of socio-religions to which he belongs and the submission to rites proposed by this group' (own translation).

Considering the preceding themes, it can be concluded that the African worldview is communal, and the whole of its life is religious.

2.4 AFRICAN POLITICAL IDEOLOGISTS

Africa has had some political ideologists. Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya was certainly one. He was a great leader of Africans and expressed the Gikuyu way of thinking: nobody is an isolated individual, a person's uniqueness is a secondary factor. First and foremost, a person is several people's relative and contemporary (1965:297). Kenyatta also declares: 'The spirit of collectivism was (so) much ingrained in the mind [*sic*] of the people'. (1965:180).

Kwame Nkrumah (1964:73), the founder of modern Ghana, argues that when seeking the socio-political ancestor of socialism, it is necessary to return to communalism. 'In socialism, the principles of underlying communalism are given expression in modern circumstances'.

In his book, titled *On African Socialism*, Leopold Senghor reminds us that 'Negro-African society is collectivist or, more exactly, communal, because it is rather a communion of souls than an aggregate of individuals ... we [as Africans] had already achieved socialism before the coming of the European' (1964:49).

Julius Nyerere, former president of Tanzania (1967:1), states:

The traditional African family lived according to the basic principles of *ujamaa*. Its members did this unconsciously, and without any conception of that they were doing in political terms. They lived together and worked because that was how they understood life, and how they reinforced each other against the difficulties they had to contend with - the uncertainties of weather and sickness, the depredations of wild animals (and sometimes human enemies), and the cycle of life and death. The results of their joint efforts were divided unequally between them, but according to well-understood customs. And the division was always on the basis of the fact that every member of the family had to have enough to eat, some simple covering, and a place to sleep, before any of them (even the head of the family) had anything extra. The family members thought of themselves as one and all their language and behaviour emphasised their unity... The basic goods of life were "our food", "our land", "our cattle". And identity was established in terms of relationship: mother and father of so-and-so; daughter of so-and-so; wife of such and such a person. They lived together, they worked together and the result of their joint labour was the property of the family as a whole"

Archie Mafeje (1992:12) observes that: 'associated with blackness in the minds of earlier generations of African leaders such as Nkrumah, Senghor, Kenyatta, Nyerere, Sekou Toure and Kaunda was the communal spirit which was exemplified by the way of life in traditional African villages. In their ideological projections, the leaders concerned contoured [*sic*] this as a natural disposition towards socialism among Africans' (1992:11). That has led some African ideologists thus to think that Marxist thinking has a large affinity to our African social thinking. One example is Gabral (1973), an African thinker, who, seeing the struggling masses, concurs with the Marxist analysis of the importance of the productive forces of the community.

Gyekye (1990:23) concludes:

African political leaders and strategists, since regaining the political independence of their nations, have, in searching for ideologies to guide their development of policies, flirted with two main ideologies: capitalism (or the free enterprise system) and socialism (or the system of public ownership for the means of production and distribution). Most of them, in the euphoric days of political independence, opted and argued for socialism, justifying their choice on the grounds of socio-economic thought and practice, pointing especially to the idea and practice of communalism.

The collective mind and behaviour of the African are therefore emphasised by practically all Africanist thinkers.

2.5 THE AFRICAN VIEW OF SIN

This leads us to a discussion about the understanding of sin in Africa. Sin is a fact of life; and as all of African culture (life) is religious, it follows logically that sin is a religious act.

2.5.1 The African concept of sin

One can describe the African view of sin as collective and anthropocentric. The argument of the foregoing was that the African view of life is intrinsically holistic, and that this life is indeed communal. Also the African's religion is communal, which means that all aspects of life are to a certain extent religious. So it comes as no surprise that sin for African people is conceived as any act that disturbs, ruins or endangers a community.

Pobee (1979:92) confirms this when he speaks about one West African tribe: 'In the Akan society, the essence of sin is an antisocial act. It is not an abstract transgression of the law but rather it is a factual contradiction of the established order'. Further, this contradiction or fault does sometimes harm others, for example, jealousy, murder, rape or incest cause harm to another person or community. This confrontation fractures the interpersonal relationship. The Akan understands this kind of behaviour as 'killing the individual personality of a person'. Sin thus becomes a destroyer and an uncleanness and the breaking of a covenant relationship.

Another witness who which tells us about the understanding of sin in Africa studied the Oromo of Ethiopia. Donders (1985:102) says:

With the Oromos, sin is not in the first place something that has do with God. It has to do with their fellow human beings. Within their frame of reference, Jesus did not come to reconcile us with God, but with each other. God does not punish. Where there is sin, God withdraws from humanity and because of this the human relationship with God drastically deteriorates

Luc de Heusch (1985:8) from North Africa declares: 'The western concept of sin is inapplicable to the Nuer thought. The Nuer condition is specifically a disorder in the social body which manifests itself in an attack on the integrity of a physical body, either of the guilty person or of his close kin'.

Kaunda (1978:136) adds from the south: 'In traditional societies the old are venerated and it is regarded as a privilege to look after them. Their counsel is sought on matters and, however infirm they may be, they have a valued and constructive role to play in teaching and instructing their grandchildren. Indeed, to deny a grandparent the joy of the companionship with his grandchild will become a heinous sin'.

From western Africa comes another echo on sin which says: 'Since, to recapitulate, to the African sin is destruction of the stability of the community and therefore to defraud one's neighbour, to cause a little child anguish, to place a piece of lighted charcoal into the hands of a blind man begging for gifts, or to have sexual intercourse on arable land, is to destroy the stability of the community, and is therefore a sinful act' (Sawyer, 1973:129).

Adeyemo (1979:52) writes about the Yoruba of Nigeria:

The Yoruba word, which has been used in the Bible to translate the word "sin" is *ese*. Literally, it means 'that which happens', and it carries a meaning which is different from that of sin as 'disobedience towards God', as in the case of original sin. It doesn't describe the nature of the act, but indeed the quality of its sequel. It recognises sin as evil, upsetting the equilibrium of society or of personal relationships. The effects of sin also extend into the cosmic realm.

Another writer, who described the notion of sin in the Rwandan culture, is Nothomb (1968:240): 'Whether it is a matter of forbidden things (*imiziro*), the violation of a law of the community (*igicumuro*, *icyaha*, *ubugome*), or a personal downfall through unfaithfulness to someone else (*guhemukwa*), the act is called morally bad, in so far as it is harmful to human relationships' (own translation).

From the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Esol'Eka (1974:58) writes on the moral awareness of the Mongo, and affirms that 'for the Mongo, the moral evil is all acts against the ancestral orders'. Louis-Vincent Thomas and René Luneau (1977:61) in their book, written in French, describing the African continent and its religion, tell us that: 'It often happens that sin is confounded with the transgression of the ordering of the particular social structure' (own translation). Gehman (1989:254) says: 'African traditional religion does not teach that sin is rebellion against God or the transgression of God's law. Instead, the traditional way of life is the best life which has been given by the ancestral spirits, the divinities and by God Himself'.

Bujo (1992:32-33) likewise confirms that:

In the African way of looking at things, it was not God but the human who was responsible for the appearance of sin and evil. The moral order is thus seen as a matter, not of the relation between the human and God, but of the relationship between human beings themselves. In fact, many tribes in Africa are convinced that a human cannot offend God, and this principle applies also to the consequences of sin. Africans believe that they can neither add anything to God, so that moral behaviour and its consequences concern only human beings. It is true that God may punish human wrongdoing, but God only does this for the sake of humankind, who otherwise could bring the established order to ruin. God knows everything and God knows that we love God: God does not need to be continually assured of our love by prayers and ritual offerings. At the same time, there are tribes who say that God's will cannot be known by human beings because God has never revealed it

In his report on *Sin and purification in African society, brief reflections on traditional conception of sin in Central Africa*, Mbonyekebe (1980:89) comes to a similar conclusion, namely that: 'Our morals, being motivated from our own culture, which is from within the community, give us an authentically African concept of sin. This concept is with regard to the community'.

Therefore, from the east to the west, from the south to the centre of Africa, sin is understood as relating to relationships within the community. Sin is an evil deed against the community and everything that destroys the community is a sin. Although the African acknowledges God, sin relates to society and human beings. African society is anthropocentric and one consequence of this is spelt out by the South African theologian, Maimela (1985:66): 'It will

therefore not help to try and understand what sin and salvation are in African traditional religions from a purely Christian perspective. In which salvation is usually understood to be an individualistic unburdening of personal sin through what has happened to Jesus Christ on the cross.

2.5.2 Collective sin and individual sin in Africa

In many tribes in Africa, an individual sin involves the community. When someone from a tribe or clan behaves badly, he or she brings the whole tribe or clan in disrepute by such behaviour. It is as if the personal act was committed by the community. The sins of an individual member constitute a community evil, and the community pays a penalty for this member. A community may be considered dangerous on account of the mischievous actions of one of its members. Chukwunyere (1990: 7) affirms: 'In the traditional African view, moral responsibility is corporate. A wrong done by the individual will have adverse effects on his or her community and the community shares responsibility for the wrong committed by its members'

For instance, in the Baluba, the marriage of a woman from one specific clan into another clan is considered adulterous. It will cause her entire clan to be mocked and ridiculed by other clans, thus enabling them to persecute the sons for mocking the woman's original clan.

A Zulu proverb says *zifa ngamvuye*, which anticipates and indicates that whenever somebody does something that is regarded as sinful, the rest of the clan to which that person belongs will be considered responsible. Africa does not only share in the deeds, but also in the responsibility for these individual sins. In Zulu, *okwakho okwami* warns that whatever belongs to one, belongs to everybody in the clan. This does not merely apply to the possessions, but also to various responsibilities. In this context, one must say: "My sin is not related to me but to my community".

So, the consequences of individual sin stain the whole community. If a sin is committed within the community, by a member of that community, the sinner is punished, because of the

fear of contamination resulting from the shared consequences of that sin. In the words of Davidson (1971:106): ‘Good is what ameliorates the destiny of the community, evil does the opposite’ (own translation). Therefore, one of the roles of the community is to prevent its members from committing sinful acts.

CHAPTER III

DIFFERENTIATION OF COLLECTIVE SIN

Many writers, who approach this topic, use the words 'social sin' or 'structural sin'. These terms can cause confusion. It is essential for the purpose of this study to consider in depth the different terms, the various collective sins and even various degrees of collective sin. A distinction should be made between 1) group sin; 2) social sin; 3) cultural sin; and 4) structural sin. All these are described as "collective sin". These are not watertight divisions. There are overlaps between the four, because group sins are sometimes social; social sins are sometimes partly cultural; and structural sin can be part of social, cultural or group sin. For practical purposes, and because the mission of the church is discussed in the final chapter, it is necessary to distinguish between these four. The differences correspond roughly with the various scientific disciplines that are working with human society, even when the theological term 'sin' is not used in these circles. These disciplines are social psychology for the temporary groups; sociology for the social groups; anthropology for the cultural groupings; and law for the structures.

3.1 TEMPORARY GROUPS

These groups are spontaneous, temporary, not durable or permanent; they are not social or cultural groups formed according to accepted norms, established expectations or rules. They are not established social organisations, not structured, do not have a recognised leadership, but usually accept some norms, a kind of moral law. Examples of such groups are 'crowds', 'the masses', or 'the public'.

3.1.1 The crowd

Genevie (1978:xix) provides the following definition: 'A crowd is a group of persons of close physical proximity who have gathered because of a need or desire to change some aspect of the environment not adequately addressed by traditional norms and known

patterns of behavior'. Lebon was one of the early pioneers of collective behaviour. His *The Crowd*, first published in 1896, remains one of the classic works in this field. He defines a crowd as 'a gathering of individuals of whatever nationality, profession or sex, and whatever the changes are that have brought them together' (1960:23-24). He sees the crowd not merely as an aggregate of individuals, but rather as a single entity with a unique psychology. Writing about the mind of the crowd, Lebon (1960:23-24) states:

Under certain given circumstances, and only under those circumstances, an agglomeration of men presents new characteristics very different from those of the individuals composing it. The sentiments and ideas of all the persons in the gathering take one and the same direction, and their conscious personality vanishes. A collective mind is formed, doubtless transitory, but presenting very clearly defined characteristics. The gathering has thus become what, in the absence of a better expression, I will call an organised crowd, or, if the term is considered preferable, a psychological crowd. It forms a single being, and is subjected to the law of the mental unity of crowds.

He (1960:27) adds:

The most striking peculiarity presented by a psychological crowd is the following: whoever the individuals may be that compose it, however like or unlike be their mode of life, their occupation, their character, or their intelligence, the fact that they have been transformed into a crowd puts them in possession of a sort of collective mind which makes them feel, think and act differently from the individual were he in a state of isolation. There are certain ideas and feelings which do not come into being, or do not transform themselves into acts, except in the case of individuals forming a crowd.

He (1960:29) also says: 'In the collective mind the intellectual aptitudes of the individuals, and in consequence their individuality, are weakened. The heterogeneous are swamped by the homogeneous, and the unconscious qualities obtain the upper hand'.

According to Lebon, different causes determine the appearance of these characteristics, which are peculiar to crowds and are not possessed by isolated individuals. The first cause is that the individual who forms part of a crowd acquires (solely because of the numbers) a feeling of invincible power, which allows the person to yield to instincts which, had he or she been alone, will have perforce been kept under restraint. They will be less disposed to check themselves. A crowd, being anonymous and in consequence irresponsible, smothers the sense of responsibility, which is the agent of control in individuals.

The second cause, he maintains, is contagion. Contagion is a phenomenon, which is easy to identify being present, but is not easy to explain. It must be classed among those phenomena of a hypnotic order. In a crowd, every sentiment and act is contagious, and to such a degree that an individual readily sacrifices personal interest in favour of the collective interest. This is an attitude which is contrary to human nature, and a person is scarcely capable of it, except when part of a crowd.

A third cause, and by far the most important one, is that dynamic which changes the special characteristics of the individuals in a crowd to something, which is at times quite contrary to the character traits of the isolated individual. It is not only by their acts that individuals in a crowd differ essentially from their real self. They have already entirely lost their independence, their freedom.

Their ideas and feelings have undergone a transformation which is so profound as to change a miser into a spendthrift, the sceptic into a believer, the honest man into a criminal and the coward into a hero. Taken separately, for example, the men of the French Revolutionary Convention were enlightened citizens of peaceful habits. United in a crowd, they did not hesitate to give their permission to the most savage proposals, to guillotine individuals who were clearly innocent, and contrary to their interests, to renounce their inviolability and to decimate themselves. (Lebon, 1960:33).

Blumer (quoted by Genevie, 1978:67) identifies four types of crowds:

The first can be called *casual*. This usually has a momentary existence and has a very loose organisation and scarcely any unity.

The second type may be called the *conventionalised crowd*, such as the spectators at an exciting baseball game. Their behaviour is essentially the same as that of casual crowds, except that it is expressed in established and regularised ways. It is this regularised activity that marks the conventional crowd as a distinct type.

The third type of crowd is the *acting, aggressive crowd*, best represented by a revolutionary crowd, a lynching mob, or a demonstration (*toy-toy*). The outstanding mark of this type of crowd is the presence of an aim or objective towards which the activity of the crowd is

directed. It is this type of crowd that is the object of concern in practically all studies of the crowd.

The fourth type is the *expressive or dancing and happy crowd*, such as one sees in the case of carnivals, music festivals, or at the beginning of many religious parades.

Another point, which is also important to introduce to this work, is the formation of the crowds. There are at least four essential steps in the formation of a crowd.

First there is the occurrence of the exciting event which catches the attention and arouses the interest of people. From that moment a person is already inclined to lose some self-control and becomes dominated by the exciting object.

The second step is the milling process, the stimulating event which leads them to move around and talk to one another as the initial excitement becomes greater. The most obvious effect of the milling about is to disseminate a common mood, feeling or emotional impulse. This leads to a state of marked rapport wherein individuals become sensitive and respond to one another and where, consequently, all are more disposed to act together as a collective unit.

The third step is the emergence of a common object of attention on which the impulses, feelings and imagination of the people become focussed. This image, or object, like excitement, is common and shared. Its importance is that it gives a common orientation to the people, and so provides a common objective. The crowd is in a position to act with unity, purpose and consistency.

The last step is the stimulation and fostering of the impulses that correspond to the crowd's objective, up to the point where the members are ready to act on them. When the members of a crowd have a common impulse oriented towards a fixed image and supported by an intense collective feeling, they are ready to act in the aggressive fashion typical of the acting crowd.

3.1.2 The mass

Blumer identifies another elementary collective grouping, called a mass. This is like a crowd, but is fundamentally different from it in other ways. Between the participants there is a minimum of co-operation and very little feeling of alliance or loyalty. A mass is represented by people who participate in mass behaviour, such as those who are excited by some national event, those who share in a land boom, those who are excited by a big event reported in the press, or those who participate in some large migration. There are four distinguishable features:

- 1 Its membership may come from all walks of life and from all distinguishable social strata; it may include people of different class positions, of different vocations, or different cultural attainment and of different wealth. One can recognise this in the case of the mass of people who follow a murder trial.
- 2 A mass is composed of anonymous individuals. It merely consists of an aggregation of individuals who are separate, detached or spontaneous.
- 3 Little interaction or exchange exists between the members of a mass. They are physically separated from one another, and, being anonymous, do not have the opportunity to mill around as do members of a crowd.
- 4 A mass is very loosely organised and is not able to act with the concertedness or unity of a crowd.

The members of the mass act separately as individuals and for this reason mass-behaviour may take unexpected turns. In the panic or stampede, individuals take different routes.

3.1.3 The public

The word itself is subject to various interpretations. There is, for example, the public at the theatre or the public at some assembly, where public means a crowd. While the importance of this type of public has declined or remains static, the invention of printing and television has caused a very different type of public to appear, one which never ceases to grow and whose indefinite expansion is one of the characteristics of our time. In these days television plays an important role in forming public opinion.

There is a psychology of the crowd; there is also a psychology of the public, understood in the sense of a pure collectivity, a dispersion of individuals who are physically separated and whose cohesion is entirely mental. The term "public" is used to refer to a group of people:

- a) who are confronted by an issue;
- b) who are divided in their ideas as to how to meet the issue; and
- c) who engage in discussion over the issue.

The presence of an issue, a discussion, and a collective opinion and these are the marks of a public. A public comes into existence only with an issue; it does not have the form or organisation of a society. In it, the people do not have fixed roles. The public does not have any awareness of its individual identity. The public does not exist as an established group and their behaviour is not prescribed by traditions or culture, but is indicated by the very fact that its existence centres on the presence of an issue. The fact that an issue exists, indicates the presence of a situation which cannot be met on the basis of a cultural ruling, but has to be met by a collective decision arrived at through a process of discussion. In this sense, a public is a grouping that is spontaneous and not pre-established.

In a public, an argument is advanced, criticised, and met with counter-arguments. Opinions are communicated to the modern public. It acts on the basis of interaction, enters into disputes and deals with conflicts. Under certain conditions, however, the public can change into a crowd. When people in public are aroused by an appeal to a sentiment that is common to them, they begin to mill around and develop rapport. Consequently their expression is in the form of public sentiment and not necessarily public opinion. It is difficult to gauge the role of modern mass media. On the one hand, there seems to be less of a tendency for the public to be displaced by the mass, but on the other hand the shared mass media can easily incite the public into common acts.

There are other primitive groupings that can briefly mentioned here, such as panic, stampedes, strikes, riots, unpopular justice, vigilante groups, processions, cults, mutiny and revolt. Most of these groupings represent variations of the crowd: each of them operates through primitive mechanisms of collective behaviour, which have been described. Another extremely

important group is 'the people'. To clearly define this concept is also difficult in the present context, because sometimes it is the cultural element that is emphasised, making a people, a tribe or a nation; at other times it is used in a Marxist sense as the proletariat, over against the rulers and the capitalists. The term becomes important because of the present high expectations of democracy.

Where does democracy fit in? In essence, democracy means what its constituent Greek words mean, namely *demos* (people) and *kratos* (rule), government by the people. Because 'the people' easily make mistakes, western democracy has developed ways and means (counter balances) to make the 'rule of the people' a consistent system. The election of representatives for a fixed term; strict rules for debates; and the division of powers between those who make the laws, those who interpret them, and those who execute them, all these are seen to be necessary to make 'the rule of the people' work. However, these days democracy is often under siege, because 'the people' easily becomes irrational 'crowds' or 'masses'.

3.14 The sins of these groupings

A crowd develops the same mind. When the direction it takes is sinful, the crowd becomes sinful. The collective mind, which characterises the crowd, can therefore be sinful. A mental unity, a sinful collective feeling and thinking can result. When the conscience of an individual vanishes, another force takes over. When individuality is weakened the collective sin is easily absorbed into the crowd. The disappearance of responsibility leads the people into the sin of irresponsibility. This contagion may cause a spiritual sickness. The hypnosis of the crowd is a powerful instrument in the hands of the devil. It can be argued that the focus on anything but God is the essence of idolatry. The acts of destruction, pillage, havoc and so on – common when crowds get out of control - are sins. The sins of the crowd can be experienced at the level of the mind, feelings, or in acts.

The panic, which may easily take control of the masses, could be considered as a lack of faith in the God who protects. The blind stampede of the masses, which sometimes takes place, is characteristic of the loss of trust by the people in the mass, and is also a sign of a

lack of conviction. Thus the public, being characterised by the same lack of trust, can also be sinful. Disputes are sometimes sinful, or can lead to the sins of discord or pride. Where of the public is united to do something evil against God, the public lives in collective sin. As Louis Genevie (1978:169) notes:

The sociologists have traditionally separated crowd behaviour, if not all elementary collective behaviour, from routine social behaviour. The separation has involved more than the recognition that behaviour patterns can differ considerably in the crowd vis-à-vis the routine social encounter. Group sin committed in a moment or instant may or may not be organised.

This sin can be a sinful collection of actions, thoughts, feelings or words. Matthew, 27:23-23 records that the crowd of Jews shouted all the louder: 'crucify him, crucify him'. These were collective words.

Pillage, injustices, strikes or marches, the shouting of collective slogans, injuries, strife, and so on, are collective sins found in all sorts of groups: students at university, workers at the work place, sport spectators in the stadium, and so forth.

In this context it is useful to distinguish two kinds of groupings: the first is an informal, or has no structure at all. The first can be called a movement, and the second a crowd. The first is organised and the second disorganised. The first follows the lead of the leaders, but the second is spontaneous. The members of the first group have some relationship between them. This grouping is almost a society, for example the students at university who demand something from the political or academic authority. The second group, however, can be the people who just meet temporarily without any relationship between them, an example being the football fanatics in the stadium. Nevertheless their collective violence, such as blasphemous songs, and the throwing of stones, is indicative of collective sin.

3.2 SOCIAL SIN

In the first chapter, an attempt was made to define society. One thing became clear: society is permanent. Here, it is necessary to return to other definitions in order to highlight other significant aspects.

For a good understanding of social sin, it is essential to start by defining the concept of a society. Berger (1978:38) informs us that:

Like most terms used by sociologists, the term society is derived from common usage, where its meaning is imprecise. Sometimes it means a particular band of people, and on the other occasions it is simply used to denote company of any sort. The sociologist thinks of “Society” as denoting a large complex of human relationships, or to put it into more technical language, as referring to a system of interaction. The sociologist will use the term more narrowly and more precisely to refer to the quality of interaction, inter-relationships, mutuality.

It is clear in these words that society is not made up of just one group of people but a large complex of human relationships and a system of interaction. Another definition is from the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, which defines society in these words: ‘A society is an aggregate of interacting individuals whose relations are governed by rule-confirming rules and practices which give their actions their characteristic significance’ (Edwards, 1967:473).

Society is the place in which we live; it is the community to which we belong. Society conditions the individual’s life. Berger (1978:53) makes an important point in this context. He (1978:109) says that: ‘to live in society means to exist under the domination of society’s logic (its fabric, its will, its intention). Very often men act by this logic without knowing it’. And, he adds: ‘Society is the wall of our imprisonment in history’. Harris (1985:115) states that: ‘the term society signifies a group of people who share a common habitat and who are dependent on each other for their survival and well-being’.

Weber (as quoted by Berger) defines the social situation as ‘one in which people orient their actions towards one another’ (Berger 1978:39). Society has a very powerful influence upon human life. ‘This influence also defines the framework of the individual’s behavior’ (Bosch, 1995:38).

Haight (1991:105) recognises that: ‘The structure of social institutions to which we belong may very well be destructive, may be contrary to the will of God. And we, as part of these social structures, participate in their sinfulness. This is not “personal sin”.’

He insists, rather, that precisely this is social sin, as distinct from personal sin or actual sinning. These social sins are an integral part of what has traditionally been called original sin. Haight (1985:148-149) elaborates:

Human existence is also sinful socially; there is such a thing as social sin, even though it is more difficult to recognise as sin and not merely evil. What one sees on the surface and what is clearly recognisable are the social effects of sin. One sees social institutions that not only structure the human freedoms of people, but also crush them, oppress their very being, cause suffering and push many toward untimely and unnecessary death. These structures are more than the effect of sin; such social structures may rightfully be called sin, and not merely the effects of sin, since they are not merely evil and products of nature. Two suppositions are needed to see this. The first is the phenomenon of interdependence; all human beings depend on one another, so that human existence itself is strictly social. The result is that the structures of society become internalised in each member of society to forge the condition of the consciousness and freedom of each person. The way we are as persons is socially constituted. The second is the fact that social structures are not the products of nature or creation but of human beings; they rest on the stuff of human freedom and can be changed. Therefore human beings are responsible for social structures; we participate in them and in so doing sustain them and help produce their effects. In other words, the overt effects of sin lead back to sin itself, and this is also a social reality in which we all participate and cannot fully escape. This is not quite the same as personal sin, for we have not personal but rather social responsibility for social structures. It is precisely social sin, analogous to personal sin in which we have personal responsibility, but still sin in which we participate freely and socially. And this is formal sin to the extent that we become aware of our situation and do not take responsibility for changing the structures in which we participate’.

Society is what regularises relations between people; thus, social sin is the sin within the society, the sin of society, the sin of a society towards God. Social sin is the sins in the interaction between people. For example, the corruption in many African countries is neither cultural sin nor structural sin, but simply social sin.

Social sin is of two kinds. The first is that kind of sin that is frequently found in society, but is, however, not accepted and practised by everybody in society. Only some members of society practise this sin, which is called a social evil. Child abuse and general crime are examples of this kind of social sin in South Africa.

Kerans (1974:84-85) argues that economic inequality is another social sin. He illustrates this through the situation in Canada, and says:

There have always been inequalities.... In earlier societies inequality was legitimated in such a way that those with less were assigned a meaningful position in society. For instance, in the Middle Ages, the man with more was entitled to more because he had more responsibility. Because he had more responsibility he embodied, in the symbolic world of the time, more of God's wisdom; his life-style, then, should reflect somewhat more of God's majesty and glory. Nonetheless, the man at the bottom also had an important role to play. He too had duties to be performed in the sight of God. And in the end, it did not matter what station you had in this world: God would judge according to the responsibilities you had; there would then be good serfs and bad kings. Equality in the face of death, equality at the last judgement was what counted. The friezes in medieval cathedrals showing kings and popes in hell relativised the social inequalities: the possibility of serfs being saints lent each serf dignity.

But in contemporary society inequality has, on the basis of the most important myths, no meaning and no legitimisation. For we are proudest of the fact that we are a democracy, where each has equal opportunity, regardless of race, colour or creed. The brute fact of inequality is, therefore, ascribed to the victims themselves. The poor and the racial minorities are not down because anyone keeps them down - quite the contrary, all liberal-minded people want everyone up - but because they like being down. They refuse to adopt those attitudes, those living patterns which would insure that they would be like everyone else. Being poor becomes a vice, a deviation; being black become a vice, a deviation; speaking Spanish or French becomes a vice, a deviation - all in the name of equality.... No individual person, I am sure, maliciously wills the poverty of the poor. But almost every affluent American and Canadian is implicated in the poverty of others by sharing assumptions about man and the world, which, while they seem realistic and benign, actually result in inequality and poverty.

The second kind of sin is accepted by all societies, even though there may be some exceptions. The history of slavery in all ancient civilizations offers an interesting illustration of this different kind of social sin.

A social structure can be sinful. It can be sinful in its source: a social structure emerges as people act out a decision that is biased, narrow and destructive. It can be sinful in its consequences: others confronted with a situation so structured are provoked to react defensively and so to reinforce the destructive characteristics of the situation. Still other people, lacking the power to react defensively, will experience sharp limitations on their effective scope of freedom and hence will experience the structures as offensive to their human dignity. (Kerans, 1974:79).

What is meant by the term "social institution"?

In ordinary terms, institution implies something solid and lasting, something with a story and a future. Institutions often have their own buildings, so specific structures come to mind when people think of religious institutions or political institutions. The

sociological concept is built on the everyday meaning and contains two related ideas: an institution is (1) an established way of organising social life and (2) a pattern that is valued by a group, community or society. A list of American institutions would include thanks-giving dinner, private enterprise, the family farm, the secret ballot, college football and many others (Broom, 1981:17).

‘A social institution forms an element in a more general concept, known as a social structure’ (Wells, 1970:3). The social institution serves to normalise the regulation of human behaviour. When these social institutions are sinful, we call it sinful institutions. And when they underscore false behaviour, it results in sinful behaviour.

It is important to avoid the confusion of social sin and social pathology. John Lewis Gillin (1939:4) defines social pathology as ‘the study of the social patterns and processes involved in man's failure to adjust himself and his institutions to the necessities of existence to the end that he may survive and satisfy the felt needs of his nature’. Is this failure sin or not? Whether it is sin or not, social pathology arises in certain conditions. For instance, the youth like amusement, so they move from the villages – where there are little of such pleasures - to the towns with its specific social atmosphere and bright lights. This may be social pathology and not sin. However, in a society where the people kill each other it is at the same time social pathology and sin.

It is also possible for the sins of groups (like crowds or masses) to develop into social sins. For example, groups of English football fanatics picked many fights with the fans of opposing teams, giving rise to a society of football hooligans.

3.2.1 Examples of social sin in a social institution: the case of the Mental Hospital and Prison

Norman Denzin in his book *Collective Behaviour in Total Institutions: the case of the mental hospital and the prison* describes some of the social conditions, which gave rise to social sins. Instances of collective sinful behaviour among mental patients, for example, have been observed when conditions like the following occurred:

- ❖ lack of staff consensus over ward and patient policy;

- ❖ turnover of patient and staff leaders;
- ❖ breakdown of communication between patients and staff;
- ❖ patient dissatisfaction with ward policy; and the
- ❖ failure of staff to enforce previously sanctioned ward policy.

Caudill has noted that collective disturbance happens when the majority of patients in a ward become upset at the same time.

In prison, collective sinful behaviour has been observed under such conditions as:

- ❖ excessive prison overcrowding and size;
- ❖ unwise sentencing and parole practices;
- ❖ enforced inmate idleness;
- ❖ inadequate official staffing;
- ❖ the presence of sub-standard personnel; and
- ❖ excessive prisoner abuse.

The institution can then lead people into collective sins like homosexuality, loneliness, and collective lying.

If social sins remain uncorrected, they may even become cultural sins.

3.3 CULTURAL SIN

3.3.1 Culture and collective sin

When two ethnic groups or communities meet, there are often things that lead to cultural conflict. The clash of doing things differently makes members of one ethnic group speak about their neighbours in depreciative terms. This kind of behaviour – based on prejudice – can be considered sinful. Therefore, prejudice can be considered to be sin.

However, it is important to start off with an introductory definition of culture. This should provide better understanding of the differences between ethnic groups. In their book on

physical anthropology, Philip and Bruce (1974:6) state: 'culture is one of those words, which everyone uses, and almost everyone uses differently'. However, Birket-Smith (1965:27) attempts to define culture in metaphoric terms as follows:

The word culture derives from the Latin *cultura*, which means cultivation; in this instance, cultivation of the human mind. Culture is the sum total of spiritual powers, of human knowledge and ability, of rational activity alongside of, and often in contrast to, the action of blind instincts and powers. Culture is created and supported by the individual and the society in unison, and both are necessary to it. It surpasses nature, yet its deepest roots are in nature, and unfolds into her most superb flower.

Culture is something, which can be cultivated in the mind of human beings. This means that human beings are the main actors in the formation of this social structure. By contrast, Pearson (1974:296) considers culture in even less concrete terms as

something you can't see or touch; it is a set of rules. You can see and touch tools and weapons, houses and canoes, but they are not culture. These things, or material artefacts, are the outcome or products of the application of cultural rules. Culture can be thought of as a set of instructions for thinking up a world that makes sense, understanding that world, and living in it. Cultural rules are deep within us and usually we are not aware of them.

Harris (1975:144) observes that: 'Culture is the total socially acquired life-way or life-style of a group of people. It consists of the feeling and acting that are characteristic of the members of a particular society or segment of a society'.

Nida (1954:28) too summarises the anthropological definition of culture as: 'All learned behaviour which is socially acquired, that is the material and nonmaterial traits which are passed on from one generation to another. These are both transmittable and accumulative, and they are cultural in the sense that they are transmitted by the society, not by genes'.

Collective sin is also learned behaviour and an acquired social element of a particular culture. It is also one of the elements that characterises an ethnic group or a society, in time and space. From the above, culture is something which cannot be seen or touched. It is the same with sin, which one cannot see or touch, but one sees only in its manifestations. This means that sin is also deep within us, and usually we are not aware of it either.

The father of anthropology, E.B. Tylor (1913:1) defines culture in these words:

The culture or civilisation is that complex whole including knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other abilities and habits acquired by people as members of society”. Likewise collective sin can also be part of knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and other abilities acquired. So, cultural sin is another name for collective sin. L Senghor defines culture as “human effort to adapt to his environment by social medium and also to adapt to his environment through his genetic activities (1983:266).

3.3.2 The concepts of culture and prejudice

Johnston and Selly (1978:311) remind us: ‘Most people feel their own culture is superior to every other group. This belief is called ethnocentrism, which means judging all other cultures in terms of one’s own’. ‘Ethnocentrism is the belief that one’s own patterns of behaviour are always natural, good, beautiful or important’ (Harris, 1975:144). Johnston adds the following:

Americans used to be ethnocentric, thinking themselves to be superior to most people. After World War II, the U.S. government tried to tell people in Europe, Asia and Latin America how to run their lives (that is, as we did) and people told us, “Yankee, go home!” Perhaps we began to learn, during the Vietnam War, that our culture was not superior. Perhaps we are a good deal less ethnocentric now, so that we can be proud of our culture and heritage, without thinking less of anyone else’s. At the heart of anthropology is the idea of cultural relativism, which states that cultures are different but that one is not better than another.

Anthropologists have defined culture in a multiplicity of ways. Most definitions have in common the understanding that culture is ‘learnt, normal, systematic behaviour that can be transmitted from person to person and from generation to generation’ (Philip and Bruce, 1974:6). Cultural differences often cause crises between people. Cultural anthropologists insist that cultures are relative, and all cultures are on the same level. But it is not perceived like that by the different groups of people. Cultural prejudice is a fact of life and it often creates tension between people.

Malinowski (1944:90) thinks that his theory of needs helps explain the difficulty of unity and diversity among human beings. He argues that:

By need then, I understand the system of conditions in the human organism, in the culture setting, and in the relation of the natural environment, which are sufficient and

necessary for the survival of groups and organisms. A need, therefore, is the limiting set of facts. Both habits and their motivation, the learned responses and foundations of organisation, must be so arranged as to allow the basic needs to be satisfied.

The system of conditions in the human organism leads to the satisfaction of certain biologically determined impulses in a series of vital sequences. Cultural phenomena are seen as mechanisms that meet individual needs (Malinowski, 1944:75). Before describing and analysing the theory about need, it is necessary to give some background on the difference between nature and culture.

Cultural anthropology sees a human being as composed of two parts: nature and culture. Every race, tribe and people share nature; culture is different from one group of people to another.

Harris (1975:144) argues that: 'Culture taken in its wide ethnographic sense is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'. Therefore, culture is acquired and depends on the society in which the individual grew up. As has already been mentioned, culture is a cultivation of the human mind. Culture surpasses nature although its deepest roots are in nature. Nature conditions culture. Nature depends on creation and cultures depend on environment, events, social organisation and so on. One can say that God, the Creator, creates nature, whereas culture is the work of human beings, considered as the second creator. For this reason, culture becomes equivalent second nature.

Malinowski (1944:75) declares:

We have to base our theory of culture on the fact that all human beings belong to the animal species. Man as an organism must exist under conditions, which do not only secure survival, but also allow for healthy and normal metabolism. No culture can continue if the group is not replenished continually and normally. Otherwise, obviously, the culture will perish through the progressive dying out of the group. Certain minimum conditions are thus imposed on all groups of human beings, and on all individual organisms within the group. We can define the term "human nature" by the fact that all men have to eat, they have to breathe, to sleep, to procreate, and to eliminate waste matter from their organs wherever they live and whatever type of civilisation they practice. By human nature, therefore, we mean the biological

determinism, which imposes on every civilisation and on all individuals in its carrying out of such bodily functions, such as breathing, sleeping, rest, nutrition, excretion and reproduction.. We can define the concept of the basic needs as the environmental and biological conditions, which must be fulfilled for the survival of both the individual and the group. Indeed, the survival of both requires the maintenance of a minimum of health and vital energy necessary for the performance of cultural tasks, and for minimum numbers necessary for the prevention of gradual depopulation.

3.3.3 Sin and need

The concept of need is merely the first approach to the understanding of organised human behaviour (Malinowski, 1944:75). The following is a further description by Malinowski (1944:77):

PERMANENT VITAL SEQUENCES INCORPORATED IN ALL CULTURES

(A) Impulse	(B) Act	(C) Satisfaction
Drive to breathe; gasping for air	Intake of oxygen	Elimination of CO ² in tissues
Hunger	Ingestion of food	Satiation
Thirst	Absorption of liquid	Quenching
Sex appetite	Conjugation	Detumescence
Fatigue	Rest	Restoration of muscular and nervous energy
Restlessness	Activity	Satisfaction or fatigue
Somnolence	Sleep	Energy
Bladder pressure	Micturition	Removal of tension
Colon pressure	Defecation	Abdominal relaxation
Fright	Escape from danger	Relaxation
Pain	Avoidance by effective act	Return to normal state

MALINOWSKI'S TABLE OF BASIC NEEDS (1944:77)

BASIC NEEDS	CULTURAL RESPONSE
1. Metabolism	1. Commissariat
2. Reproduction	2. Kinship
3. Bodily comforts	3. Shelter
4. Safety	4. Protection
5. Movement	5. Activities
6. Growth	6. Training
7. Health	7. Hygiene

These are natural and biological needs. Human beings share these with the animals. They are primary deterministic needs. By being social, human life imposes a secondary determinism. Malinowski (1944:124) defines these as 'derived needs or imperatives. Derived needs have the same stringency as biological needs, and that stringency is due to the fact that they are always instrumentally related to the wants of the organism'.

The following is a brief list of the cultural responses to these imperatives:

IMPERATIVES	RESPONSES
The cultural imperative: apparatus, implements and consumer goods must be produced, used maintained and replaced by a new production.	Economics
Human behaviour, as regards its technical customary, legal or moral prescriptions must be modified, regulated in action and sanction.	Social Control

<p>The human material by which every institution is maintained, must be renewed, formed, drilled and provided with the full knowledge of tribal tradition.</p>	<p>Education</p>
<p>Authority within each institution must be defined, equipped with powers and endowed with means of forceful execution of its order.</p>	<p>Political organisation</p>

(Cf. Malinowski, 1944:125)

Actions, that respond to the demands of impulse, are conditioned by the environment, events, and so on. And these acts, repeated, produce culture. As different environments and events offer different possibilities, there are different cultures. For instance, human beings satisfy their metabolism by eating food, which is from their environment. This habit is transmitted from one generation to the other.

The different ways of satisfying natural needs are not sins, but collective sin can be born, grown and spread in the satisfaction of a natural need.

The description of the concept of need sheds light on the origin of cultural diversity. Therefore, diversity is not sinful. Each culture provides an answer to a natural need. For this reason, people from one group cannot judge the other group in terms of their system of social organisation, kinship, shelter, protection, activities, training, hygiene, economics, social control, education and political organisation. However, in satisfying a natural need, a group can develop a sin. Culture, as 'determinant of human behavior' (Malinowski, 1963:173), can cause people to sin.

As all culture is learnt, acquired socially, cultural sin, then, is the sin acquired socially, passed on from one generation to another. Social sin is part of social life and cultural sin is the sin which is transmitted culturally. For a culture 'is the way of life of a people; while a society is an organised, interacting aggregate of individuals who follow a given way of life... a society is composed of people; the way they behave is their culture' (Herskovits, 1960:316). Thus social sin

is the sin of the interacting individuals in a society; while cultural sin is the sin of their life-style. People almost automatically follow cultural sins. Africans from different countries have been interviewed in order to, enquire what people think and state about the weaknesses or sins of other tribes than their own. The result of these interviews is this list of African tribes and their prime perceived sin. This is given as an illustration of the argument.

- ❖ The Kongo (Congo) – hypocrisy;
- ❖ The Luba (Congo) – pride;
- ❖ The Mongo (Congo) – adultery;
- ❖ The Zulu (South Africa) – violence;
- ❖ The Tutsi group (Rwanda) – hatred;
- ❖ The Banda (Central African Republic) – treachery;
- ❖ The Kikuyu (Kenya) – restlessness;
- ❖ The Luo (Kenya) – traditionalist;
- ❖ The Kamba (Kenya) – superstition;
- ❖ The Chewa (Malawi) – fetishist;
- ❖ The Nyanza (Malawi) - not serious about God;
- ❖ The Tumbuka (Malawi) – pride;
- ❖ The Sotho (Lesotho) – traditionalist;
- ❖ The Xhosa (South Africa) – stealing;
- ❖ The Bemba (Zambia) – pride;
- ❖ The Nyanja (Zambia) – tribalist;
- ❖ The Kaonde (Zambia) – laziness;
- ❖ The Lovale (Zambia) – timid;
- ❖ The Chagga (Tanzania) – chiefs;
- ❖ The Haya (Tanzania) – prostitution;
- ❖ The Sukuma (Tanzania) – darkness;
- ❖ The Baya (Central African Republic) – pride;
- ❖ The Banda (Central African Republic) - like treason;
- ❖ The Yakoma (Central African Republic) – haughtiness;
- ❖ The Mbaka (Central African Republic) – laziness;
- ❖ The Mandja (Central African Republic) – theft.

It is also the general perception that Nigerians are dishonest, Congolese (Brazzaville) malicious, and the Gabonese are lazy, for instance. If these perceptions are true, the sins can be classified as national sins. However, they are not structural, but social or cultural.

Although not illustrated here, there is also the sin of the sub-culture. Sometimes different clans have their “own” special sin!

3.4 STRUCTURAL SIN

3.4.1 A justification of the theology of structural sin

Stanley (1971:157) observes that the term “structure” has been much abused by sociologists and others, and that it requires clarification. The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines “structure” as ‘something made up of a number of parts that are held or put together in a particular way: hierarchical social structure’ (1996:1782). Structure invokes the idea of organisation; therefore Schott (1964:488) defines organisation as “collectivities”. ‘The structure of an organisation can be defined simply as the sum total of the ways in which it divides its labour into distinct tasks and then achieves co-ordination among them’ (Mintzberg 1979:2).

It is also necessary to distinguish between the meaning of “structure” and what the sociologists call “social structure”. Kroeber (1948:7) asserts: ‘When we speak of social structure or organisation of society, it is clear what is meant. The way a mass of people is constituted into families, clans, tribes, states, classes, sets, clubs, communities, and the like’.

For the present purpose, however, structure will describe relationships among people or groups that are fairly stable and are recognisable to observers as well as to participants. The hierarchy of authority is one element of an organisation’s structure. It describes who reports to whom and is both a recognisable and permanent feature of most organisations.

The division of labour - who does what - is another aspect of structure, as are regulations that determine how workers should respond to various situations. The structure presupposes one organisation, one law, and the tasks for fulfilling these laws, and so on. These are state structures, campaign structures, for instance.

Structural sin is the sin inside the structure of the structure. When the structure misses the point, it becomes structural sin; when the motivation of the structure-makers is bad, this produces a sinful structure. This is a case, for example, with the structure of oppression, exploitation of human beings by other human beings, impoverishment, and so on. Olson (1994:165) clarifies the point by stating that ‘ “political machines”... have massive organisation structures. But political machines do not work for collective good. A machine is at best interested in patronage, and at worse outright graft’.

Bosch's term for this is “structural evil” (1991:407). The declaration of Wheaton ‘83 states that the evil is not only in the human heart, but also in social structures. An illustration: apartheid was the structural sin; racism is the social sin. The system of exploitation of the poor countries (the World Bank?) is structural sin. Colonialism, neo-colonialism, communism, atheism and oppressive dictatorships are structural sins. When a sin is structured and bureaucratised, it is called structural sin.

The process of becoming established is called institutionalisation. This happens through organisational structuring or restructuring. Organisation is the practical arrangement for getting a job done. If one part of an organisation is influenced by structural sin, many or all parts of the structure are affected.

It is necessary to clarify this point with an illustration. When parliament passes a bill allowing abortion, an abortion clinic has to be built, or a ward in an old hospital has to be restructured, using money, which was meant for something else. Even teachers have to teach this law in school, and the justice system has to change to deal with it differently in court. This means that even a private builder, financial institutions, as well as the educational and judiciary systems participate in this structural sin. Thus accepting a sinful

law is one way of introducing sin into the structure. This law affects the sum total of labour. If it is a national structure, this affects the whole nation. Even, for example, road building is affected by an oppressive system.

3.4.2 Structural sin: an antithesis

This theology of structural sin is not acceptable to everybody. Edmund Hill (1984:71-72), for example, expresses the opposite. He feels that the concept of sinful structures, contrasted with the concept of personal sin, is a mistake and a source of confusion.

The intention of those Christian moralists who make use of the idea, is the very praiseworthy one of prodding the consciences of Christians into an awareness that their Christian moral responsibilities extend far further than their private personal lives; that we must not only examine our consciences about the sins which we personally commit, but also about the sins committed in our name by the societies we belong to, sins that are built into the very structures of that or those societies; the structural sins of the “consumer society”, for example, or “apartheid society”, or the “class society”, or the “authoritarian society” which the catholic church still is to an excessive degree.

I think the distinction what the proponents of the ‘sinful structure’ concept are looking for is one between this concept and that of private individual sin, or perhaps between sinful structures, which correspond to the vices or bad habits of a social organism as such, and sinful acts. But the responsibility for both must be personal - or else there is no responsibility or liability at all. This is enough to make it impossible to identify original sin with sinful structures.

However, ‘by faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of greater value than the treasure of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward’ (NIV Hebrews, 11:24-26). The sin that the above text is talking about is the structural Egyptian sin.

Three elements are at the foundation of all sinful structure: firstly, ignorance of the historical action of God and his promises and the destiny of his people; secondly, fear; and thirdly, wicked utilisation of power and secrecy. This can be clearly seen in the Egyptian structures used against Israel. In Exodus 1, we follow these basic structural elements.

- Verse 8 reads: ‘The new king did not know about Joseph’. This means that he ignored the action of God and the promises for Israel (Genesis, 12:2, 3, 7, 10; 20:39-42).
- In the same verse it is written that the King ‘came to power’. Power is always a temptation. In verse 9, he says to his people: ‘The Israelites have become much too numerous for us’; and in verse 10 it states: ‘Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will even become more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country’. That is an expression of fear.
- Verse 11 reads: ‘So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labour’. That is a sinful structure. This is the sin that Moses refused to commit. Christians have to know the action of God; how He can change time and circumstances, because fear is the opposite of faith and oppression is the opposite of love.

Patrick Kerans (1974:57-58) notes:

The Christian Church has clung to a private, individualistic notion of sin. What are the motives for this individualistic tendency? It is unlikely that the majority of Christians are motivated by a conservative political position. Church leaders, it is true, often seem to have the same point of view as other big proprietors; and seem to exhibit the ‘prudence’ required of the guardians of large holdings or of the administrators of large organisations, rather than the folly of the cross.

What is a key is the connection between, on the one hand, the Christian’s theological vision of the all-or-nothing stakes of the individual drama of sin and salvation, and on the other hand, the Christian’s insistence that “full knowledge and full responsibility” are characteristic of sin. In the Christian view, each person is called forth into existence by a loving God; God calls each of us by name to an unending life of love with him. But the mystery of human freedom is such that each person must accept or reject this call. Everything hangs on this decision. This “eschatological” vision of sin does not take kindly to loose talk that a shopper in a supermarket in Peoria who buys a pound of coffee is “responsible” for Portuguese oppression of Angolan coffee workers. Too much is at stake to admit this kind of responsibility.

These three basic elements referred to above are also found among believers. For this reason Africans ask: ‘Is it possible to be at the same time Christian and American, Christian and Swiss, French, and so on?’ This will be discussed later. On the other hand, it is also a fact that many western Christians (like Pharaoh’s daughter in the previous example – Exodus, 2:6) feel sorry for the victims of structural sin.

In the previous century, Ernest Naville (1871:98) observed:

The thinkers whom I will call the moralists say: "Men are everything, institution nothing. With good men all institutions are good, but the best institutions are spoiled by men." Such is the opinion of the moralists. This opinion is not in conformity with the truth. Institutions are productive of Good, and institutions are productive of Evil. In the family, for example, polygamy or the Roman custom of divorce, which reduced marriage to a temporary concubinage, are not indifferent things. In society, the institution of slavery is not an indifferent thing. Certainly, if all slaves were perfect, and all masters faultless, a social system based on slavery might be happy; but slaves not being perfect, nor masters either, slavery is far from being without influence on humanity such as it is. A man recently took a pen and was about to affix his signature, which was to transform twenty million serfs attached to the soil, into free men. Would you have liked to approach the Emperor of Russia at that solemn moment and say to him: "Sire, you are going to create a great deal of trouble for yourself; you are about to bring formidable difficulties into the administration of your empire; you will have a fearful crisis passing through your empire; and, after all, for what? What matters about institutions? Let the noble be good and serfs be happy".

He adds (1871:98):

I have no doubt that, in some less explicit form, this reasoning was addressed to the Emperor Alexander. He did not listen to it, and you will all agree with me in saying that it was just as well he did not. Free institutions develop in a people the feeling of self-respect, and tyrannical institutions tend to degrade them. Just institutions develop the sentiment of justice, and unjust institutions the feeling of oppression. There are peaceful institutions, which excite mutual good will, and there are warlike institutions, which excite enmity, hatred and every evil passion. We must never oppose salutary reforms, under the pretext that men are everything and institutions nothing. This error of the moralists leads to mischievous practical consequences.

Structural sin is a reality.

People experiencing structural sin have three possible attitudes: acceptance, tolerance and revolt.

- The people, who accept structural sin live in compliance with it, are orientated by it and are part of the sinful structure. This structural sin is effectively their collective sin.

- Some people just tolerate structural sin, live between acceptance and refusal. Sometimes they tolerate it only because they are afraid to stand up against it, sometimes they do not know how to change it.
- Revolt is another attitude of people under structural sin. At this level, the structural sin does not become collective sin, because the people refuse to commit the collective sin.

3.5 INTERACTION BETWEEN COLLECTIVE SINS

There is interaction and overlap between the different kinds of groups, like the crowd and society, society and structure, structure and culture, culture and society, temporary groups and structures, temporary groups and culture.

Therefore there are also interaction and overlap between the different categories of collective sin, between group sins, structural, social and cultural sin. Structural sin can have its origin in one of the preceding collective sins: the sin of an elementary grouping, social or cultural sin.

3.5.1 Group sin

Group sin can become social sin when the grouping becomes a society. To repeat the example: groups of English football fans pick fights with the fans of opposing teams. A society of football hooligans was born.

Group behaviour is often the source of structural sin. In illustration, the visiting crowd returns from the football stadium, meet nationals on the way, and start a fight. This act can lead to laws against foreign citizens, like job reservation, repatriation, and so on. These laws may have good intentions, like protecting the foreigners against the anger and hate of the citizens, but those kind of laws are nevertheless structurally sinful, because they are laws without love. In the Bible there are many teachings about loving strangers.

So, a small group may cause structural sin affecting a large majority. A group may have power, information or possessions and use them to create structures for their own benefit. In many African countries there are groups who are in contact with western political leaders who assist them to gain military power, and which often lead to a dictatorship. There are enough examples of this even in the Congo. One illustration is a group of Binza in the Democratic Republic of Congo. They took the power through the help of western capitalist leaders. In other African countries, these groups are from a certain tribe, province, region or area. For example, in Congo Brazzaville, one group contacted the communist countries just to get power and build communist structures. It was the same in Angola, during the period of communism. Dictatorship thus became the system. It was not really a one-man rule, because it was made, maintained and supported by a group. Thus the social sins of power mongering, tribalism and discrimination cause structural sins.

If these groups form structures with bad intentions, if they want to use this for their own selfish benefit, the structures will become sinful. Even the group itself will be sinful. Thus, structural sin can be started by a group.

3.5.2 Social sin

Social sin can be the source of structural sin. Social sin often precedes structural sin. For instance, in South Africa, racism (social sin) preceded apartheid (structural sin) and racism continued after apartheid.

Leaders and churches struggled strongly against apartheid and structural sin, but not enough against the social sin of racism, because it is still practised by the whites as well as by the blacks, even after apartheid has ended.

Social sin can feed structural sin. Social sins can be of the same or of a different nature from structural sin. For example, dictatorship in Africa is nourished by the African collective sins of tribalism, namely lack of individual strength, poverty, ignorance and fear. There are also sins of a different nature - the sin of exploitation. Racism is a sin of the

same nature as apartheid. Apartheid has its origin in racism. The sin is separatism, but the social expression in South Africa is racism, and the structured expression is apartheid.

The people who are victims of structural sin are not always innocent. Bosch (1991:444) quotes Bishop Alpheus Zulu, who maintains: ‘The statement “God is on the side of the oppressed” cannot simply be turned round: “the oppressed are on the side of God”.’

Structural sin and sinful law can also originate in social sin. Abortion, for example, was practised by some people, and became a collective sin, before it was made a sinful law in some countries. When the sin was accepted by many people, it became structural sin.

3.5.3 Structural sin

Structural sin can create social sin. The communist structure in Russia was fundamentally atheist, and then it created an atheistic society, atheism being a major sin. The system (structure) of oppression is sinful, but (worse still) it leads people to internalise oppression. The structure of exploitation leads to the internalisation of poverty by the poor. So the system creates sinful structures, which create the internalisation of collective sins like oppression and poverty.

Structural sin or sinful law can create sin of another nature, for example, the breakdown of the family through to divorce. This is a social problem. So, structural sin can have its origin in any one of the preceding collective sins: the sin of a temporary grouping, social or cultural sin.

3.5.4 Cultural sin

Cultural sin can also be the source of structural sin. Culture is social, because culture is learned socially. But all social behaviour is not cultural, for it is not always transmitted from generation to generation.

What is written above about social sin is also true of cultural sin. But there are also sins transmitted collectively from generation to generation; these sins can feed the structure and cause structural sin. For example, some African countries have legalised polygamy as part of African culture.

Sometimes the sins fight each other. One kind of sin gains more power than the other kind of sin. During the French Revolution, for instance, crime, a sin of crowds, overcame the structural sin of absolute reign. If one sin removes another sin, it becomes the master sin. In some African countries, like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the sin of rebellion banishes the sin of dictatorship. The rebellion simply continues with others role players. Even the new political leaders guide the country in a rebellious mood.

When collective sin in one category kills another, it gives birth to a new sin. In South Africa, when the group sin of violent action removed the sinful structure of separation, it gave birth to the sin of social crime. In consequence, streets and homes are no longer safe.

Culture largely controls and guides social behaviour. Culture is an antecedent as well as a consequence of social behaviour. Just as culture influences social life, so too does cultural sin influences social life. This can be termed socio-cultural sin.

Social behaviour can become part of established culture. Culture itself would quickly disappear if it were not constantly reinforced by social behaviour. Thus, social sin can become cultural sin. The elementary group (the crowd) creates social life and also influences social life. Therefore, elementary sin can influence social sin. Collectively, bad behaviour of a crowd can be the mother of social sin, for example, the culture of soccer violence.

Culture influences public opinion, and it becomes a reason for grouping together. Thus, when cultural sin influences the motivation for groups, then public opinion becomes sinful opinion. For example, the cultural sin of xenophobia can cause the sin of crowds, like violence, pillage, and so on.

3.6 COLLECTIVE SIN : TRANSMISSION

The doctrine of the transmission of sin brought forth a great debate during the Middle Ages and throughout the centuries. The discussion centred on the question of original sin. The important question was: how is original sin transmitted? St Anselm's answer was that 'original is transmitted by the natural way of regeneration. Disordered lust accompanies the act of procreation. Is it not this lust which is the cause of the transmission of sin?' (St Anselm, quoted by Odon Lottin [1954:17]). Guillome had the same point of view. He understood original sin in two ways: the first aspect is the sin Adam committed in eating the prohibited fruit; the second is the result of this first sin, and resides in the genitals (quoted by Odon Lottin [1954:17]). St Thomas Aquinas said: 'It is Adam who corrupted human nature and it is human nature which by the act of procreation, corrupts the person of the new born'.

The counter argument raised at that time against this doctrine was: how can physical material such as human semen transmit sin in such a way that it removes original righteousness from human nature.

St Thomas Aquinas (quoted by Lottin, 1954:250-251).

If human semen does not, in fact, contain *in actu* the original fault, it contains its powerful effects. The semen of a leper is not affected by leprosy, but it contains the germ which will manifest itself when it finds susceptible soil; in the same way the contaminated semen is not affected by the original fault, but it contains the germ which bears the fruit when it contacts the soul (own translation).

Calvin felt that original sin is a hereditary depravity of our nature, diffused into all parts of the soul (Institutes 2, 1, 8). In short, for the transmission of original sin, we find two schemes:

- ❖ biological-judicial:
 - a) the juridical includes everybody in Adam
 - b) the biological action of semen or heredity
- ❖ psychological-ethical:
 - a) the psychological aspect is constituted by concupiscence
 - b) the ethical aspect brought about by disorderly promiscuity.

What is important, here, is the biological aspect. For the purpose of this present study, the question is: if sin is transmissible biologically, is collective sin also transmissible, and how?

3.6.1 Cultural heredity

As has already been noted cultural sin is transmitted from generation to generation. This sin is not just social sin, but has crossed generations. It becomes part of the culture, an element of the culture. It is transmitted culturally: through imitation, initiation, proverbs, teaching, and the like. What the group transmits is not just sin, but also the language and the other elements of culture, that differentiate people. These differences are sometimes also the bearers of the sin of division.

Culture is learned behaviour, as opposed to the innate. 'By innate is meant biologically determined, coded by the hereditary material.... Culture is an extra-somatic adaptation to an environment'. (Philip and Bruce, 1974:6, 7).

3.6.2 Biological heredity

The four main purposes of this section are:

- 1) To show whether collective sin can be transmitted by biological heredity or not. If yes, the mission of the church (which will be dealt with later) will have to concern itself with the mechanism of heredity.
- 2) To show whether in biological characteristics there are collective sins, or whether collective sins are linked to biological or physical features.
- 3) If physical diversity always leads to the sins of separation, collective pride and so on, then a biological explanation of diversity is necessary.
- 4) To show how collective biological characteristics of a group can bring collective sin to this group.

When observing a culture, the cultural traits, or the sin of others, it is possible to obtain the impression that these are in the blood. In other words, the belief is that culture is transmitted biologically.

It is necessary to study collective genetic inheritance. This new scientific field is called socio-biology, and was developed in the 1970s. This school of thought attempts to discover the gene-factor, which determines human behaviour. Ted Peter (1994:294) observes:

The spectre of biological determinism seems to be looming on our horizon. More and more voices seem willing to say "It's all in the genes!" Many seem to be saying that it is not just the colour of our eyes that is determined by our genetic inheritance; patterns of behaviour are genetically coded as well - including such things as aggression and altruism, vice and virtue.

3.6.2.1. Examples of specific genetic sins

1. Selfishness

In his book *The Selfish Gene* (1976), Dawkins demonstrates that humans are by nature selfish - ruthlessly selfish. Every aspect of our social lives - our loving and hating, our fighting and co-operation, our giving and stealing, our greed and generosity has an underlying biological explanation.

Humans are selfish because the genes are selfish. Dawkins demonstrates that when humans are altruistic to the point of self-sacrifice, their behaviour is still explicable in terms of the selfishness of the gene. Human Beings are willing to die to ensure the survival of someone belonging to their own group, their own family, their own race, their own nation, in the interest of the greater good. This theory explains why xenophobia, territorialism and war are expressions of altruism; one can understand why hero status is accorded to soldiers who die bravely in battle: they have sacrificed themselves for others - the others being those belonging to one's own nation or group and not to one's enemies.

Dawkins specifies that source of selfishness. There is a specific gene, located in a specific chromosome, which codes selfishness. The concept of the selfish gene is based on the

general principle that the purpose of DNA is self-replication. The blind, ongoing process of DNA replication is the source of genetic selfishness.

In this way, it is possible to understand why every collectivity is selfish; why there are such aspects of human behavior as ethnocentrism and tribalism.

2. Crime

Wilson (1978:65) has explored the nature of certain crimes. His findings are that physiological features can be associated with criminality:

- ❖ Criminals are more likely to have mesomorphic body types. Criminals are more likely to have biological fathers who were criminals than non-criminals; this also applies to adoptive sons who never knew their biological fathers. Criminals tend to be somewhat lower in intelligence than non-criminals; they are impulsive or extroverted; and have autonomic nervous systems that respond more slowly and less vigorously to stimuli. This means that social factors are not the sole influence on criminals. Physical factors are also significant. Constitutional factors in a way predispose individuals to socially unacceptable behaviour. This factor by itself has an influence on the chances for a given individual to engage in criminal activity.
- ❖ There are interactions between nature and nurture, between an individual's physical constitution and environment. But Wilson moots the notion of the 'crime gene', and accepts the possibility of a genetic predisposition to commit crime. Criminals are not born, but it is in their temperament to engage in criminal activities (1978:69).
- ❖ In the case of certain tribes, which inherited some physical feature associated with criminality, can call crime their collective sin.

3. Alcoholism.

The psychiatrist, Chomenga, distinguishes two types of alcoholism:

- ❖ That which resulted from consumption of strong liquors over a long period of time. Alcoholics, who begin drinking as teenagers, find it difficult to keep a job, and they often create difficulties within their families.

- ❖ In other cases, genes are responsible, because of the dopamine receptors on nerve cells which can be found in chromosomes.

Whether this is verifiable or not, some social collective sin seems to be attributed to the genes.

4. Homosexuality

Many accept that homosexuality has a variety of causes, genetic and environmental.

In his studies with a sports team in America, Hamer found

a statistically significant correlation between inheritance of genetic markers on chromosomal regions X928 and sexual orientation in a selected group of homosexual males. The study examined forty pairs of homosexual brothers and found that thirty-three pairs shared a set of five genetic markers located near to the end of the long arm of the X chromosome. Males have a combination of X and Y sex-determining chromosomes. They receive the Y chromosome from their fathers and the X chromosome from their mothers. (quoted by Ted Peter, 1993:312).

Thus, Hamer's team contends that its research has 'produced evidence that one form of male homosexuality is preferentially transmitted through the maternal side'.

If this opinion is accepted, the source of one important aspect of "collective sin" is genetic.

Ted Peter (1993:319) observes:

If these early investigations into possible genetic links to alcoholism and homosexuality are any indication, the next decade will find our entire society wrestling with a dramatic array of questions regarding the cultural, philosophical and legal implications of genetic research and proposals for biological determinism. This should prompt theologians to open up discussion on a number of doctrinal fronts, especially the doctrine of sin.

There are other thinkers, such as Rauschenbusch (1917:60), who express alternative opinions: 'Vice and crimes are not transmitted by heredity, but by being socialised', listing such things as alcoholism, drug evils, cruel sports, sex perversity, blood feuds and lynching'.

3.6.2.2. The Biological diversity of human beings

Studying the biological diversity of human beings requires knowledge of the mechanism of basic heredity. Since Mendel, it has been known that heredity is the fusion of gamete from father and mother. These particles, the genes, are arranged in lines on kinds of small sticks, chromosomes, found in the nucleus of all cells. Any species has a constant number and form of chromosomes (except abnormal species). Each has forty-six, of which forty-four form pairs, recognisable under the microscope, homologous chromosomes, alike in both sexes. To these twenty-two pairs of autosomes, is added a pair of chromosomes, morphologically identical, designated by the letter X, in the case of a woman, while in the case of a male, the corresponding pair is composed of a chromosome X and a chromosome with a small y. Y and X are called sexual chromosomes. The probability of finding two persons with identical genomes is practically non-existent, except in the case of monozygotic twins. It is also practically non-existent when this is extended to mankind, whether past, present and future. When man is compared to his contemporaries, or to human beings through all centuries, each of us is genetically unique. Doctor Jean Hiernaux (1969:7) claims:

For the biologist, there are no two identical human beings. As a matter of fact, the number of possible combinations of the variant human hereditary characteristics outnumber the number of electrons in the universe; moreover, human biological diversity concerns not only the hereditary patrimonies, but also their expression, on which multiple social factors have influence. However, all of us come down from the same ancestor, presumptuously called Homo Sapiens. This means that we have much in common; humanity is one in its diversity (own translation).

And he (1969:8) adds:

Even more than in two individuals, there are no two human groups having identical biological characteristics, whatever their grouping criteria. The question we ask about our origin we also ask about the groups we claim to belong to: what differentiates them, from others? How much are they different? How much has heredity and social spheres influenced them? Are there naturally superior groups? A lot of people do not ask this last question themselves because opinions and behaviours in their social spheres have developed a firm assurance that their own group is better than others. They often go too far: any member of their community is naturally better than any foreigner. And in the name of this assurance, millions of human beings have been slaughtered in this country, other millions tortured or hungered. And other millions brought straight from birth to death: being victims of

a systematic social discrimination (own translation).

There are three visible features, which indicate the diversity of human beings. These features are: a) diversity of skin colour; b) diversity of stature and body proportions, and c) diversity of nasal dimensions.

a) Skin colour diversity

Hiernaux (1969:88-99) argues as follows about skin colour diversity.

If we plot skin colour averages, we will notice a strong tendency of dark pigmentation to concentrate in the inter-tropical zone, and light tints to predominate in cold and temperate regions. As the intervention of heredity is largely predominant in pigmentation, it suggests that the genetic adaptation to climate has played an important role in the differentiation of the human populations as far as colour is concerned. Physiology assigns an advantage to a bright skin in less sunny milieu and to a dark skin in a more sunny milieu. Skin colour is caused by pigments, of which melanin determines the darkest tints.

So, although it is possible that environmental factors other than ultraviolet radiation intervene in the association between the tropical zone and dark skin, it seems that skin colour is an expression of genetic adaptation.

b) Diversity of stature and body proportions.

As has been previously noted, the diversity of adult statures has a genetic component. What environmental factors do these genetic adaptations respond to? Relationships between morphology and climate have been observed among warm-blooded animals and established Bergmann and Allen's rules. Bergmann's rule declares that for these animals their size tends to increase when the temperature of the habitat drops. Allen's rule states that the relative dimensions of the prominent and exposed parts of the body (such as ears, tails and limbs) tend to grow bigger with higher temperatures. Is it also the case among humans?

Some data indicates that there is also a relationship between climate and human morphology. For example, in the Mediterranean stature decreases. Among pre-Columbian Americans, Amerindians were the tallest in the North-American plains. However, Bergmann's rule fails in sub-Saharan Africa: stature presents a net positive correlation with the highest temperature. The greatest average masculine stature in the world is that of the Nuer, living in the torrid climate in the valley of the upper Nile.

At international level, the rule of Allen is statistically verified for human species concerning the relative length of the lower limbs: this length tends to increase in accordance with the atmospheric temperature. But as in the case of Bergmann, Allen's rule is invalidated in sub-Saharan Africa, where the relative length of the lower limbs tends to decrease in the warmer areas.

c) Diversity of the nasal dimensions

The height and the width of the nose vary among populations. The intervention of heredity in the diversity is manifest.

Links have been found, too, between average nasal dimensions and climate. It is generally accepted that the nasal index (relationship between the width and the height of the nose) is related to the temperature of the habitat, and even to its absolute humidity. The nose tends to be higher in a humid and hot climate, and flatter in a dry and cold climate. Physiology provides an explanation for this. The principal function of the nose is to humidify and heat the inhaled air; if it does not reach the lungs saturated with water and with body temperature, it will damage them. Humidifying and heating depends on the distance covered by the air and the intimacy of its contact with the nasal mucous membrane, which has body temperature and is covered with secretions. In the dry or cold climate, a high, narrow nose is thus advantageous; in a humid, hot region where this conformation has no advantage, a flat, large nose facilitates breathing, which in turn affects thermo-regulation.

Summary

Ronald Col-Turner accepts the premise that genes influence behaviour, even sinful behaviour, but he maintains that genes are not the sole determinants (1993:87). Philip Hefner (1993:127) states: 'Co-evolution of genetic and cultural information, mediated by the brain and selected by the system of forces that selects all things, can be said to be the means that God has chosen to unfold the divine intention and to bring nature or matter to a new stage of fulfilment'. And he adds, 'Our genes can dispose us to sin' (1984:200).

In conclusion, from the discussion above, it can be deduced that sin can be biologically transmitted, in other words, that sin is a spiritual entity that can be materially transmitted. Sin does not exist in the collective genome. The popular sentence: "such and such a group has such and such a sin in the blood" is not correct. But, on the other hand, diversity brings the sin of separatism; whether it is called racism, tribalism, or clanism and so on. In the separation one finds hate for another group.

And the differences can give rise to collective sin. The following examples are sufficient to illustrate this point: the tallest tribe can become powerful, and it may lead to collective pride; the smallest group can develop fear, or live secretly, and develop the sin of fear, or hypocrisy; skin colour or nose dimension can appear beautiful to one group, and consequently can be esteemed and this develops collective pride. Thus sin can be transmitted and become collective sin.

CHAPTER IV

A SPECIFIC TRIBE AND A SPECIFIC SIN

In his book entitled *Sin: Radical Evil in Soul and Society*, Ted Peters (1994:102) writes: 'The oldest form of the group relevant to the discussion of sin is the tribe'. This present discussion concentrates on one specific tribe, the Luba.

One of the answers to the question of the choice of this tribe and not another lies in the fact that this is the writer's own tribe. This ensures full understanding of the culture. Another answer is that this tribe is well known for the specific sin, that is the focus of this study.

This chapter consists of an analysis of the sin of this specific group. This analysis is two pronged:

- 1) a description of the understanding of sin among the Luba; and
- 2) a demonstration that there is in every group at least one collective sin.

This sin is an integral component of the Luba culture, and it is therefore collective.

4.1 THE LUBA ETHNIC GROUP AND THEIR SIN

In this chapter, the Luba ethnic concept of sin and its specific sin will be analysed. It is important to respond to the question as to why a tribe rather than a nation has been selected as the basis for the discussion. In other words, instead of studying tribal collective sin, national collective sin could have been the focus. There are three reasons for this choice:

- 1) A tribe has a longer history than a nation. Most African countries (nations) date their independence between twenty and forty years ago. In addition to this, colonisation lasted approximately seventy years. There is no solid cultural identity for this period. Many countries have a diversity of cultures. On the other hand, the tribe has a longer history, of at least 400 years. Because of this, the tribe has a solid culture.

- 2) The second reason is that it has been proved today that the African feels more attached to his tribe than to his country.
- 3) The tribe commits the three sins studied in this work: social, cultural and structural sin.
 - 1) Social sin: the tribe is a solid and durable society.
 - 2) Cultural sin: a tribe has only one culture (although there are many subcultures). Generally in Africa there are several cultures in a country.
 - 3) Structural sin: here modern nations would provide good material, but the tribe is part of a nation, thus being influenced in its culture in one way or another by the structures of the nation.

4.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE LUBA ETHNIC GROUP

The Luba ethnic group is geographically situated in the middle of Congo and in the province called Kasai oriental (eastern Kasai). The Luba ethnic group is divided into many groups: Luba-Lolu; Luba-Lulua; Luba-Bambu also called Luba-kasai, and so on. Most of the Luba live in Kasai and the Luba-Lolu live in the province of Katanga. The Baluba originated from the north of Africa. They passed through Rwanda and arrived to settle in the north-eastern part of Congo. But some of the Baluba settled in the province of Katanga. The Kasai region is divided into two parts: eastern and western Kasai. The Luba-Lulua lives in western Kasai and the Luba-Kasai live in eastern Kasai. The groups have historic and linguistic links. It is important to indicate that there are also other ethnic groups within the Kasai region with whom the Baluba share the same cultural characteristics. However, the focus of this study is the Luba-Kasai. I will call them the Baluba or Luba ethnic group. 'Ba' is used to indicate the plural and 'mu' is used to indicate the singular. Therefore when □Baluba□ is used, it is to indicate the people belonging to the Luba ethnic group and “Muluba” refers to one person who belongs to the Luba ethnic group.

The Luba ethnic group has more than sixty clans, which differ from each other in certain aspects of custom. Nevertheless, some basic traditions remain the same. The Baluba are profoundly religious. Nowadays, 80% of the Baluba are Christians and belong to different

denominations (60% to the mission-established churches, and 20% to those African Independent churches and sects which originated from the Western and African countries and also from local sects), 15% of the Baluba belong to the African traditional religions, and 5% belong to Islam.

In summary, it is important to say that the Luba traditional religion is characterised by ancestralism, anthropocentrism and the communal mind. The Baluba love their language and culture. They speak about their culture proudly.

In the next section, two aspects of sin among the Luba are discussed in further detail: the understanding or concept of sin among the Baluba, and the specific sin of the Baluba.

4.2.1 The Baluba's concept of sin

The following terms are used to indicate sin (evil) among the Baluba:

Cilema, cibau, cibindi and mikiya.

4.2.1.1 Cilema

In this section, the analysis of Tshiamalenga (1980:123-127) of the Luba term *cilema* is used. This analysis is useful in penetrating the concept of sin in the Luba ethnic group.

The vocabulary of evil.

Spoken 'Luba' reveals a diversity and a gradation of expressions in connection with evil. The principle expressions are articulated by three verbs:

- ❖ *kwenza* - to do, to act;
- ❖ *kupia* - to burn, contaminate, to contract;
- ❖ *kubunda* - to provoke, to make oneself gravely guilty;

There are also other verbs;

- ❖ *kwikala ne* - to be with, to have.
- ❖ *kwensa* - to do

- ❖ *kwenzela* - to do badly, to act with evil, to do a bad thing
- ❖ *kwenza bwalu bubi* (plural: *malu mabi*) - to do bad things
- ❖ *kwenza cilema* (plural: *bilema*) - to do malpractice, malformation, to make something infirm, to do wrong, to make a mistake
- ❖ *kwenza tshilumbu cibi* (plural: *bilumbu bibi*) - to do bad things
- ❖ *kwenza cintu cibi* (plural: *bintu bibi*) - to do a bad thing
- ❖ *kwenza muanda mubi* (plural: *kutupakana*) - to make a mistake.

Cilema appears as a primary category of evil in the Baluba language. The epithet 'bi' (bad looking) appears as a generalisation. Then all things, which are physically defective are bad-looking, but all things which are bad-looking are not physically defective. Mud, for example, is bad-looking, but it is not defective. *Bitoci mbibi, apo ki cilema* to mean 'mud is bad-looking but is not evil.' *Cilema* is used to point out physical ugliness or moral imperfections or behaviour as against technological, scientific or ethical norms. This conveys the real meaning. *Cilema* means 'moral fault'.

The second verb which goes with the word is *kupia pia*. -'to be burnt, to be contaminated'
Kupia cilema, kushala cilema - to be contaminated with blame.

kupia cibindi (plural) - to be contaminated (to act against) by crime against one familial taboo.
Cibindi is discussed later.

THE THIRD VERB IS KUBUNDA - TO PROVOKE; TO MAKE GUILTY

- ❖ *Kubunda* - provoke, to take oneself seriously; guilt.
- ❖ *Kubunda bwalu* - to consider someone guilty of serious crime; to fine.
- ❖ *Kubunda cibau* - to consider oneself guilty of serious crime; to fine.
- ❖ *Kubunda cilumbu* - to be gravely guilty of godly affairs and possibly of judgement.

The verb *kwikala ne* -to be with or to have.

The verb 'to have', 'to get' or 'possess' is absent in Tshiluba (Luba language) just as in most African languages. The Luba do not say 'I have' but 'I am with'. Instead of

'having something' the Baluba is 'with something'. He is not the owner of the house, but the child of the house - '*mwena nzubu*'. It means one who is at home and not one who possesses the house. The verb 'to have' and 'to possess' are foreign to the Luba mentality. It is the same muluba who will not be guilty but he will be without fault.

- ❖ *Kwikala ne bwalu* - to be with a grave fault.
- ❖ *Kwikala ne cibau* - to be with a crime.
- ❖ *Kwikala ne cibindi* - to be guilty of a crime against taboo.
- ❖ *Kwikala ne cilema*- to be with a bad affair, possibly from judgement.
- ❖ *Kwikala ne cilumbu* - to be with a bad affair.
- ❖ *Kwikala ne mwanda* - to be with a bad story.

The verb 'to be with' specifies the meaning of being contaminated with a moral fault, that is, a person can have a fault or be guilty, while he himself is not faulty or guilty. He is supposed to belong to the fault. One who is with the *cilema* is not confounded with his *cilema*; he does not 'have it' but he is 'with it'.

There is a graduation of sin in the Luba tribe.

A *cilema* is a primary category of sin.

Mwena cilem - child of fault, evil.

Cilema - deformity, hideousness, defect and evil.

When a Baluba says *Mwena cilema* she/he wants to point to someone who is avaricious, someone who eats while hidden in the house, because eating outside gives the opportunity to everyone who wants to eat. One who eats inside the house is avaricious or *mwena cilema*. Hence the Luba proverb: *Cikuyi tumukulula musenga, mwena cilema tumubelele mu bantu* which means: 'Let us strip the great tree, the child of evil or wrong must be counseled in public'. This is intended to make him/her feel ashamed and help him change.

4.2.1.2 The second term is *Cibau*.

Cibau means crime. It invokes the idea of a fine. One who speaks about paying *cibau*, speaks both of what is paid and where it (*cibau*) goes. Note that people who receive *cibau* are not included here. That is to say that here *cibau* is something abstract or philosophical, though it is real. The one that western people call a criminal, the Baluba call him/her □*mwena cibau*□, that is, a child of crime. It is *cibau* which is condemned. *Cibau* itself is not condemned.

For Tshiamalenga (1980:138), there are four major crimes (*bibau*) which are:

- 1) to kill somebody.
- 2) to get hold of someone's possessions, or his wife.
- 3) to afflict another person through witchcraft or sorcery.
- 4) adultery.

4.2.1.3 The third term is *Cibindi*

Cibindi evokes the intervention of ancestors; it is the crime against the prescribed taboos left by ancestors; that is why they must intervene. They choose the punishment themselves: to strike, to lap, to wound, to cause sickness or to kill. The *cibindi* is not a direct crime against ancestors, but against the community or members of the community.

This is a list of *bibindi* (*bibindi* is the plural of *cibindi* - 'bi' being plural as 's' in English and French; 'bi' replaces 'ci' which is singular).

- 5) To see the parents' nudity
- 6) Incest
- 7) To beat one's own parents
- 8) Adultery of married women.

DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF CIBINDI:

- a) *Cibindi* as action within the family

- 1) *Cibindi* is a parental relationship. *Cibindi* is contracted:
- 2) when the father sleeps with his daughter or a mother sleeps with her son; an uncle with a niece or an aunt with a nephew. Both concerned contract *cibindi*.
- 3) when the son or daughter have seen the parents nude (son or daughter contracts *cibindi*)
- 4) when there is sexual intercourse between brother and sister; or between two cousins (both concerned contract *cibindi*)
- 5) when a son beats his father.

It is right to point out that the terms uncle and aunt are not Luba concepts; the Baluba have fathers and mothers: they call them elder father or elder mother, when he is the elder father's brother or mother, or younger father or mother when they speak about younger mother's sister. The father's sister is called father woman. The cousins are brothers and sisters. For this reason, all things done to one's father one has to do to one's elder or younger fathers; the same with your one's mother's sisters. Cousins receive the same consideration as do one's sisters and brothers.

b) *Cibindi* between husband and wife.

- 1) Interruption of sexual intercourse because one partner is angry or disgusted leads to *cibindi*.
- 2) If one partner spits saliva during sexual intercourse, this is a sign of contempt; this act brings about *cibindi*.
- 3) The biggest *cibindi* is adultery of a married woman.

For a married woman, it is important to realise that, owing to the dowry, she is linked directly to her husband's family and tribe for as long as she still lives at home. But if she commits adultery, she will suffer sickness and death. To repair it she has to pay a fine consisting of a chicken or a goat to her sisters-in-law.

c) *Cibindi* with the family-in-law.

- 1) To sleep with a brother-in-law is prohibited.
- 2) To look directly in the face of a mother-in-law is disrespectful towards her.
- 3) *Cibindi* on the level of words within the family.

- 4) The son who insults his father contracts *cibindi*.
- 5) The woman who insults the father-in-law contracts *cibindi*.
- 6) While the discussion or trouble between a woman and her mother-in-law, the woman cannot murmur otherwise the mother-in-law will say she is insulting her, which means it is an insult made orally.

d) *Cibindi* as the gesture or sign

When a woman is angry, she can rearrange the kitchen utensils as a sign of anger. This is an insult to her mother-in-law. Spitting saliva during sexual intercourse or looking directly at the face of the mother-in-law has already been mentioned.

Cibindi aims at the conservation of society. The Baluba say: *meyi mashiya kudi bankabua*, that is, the 'law left by the ancestors'. For a clearer understanding of the differences between *cilema*, *cibau* and *cibindi*, the legal penalties must be considered. *Cilema* must be made known to the members of the community in order to correct a child of *cilema*. Any member of the community can apply this correction. *Cibau* must also be understood by the community and a child of *cibau* must pay the penalty of the *cibau* to specific persons. *Cibindi* is known even in secret by the ancestors and God. The sign which can show that this person has a *cibindi*, is an illness. Then the elders can ask the sick person if he/she has contracted *cibindi* (to distinguish between the two - *cibau* and *cibindi*). For example, when a man sleeps with someone's wife, the man commits a *cibau* and the wife a *cibindi*. But both of them are *bena cibau* (children of *cibau*). Therefore the man must be severely judged, condemned and punished. This happens only when people are informed about it. As far as the woman is concerned, whether the case is known or not known, the ancestors will punish or kill her. When she starts to be sick or before giving birth, she must confess, otherwise she will die. Adultery committed by a married woman is a serious crime. It is easy to understand that all *cibindi* is *cibau*, all *cibau* is *cilema*, but not the opposite.

Among the Baluba, community witchcraft is the most serious crime. This crime can be the cause of other crimes. A witch can commit adultery, violate a taboo and so on. Witchcraft is the cause of bad luck, unhappiness, misfortune, calamity, disasters and accidents.

4.2.1.4 The fourth term is *mikiya* (Plural: *mukiya*)

The concept of *mukiya* can be defined as conscious or unconscious omission of an act which one must do to obey the rituals established by the ancestors. *Cibindi* is from an act committed and *mukiya* is from an act omitted. According to the Baluba tradition, *mukiya* is the sin of omission.

Kinds of *mikiya*

- (1) From birth everybody is affected by *mikiya* from which one must be purified, because *mikiya* is considered as a stain to be removed. This kind of *mikiya* is congenital. Every child must be correctly introduced into society. These proper introductions prepare the child to be a builder of society. For instance, after birth, the child's umbilical cord must be buried under a plantain tree.
- (2) A second category of *mikiya* is for children of *mikiya*. This category is more complicated. The *bana ba mikiya* means children of *mikiya*. These children carry the stains of *mikiya* from birth.

These children are also called *bana ba buhanga*; children of *buhanga*. The term *buhanga* is derived from the verb *kuhanga*, which means to miss or to fail. Thus *bana ba buhanga* are children of failures; children outside the norms; taboo or sacred children.

There are two levels of *bana ba buhanga* or *mikiya*

On the first level there are strong children of *buhanga* or *mikiya*. The following are the children in *mikiya* or *buhanga*:

- a) **Ngalula**: this name is given to a female child who follows three or four boys in the family. It is the same for a boy who follows three or four girls. After four children of the same sex, if there is a child of another sex, the Baluba call him *Tshingalulalula*. This can well be understood in analysing the suffix *tshi*, which is a sign of grandeur, greatness and physical height; and the repetition of the name *Ngalula* is an exaggerated sign. Briefly speaking, *Tshingalulalula* means big *Ngalula* who is exaggerated to such an extent that he

or she almost loses the privilege bestowed to *Ngalula*. He or she is also a child, who moves out of the norms of the family and brings change.

b) **Twins**: a child is normally born alone, so to bear two children at the same time is called *buhanga*.

c) **Ntumba** is a child who is born before the mother's first menstruation. This child is called *Ntumba was mulu*. The meaning is *Ntumba* from sky. This means that it is an extraordinary child.

The second level of children of *buhanga* is weak in *mikiya*. The following are these sorts of children:

a) **Mujinga** is a child that was born encircled by the umbilical cord. *Mujinga* is from the verb *kujingila*: to encircle.

b) **Tshiela makasa**: this name implies one who puts the feet first. This child will, when he is being born, let his feet go out before his head, unlike a normal delivery.

c) **Kapinga**: a child born after another which was dead *Kapinga* froms the verb *kupingana*, which means to replace, to take the place of somebody else. *Kapinga* is a child who replaces or takes the place of his brother or sister who has died.

These are the children born with *mikiya* because they are stained from birth. To heal these children, to bring them from *mikiya* to a pure life, they have to pass through the rites and ceremonies of cleansing or purification called *kukolobola*. This term means to organise, to put in order. To purify and finish the *mikiya* is also to shelter the children from witchcraft. Because the witches know the children are not purified they would take advantage of this opportunity to kill the children.

(3) The third category of *mikiya* is the *mikiya* contracted in adulthood. For instance, when the:

Father-in-law dies, sexual intercourse must be stopped between the son-in-law and daughter of the one who has died, until the son-in-law gives a chicken to the family of his wife. The chicken is called *nzolu wa kashipela ka buku* and can be translated as a chicken to heal the rupture of the relationship, and which will unite son-in-law with father-in-law. This relationship is not just juridical, as it would be in western mentality, but indeed a spiritual relationship. Before he gives this chicken, he lives in *mikiya* until he drives it out by the creation of a new situation.

Another example to describe *mukiya* is the following. It is not tolerated by the Baluba people for a parent to die in the house of his son or daughter, otherwise the son or daughter contracts the *mukiya*. For purification from *mukiya*, the daughter or son must pay his father's brother by sacrificing a goat. Therefore, *mukiya* can be understood as sin not wanted, not committed, but experienced.

Someone who contracts *cibau*, *cibindi* or *mukiya* is not *muntu mujalame* - in other words, not right, normal or just. The ceremonies and rites of purification make him *muntu mujalame* - a good man, correct and useful to the clan, in ethical cases or within society.

4.3 CEREMONIES AND RITES OF PURIFICATION

4.3.1 Ceremonies

It would be impossible within the framework of this thesis to describe all the ceremonies and rites of purification from *cibau*, *cibindi* and *mikiya*. Only a few important points are raised, as there are a lot of ceremonies related to the kinds, categories and the seriousness of *cibindi*, *cibau* or *mikiya*. There are also the ceremonies of *mikiya* which one does twice or three times as in the *mikiya* for twins, *Ngalula* and *Ntumba*.

Attention is given to five aspects of these ceremonies:

(a) **Community**: one group of people can be representatives of the community. They can be the elders of a family, clan or ethnic group. Then the *cibindi-cibau-or-mukiya* [the woman concerned] is treated by the oldest women. 'The commission is never joint and mixed, except where incest is committed by two persons of two different views' (own interpretation: Kabengele, 1989:34).

For the children born in the *mikiya*, like *Ntumba*, *Ngalula* and twins, the ceremonies must be public. Dances, communal dinners and so forth take place in these ceremonies. For instance, after the birth of twins, the mother should avoid sleeping with her husband till the day of the ceremony. During this ceremony of dances and music, somebody brings a mouthful of casava (local basic food) and chicken on a machete held out publicly to the twins' mother. If she accepts and eats it, it is a sign that she has not slept with her husband till now and the community claps their hands. This is indicative of the importance of the community in ceremonies.

(b) **The living-dead or ancestors**: The subject of ancestors is a much debated theme of African traditional religion, according to Tes Haar and co-writers (1992:75). Mbiti (1969:29) has put forward the idea of ancestors being called the 'living-dead'. By this name, he seeks to point out that the ancestors are not men who lived only in the past, but they are living now and are part of some social reality in community life. Russels (1981:65) says: 'The central theme of ancestor worship is not that there is life beyond death, but that the dead continue their involvement within the society of the living'. The notion of the living-dead is important in ceremonies of *cibindi*, *cibau* or *mikiya*. Due to the fact that *cibau* or *cibindi* is a sin against societal laws, called *meyi a bankambwa*, the words of the ancestors are implied.

Mbiti (1969:59) confirms that 'when these acts are directed towards the living-dead, they are a symbol of fellowship as well as the recognition that the departed are still members of their human families and tokens of respect and remembrance for the living-dead'.

Talking about the ancestors or the living-dead, Muzorewa (1985:12) observes: ‘... this presence of the ancestral spirits or their equivalent in any given community augments the African spiritual understanding of the community’. Idowu (1975:187) also argues: ‘Ancestors remain spiritual superintendents of family affairs and continue to bear their titles of relationship like “father”, “mother” ’ and, he adds: ‘the ancestors are factors of cohesion in African society’ (1975:185).

The living-dead do not vanish from existence: they now enter into the state of collective immortality (Mbiti, 1969:26).

Purification from *mikiya* includes respecting the words of the ancestors as well. This implies that the way marked by the ancestors will be followed. The reason for speaking to the living-dead is to ask their favour, to invoke their beneficence and protection, as well as to avoid punishment. The actual act of speaking to the living-dead is a very important time in the rites of *cibindi*. It is only after this step has been taken that the people can be sure that the son of *cibau* is protected, purified and can rejoice and enjoy the favour of the living-dead.

Benjamin Ray (1976:147) is quite correct when he writes about African ancestors in connection with African morals, saying that:

God, however, rarely intervenes in the moral life of men on earth; for the most part, it is the ancestors who act as the official guardians of the social and moral order. This is especially true of the small scale, stateless societies whose socio-political rules are entirely governed by a decent system based on genealogical frameworks. In such societies, ancestors become the focus of religious activity.

(c) **Words** play an important role in ceremonies of *cibindi*, *cibau* and *mikiya*. The words in the form of questions are formed to guide or judge the people, men or women who contract *cibindi* or *cibau*. Words of glorification for the children of *buhanga* or *mikiya* are poetic sentences honouring the children of *mikiya*. For instance, this poem glorifies the *Mbuyi* - the first born of twins.

*Tshibwabwa Mbuyi,
Mutunda wa toka,*

*Mukulu kudi Nshandi,
Inandi mwakunyeda.*

The significance of this is:

Tshibwabwa Mbuyi – (two names just to glorify)
Snake's den
He is the eldest child of his father
His mother is youngest to him.

It is necessary to say that the children of *mikiya* are at the same time the children of *buhanga*, which means that they are indeed children who do not respond to norms of society, but are at the same time children of honour. Their mothers have to change their names, only then to be called: the mother of *Ngalula*, *Ntumba* or *Mbuyi*.

As mentioned above, all words are very important when one is speaking to the living-dead, as already argued.

(d) **Materials:** some materials are useful for the above-mentioned ceremonies. For instance, clay dishes, some plant kaolin and so forth. In some ceremonies, knives, matches and other things might be used.

(e) **Sacrifices and fines:** goats and chickens are useful for sacrifices and fines. One group eats these in the name of the community. It can be the brother's father, if the offence is committed against the father, or the elders, who may judge the affairs.

Mbiti (1969:59) describes these sacrifices in these terms: 'Sacrifices refer to cases where animal life is destroyed in order to present the animal, in part or in whole to God, supernatural beings, spirits or the living-dead'.

Offerings refer to other cases, which do not involve the killing of an animal, chiefly involving the presentation of foodstuffs and other items. In some cases, sacrifices and offerings are directed to one or more of the following: God, spirits and the living-dead.

4.3.2 Rites and Ceremonies

Wilson (1993:62) makes a distinction between ceremonial and ritual rites. A ceremony is a symbolic act with a lesser point of reference than a ritual. A ritual act is religious; it is instrumental and affects the relationship between humanity and the transcendent realm. The ceremonial rite is a social issue. In the light of the foregoing distinction, the *cilema* is linked to ceremonies and the *cibindi* and *mikiya* to rites, because as has been argued, *cilema* denotes morally bad acts and can be ended with a ceremony in the community, without the intervention of any supernatural being. With regard to Baluba sin, three kinds of rites of purification can be identified:

- a) The introduction of the child to the society as the child who has contracted *mikiya* from childhood. These ceremonies are very simple. They consist of cooking a chicken and then eating it, to bury the child's umbilical cord in the ground under a plaintain tree.
- b) Rites and ceremonies of the children of *mikiya* are more complex. For twins and *Ntumba*, there are for instance two ceremonies, the first called *kujija*, which has proper significance in performing a dance. After this is done, they have accomplished the rites through eating certain refreshments. The second rite is called *kuendesha nsau*, which involves marching from house to house and, more particularly, dancing outside the house. For both these ceremonies, the community should be involved.
- c) The rites of purification. This is the removal of a stain (*mikiya*) from *cibau* or *cibindi*, in other words, having been removed from the community by your own bad act. As written above, there are two kinds of *cibau* (sin). In the Baluba, one small sin can be committed and the people may realise this before you are condemned. Another sin might be serious but committed in secret, although the ancestors will be aware of this. The latter sin takes place when, for example, the wife commits adultery or incest, and even though the people might not be aware of this, the ancestors definitely will be aware of the wrong, which has been committed. In case of incest, the blood of a chicken is sprinkled on the bound feet of both people concerned. This is the symbol, which signifies that the same blood cannot be mixed.

In the case of adultery committed by a woman, the sanctions against her are heavy. Sanctions include torture, public exposure, her sisters undressing her in the presence of others, her cousins and all the other women of the Baluba, who are called the sisters of the husband. This woman must also pay a fine to the husband's sisters. This fine can be in the form of a goat and chicken. When this woman lives amicably with her sisters-in-law and the in-law family, the sanctions may be reduced.

The purpose of these traditions is to:

1. save the integrity and continuity of the clan
2. protect weak persons, for example, women and children.
3. prevent trouble which could erupt.
4. protect the human being from the anger of the ancestors, of witches and of evil persons.
5. to protect the future generation.

In conclusion, it should be noted, in line with Tshiamalenga (1980:128) that:

Except with hating, human beings are not generally considered to be fundamentally bad or sinners. The human being is not always bad or already a sinner. In fact, the human being *ntu* is good, but he/she may have a fault or a sin. Thus, sin appears external with regard to the human being *ntu* who can thus entertain a relation of "being with it". This is experienced differently when the judeo-christian experience of sin is considered. Except for the witch, man *ntu* is not aware of being sinful from his conception (Psalm 51:5), but he can just be with the sin (own translation).

Sin is committed against the society or community to which the human being belongs. All accidental evils and sins are against the community first. Mistakes are only allowed among foreigners from within the community to the *wewe kwenza mwa kwenze wa bena* which means 'you harmed me as if you were a member of another community'.

For the Baluba group, sin is not solely anthropocentric. The ancestors are also involved in the affairs of the community. Sin is against the living and the living-dead. That being as it may, the living are in a vital union with the living-dead, who are also considered part of society, as already argued. The neglecting of giving sacrifices to the ancestors (living-dead) is conceived

as faulty or a sin against them. This situation can disrupt the whole society by bringing in different problems such as death, barrenness, and sickness.

4.4 THE BALUBA AND THE SIN OF PRIDE

The Baluba are often characterised by their pride and are well known for their boastfulness. Everybody in the Congo, as well as outside the Congo, speaks about it. All the other ethnic groups say the same thing about the Baluba. The terms used to describe the people who belong to the Luba ethnic group are: proud, imperious, haughty, stuck-up, boastful, lofty and intrepid. Among those interviewed, 80% of the people accepted that the Baluba are proud; 50% justified this pride, and took pride in it, as a positive aspect of life; 30% accepted that pride is evil or sinful and 20% denied this allegation. There were Christians as well as non-Christians among the people interviewed.

There are some authors who have written about evil among the Baluba. *Kambayi* is one who wrote a book (1989) entitled *Tshintantshisme*. In this book he describes the evolution of the Luba mentality from 1960 onwards. Butantshi means to be rich, strong, great, remarkable, and so on. Mabika Kalanda is another author and also a well-known advocate on African personality, authenticity and Luba culture; nevertheless, during a conference on the development of western Kasai, he recognised the weakness of the Luba culture when he said that: 'our problem comes from the depths of the age, meaning a cultural atavism' (own translation: Mabika, 1990:125). He calls it 'our innate manner' or 'our way of being'. Both of these authors confirm the existence and actual presence of evil within the Baluba culture.

The question arises as to how did the Baluba ethnic group come to be like that? This is a problematic question. The argument of this study is that the environmental history and context in which the Baluba live are the causes of this ethnic sin. One may add that, somewhat paradoxically, it is the dynamism and intelligence of the Baluba that is another cause of their collective sin.

4.4.1 Environment and context

Culture is born within a geographical area. However, it is important to note that the environment moulds that particular culture. Birket-Smith (1965:51) argues that: 'Every culture - with the exception... of the very lowest ones - is connected with a definite geographical area, but the proposition cannot be reversed, for an area does not generally demand a specific culture'. He continues by noting that: '*vis-à-vis* the inner mental conditions are the outer owners, which consist of social and geographical surroundings' (35). Keith (1972:11) makes the following comment about the environment:

Environmental location of a culture is one of the most important factors influencing culture. The way of life of the members of a culture can be influenced by the opportunities which its environment presents, such as abundant animal life which may lead to a well developed hunting technology, fertile soils which permit the development of horticulture and agriculture, and grasslands which provide excellent grazing grounds for herds of animals. Or the way of life can be influenced by the limitation which the environment presents such as scarcity of animal life, cold temperatures which prohibit the growing of crops, and dry lands which provide little or no pasturage.

Another question that arises is: Why do two tribes living in the same area have two different cultures? A valid answer to this question that has been endorsed by many anthropologists since the end of the nineteenth century is called 'environmental possibility'. This theory argues that the environment provides both opportunities and limitations. The environment also provides several options or alternatives. Culture can evolve from one or more of the options available in the environment. Events and other factors can facilitate or constrain one tribe to the use of one option and the other tribe to the use of another option. Speaking about the influence of environment, Harris (1988:26) observes:

Soils, climate, topography, rivers, seashores, forests - all these interact with the intervention and diffusion of technology. Thus agriculture obviously does not penetrate as readily into arctic or desert environments as it does into river valleys and areas of abundant rainfall. The yield from rice planted in irrigated terraces far surpasses the yield from rice planted in gardens dependent upon rainfall. To repeat, any item or technology must interact with a specific natural environment.

Environment can thus foster come cultural rules in the heart of human beings.

The Baluba tribe lives in agrasslands region. This was considered a poor environment in comparison with some parts of Africa or, more particularly, of the Congo. It is easy for people living in the areas surrounded by big forests to be helped by nature; they have the advantage of getting food without working hard. For instance, fruit and wild life are abundant. For them, life is not demanding, owing to the fact that nature is favourable in their area. Therefore, these people do not usually develop the habit of working hard.

In contrast, the Muluba nation find their environment hostile, requiring them to work. That is why they have to acquire the habit of working with the aim of achieving individual success. Usually, when a man has a hard time, when he is in a life and death situation, his normal reflex is to defend himself by the way he works. Within a hostile environment, everybody has to work to save his or her life. For this reason, people get into the habit of working in order to increase their inheritance themselves. A proud man, who succeeds by himself, through his own efforts, exposes himself to the temptation of pride, haughtiness or arrogance.

When a Muluba hands down his culture to posterity, he says: 'work hard to live and be proud of life'. At the same time, he transmits the satisfaction of a task well done as well as taking pride in life.

4.4.2 Historical events

Events in history have helped the Baluba to adapt to any new situation. Their history can be divided into four sections:

- ❖ before the arrival of the Arabs;
- ❖ The Arab period;
- ❖ Colonial rule; and
- ❖ Independence.

1) Before the arrival of the Arabs

The Baluba, just like other African tribes, have moved around to many places. The writer, like Alexis Kagame, believes that the Baluba came from Northern Africa. When they came to

Kivu (eastern part of the Congo), some of them stayed there, some settled in Zambia, and some in Shaba. They took on different names. The migration from Katanga has already been mentioned. Luba history begins with the Baluba-Shankadi. This was a large kingdom near modern-day Kabongo, at the Mutombo-Mutombo villages and at the city of Kamina in the Shaba province. This place is called Sanga-Lubangu. Many tribes live in Kasai and many of them confirm that they moved there before Sanga-Lubangu, which means the place where the cork tree was notched. This was a very large place where many a tribe has lived together. One of these is the Luba tribe, today called Baluba-Kasai, or just Baluba, which is the specific subject of this research. It took about three centuries before the Baluba people were re-united to become a powerful kingdom. This kingdom was created by Nkongolo Mwamba, son of Kahatwa, from the Songe tribe. Nkongolo Mwamba became the king of all the villages between the Lomami and Lwalaba rivers, and including Lake Kisala. These events took place between 1600 and 1650. A daughter of Nkongolo Mwamba married a man named Ilunga Mbidi, originally from a village near Lake Upemba. This couple had two boys: Kisulu and Kalala Ilunga. In order to decide the succession, the two princes waged war with each other and so the Luba-Shankadi tribe found themselves in a violent internecine struggle. The second son, Kalala Ilunga, was victorious and became the founder of the second kingdom of the Luba-Shaba tribe. Kalala Ilunga extended his domination northwards, and to the west as far as the Lubilanji. As a result of these conquests, every chief was forced to pay him tribute and was required to endorse his enthronement. Until 1891, after eighteen kings had succeeded each other, another dispute between two princes took place during the schism of the two autonomous kingdoms and as a result of this, the large kingdom of Baluba-Shankadi ended.

2) The migration

Two wars among the Luba-Shankadi caused the migration to many tribes of Kasai to take place. Among them was the Baluba called Baluba Kasai. The first war was the one of Kalala Ilunga against his brother, when one part of the population of Luba-Shankadi left the region and went in a westerly direction. The second war resulted in many tribes, like Luba-Lulua, Kanyioka, Songue and others, coming to establish themselves in the region of Kasai. Another group ran away from the Luba-Shankadi region, probably for political reasons, that is,

dissension between the king and one of his subjects. Another reason why a part of the Baluba-tribe moved from the Luba-Shankadi had to do with their fields. This situation lasted for a long time so many people moved from the kingdom of Baluba-Shankadi to look for fertile lands, forests and food. The people moved group by group. This migration took place around 1650.

Historians speak of three migratory movements, this first of which took place about 1650. One group established themselves in the valley of Luila and Lubilanji, which they called Bena Kanyioka. Another migration established itself in the valley of the Lulua River, which they called Bena Lulua and the third group dispersed in the Bena Lulua, the valley of Kasai. These migrations started in about 1700. The third migratory movement took place during the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the people established themselves along the Lubilanji River in the east and the Lubi River in the west. All these people are called Baluba-Kasai and form the subject of this study in this section. As the previous group already occupied the land before them, the Baluba-Kasai established themselves in the territory of Mbilanji Ibidi and Lubi. They found fertile land, but it lacked water and was largely forested. During this period of establishing a settlement, their brothers, Kanyioka and Tshiokwe attacked the Baluba. The first time Tshiokwe attacked, the Balubians were not acquainted with handling guns and Tshiokwe killed many people. But when the second attack came, the Balubians were out of their difficulties and killed Tshiokwe. These events created political problems and since then wars have been raged against immigrants and their settlements. Generally, life for the Balubians was made unpleasant and this was the reason they created a culture of hard work for the generations to follow.

3) The Arab influence

Two wars started to influence the settlement of the Baluba. The first war was with the Kanyoka tribe, who are also from the Baluba-Shankadi and they established themselves by the Luilu River and Lulundu hills. For a long time, between 1750 and 1800, the Kanyoka tribe became allies of the Baluba-Shankadi and dominated the area around Mbuji-Mayi.

The second war was fierce and named the Baluba Ngongo Lutete war. 'Arabist' is the name given to the African men in the service of the Arabs who came to look for slaves in Africa. Ngongo Lutete is well known as one of the biggest African Arabists. He was a very bloodthirsty sadist, prepared and equipped in arab-style warfare. He was a vassal of Tipu-Tipu, another Arab who lived in the east of the present democratic Republic of the Congo. Ngongo Lutete was from the Songue tribe. He brought the Tetela tribe, as well as other tribes, under subjection. Before 1891, Ngongo Lutete and his accolites, Lupungu and Mutombo, had never gone into the Baluba areas to look for people to kill, eat or sell. However, thereafter, under the influence of Ngongo Lutete, cannibalism was practised.

The Baluba also suffered at the hands of the Tshiokwe, who did great harm to the Baluba. Ngongo did not know this area, so he could not go far from his territory of action with Sankuru-Lomami, but something happened which forced him to penetrate the Baluba area. A chief named Kasongo Tshinyama, of a very small village, became more and more powerful because he got in touch with Batshioko who traded in ivory and slaves, as well as in guns. After a war between his tribe and the Kanyoka, Tshinyama was killed. His wife cried for vengeance and went to someone who could arrange it for her. She found Ngongo Lutete and asked him to massacre the Kanyoka and Tshiyamba tribes who had killed her husband. Ngongo asked her: 'If I do help you and take revenge of your husband, what will my reward be?' After seeing the blood of the Kanyoka tribes, Tshinyama said that their heads dropped like flies. 'I will show you a province where there are many, many strong and beautiful people who won't be able to resist you, due to the fact that they do not yet know of guns'.

Many were taken into slavery as well as their goats, sheep, chickens and so on. The tribe, which she spoke about, was the Luba tribe. Ngongo was excited and mobilised a complete group who took up guns, knives and spears to hunt this tribe. When they arrived at Tshinyama and Kanyama, they killed men with great ruthlessness. Ngongo looked for skulls as decorations for his house while he and his men went into the Luba villages, plundering, killing and taking men as slaves. This was indescribable cruelty. Ngongo went from Ngadajika to the Luba River. This took place in 1891 and he came again in 1892, 1893 and again in 1894 and each time Ngongo massacred the people or took them into slavery.

The disarray provoked by such invasions was aggravated by famine. Because fields were left devastated by many wars, the Baluba did not have any more goats, sheep or chickens. Every living thing was killed, eaten or taken away. The famine was so great that the Baluba began to eat the bark of trees, herbs, insects, locusts, and so on. According to some people, these feeding habits have remained. This food is nutritive and nourishes the brain of the Baluba and this explains why the Baluba people are generally known to be intelligent, which will be discussed in more detail later.

This famine, which continued for three years, stimulated the Baluba to work diligently. In 1895, the general administration of the independent state of Congo in Brussels was informed of the suffering of the Baluba and a decree was promulgated, allowing the Baluba to be established in an administrative capital where one could find administrative offices, soldiers and policemen; as well as the Christian mission station. These were in the Lulua province. The Baluba were informed of this decree. For three years they went to live in west Kasai. While at mass, the Lulua are Baluba's brothers and they welcome them. More can be read about this period, in the French books *Les Baluba dans la tourmente* (Aime van Zandycke, 1984) and *Origine des Populations du Kasai* (Joseph van Keerberghen, 1990).

4) Colonial rule

The construction of the railway of Katanga-Ilebo in about 1925 needed a large number of workers and because the Belgians were used to the Baluba and Lulua people, they were used as the workforce. After the construction was completed, the Baluba scattered everywhere in Kasai and Katanga (Shaba). In Katanga, a large mining company came and explored the copper and malachite resources; and because they needed labourers who could work hard, were adaptable and who knew how to make the best of things, the Baluba, who had already proved themselves, were chosen. Because of these traits, they worked happily with the Whites. When the big cities, like Lubumbashi and Kinshasa were built, the Baluba moved there. By this time the Baluba were already conspicuous for their bravery, intelligence and adaptability.

5) The period of Independence

The Baluba were attacked almost everywhere in the Congo. Because the Lulua asked them to go back to their original area, a war broke out between the two brother tribes, lasting from 1959 to 1960. In Katanga, the Baluba were also fighting the Katanga people because they had been asked to return to their own area at Kasai. After reconciliation took place, most of these Balubians once again went back to western Kasai, Katanga and other provinces. These events were complicated by the story of diamonds. The biggest find of diamonds in the world had been discovered in eastern Kasai where the Baluba lived, and when they started mining these diamonds, they made a great deal of money.

The term *Tshitantshisme* was coined from the Tshiluba noun *tshitantshi*, which means 'long time' and Tshitantshiste indicates him who has been rich for a long time. Although the "tshitanciste" has, in reality, been rich for long time, he is somebody who invests in a mine and is lucky enough to get hold of the precious diamonds and so amass a lot of money. "Tshitantshisme" has become the term to describe the instantly rich, those who were not prepared for great wealth, nor were able to manage it. Whenever a Muluba acquires money, everybody knows about it because of his ostentatious behaviour concerning his great wealth and Tshitantshisme is only one illustration of the effect riches have on a person.

6) Other factors

Their environment and history resulted in the Baluba being intelligent, adaptable and therefore acceptable to other people. To these factors we can add two things, namely food and individualism.

Concerning the interaction between food and intelligence, many medical doctors interviewed confirm these following suppositions. For the proper and optimal functioning of the brain, sugar is of the utmost importance. Sugar is fuel for the human body, which burns with oxygen to obtain maximum effect. The energy, A.T.P. (adenosine tri-phosphate), serves as nutritional energy to feed the brain. In principal, this energy comes from glucose and glucose, which is derived from nutritive products such as rice, maize, potatoes, jam, mangoes, and the like. This energy is also found secondarily in proteins from meat, such as goat, chicken,

caterpillar and locust. It is also obtained from limpid (oil) found in peanuts and palm oil. Energy helps the nerve cells to function correctly. The Baluba people enjoy eating maize cassava, potatoes, jam, chenille and locusts, and so on . During the centuries they have not been as fortunate as others who are able to choose their foods according to taste, because their environment and experiences of the Baluba obliged them to eat certain foods. But it so happened that these foods nourish the brain.

Another reason why the Baluba people made such good progress, is individualism. Viewing their community objectively, it might seem that they live in isolation because they only want to speak their own language, as used within their culture. And so when one comes to be part of them and experience their culture from the inside, it is found that they live as individualists. Everyone should make an effort to succeed in life. This was emphasised by an important author of the Baluba, Mabika-Kalanda, at the time of the first conference on the development of east Kasai. Speaking about the negative aspects of Baluba mentality, he (Mabika, 1990:125-126) asserts:

Every house processes his own cult, with his own spirits and ancestors; therefore there is no collective religious service. It is therefore not the same subject of cult that is present, as for instance with the communal ancestors or communal religious building. The Baluba had a chief and a kingdom, much of which was destroyed long ago. This is the reason the Muluba thinks about his own successes before he thinks about others. The Baluba live within this link. Promotion of the individualistic succession is of prime importance. The Baluba are of solidarity-individualistic orientation. Each person works for himself: a woman should carry her burdens herself, as nobody has created anything for communal needs. A writer called this "mhuetu mhutuwudih" which describes our way of being, through cultural activism.

This does not mean the Baluba do not live a life in solidarity, as all other African people do. For the Baluba, the individual efforts count most. A Luba proverb says: '*mua mukulu kantu, mua muakunyi nkantu nanku bulanda bua disangd*', which means that the brothers, old and young, should chase away their own sins, because then their relationships and solidarity will be restored and they will become strong. Solidarity is defined by Durkheim 'as an invisible link, which links the group, as well as the individual in one complete social union, and this link is coercion but also a moral

principle' (own translation: quoted by Duvignaud, 1990:20). The Baluba live in this invisible link which promotes individualistic succession.

7) The Luba tribe and four collective sins

The question here is how pride, as collective sin, works in the four categories of collective sins; in other words:

- ❖ Temporary Grouping Sin,
- ❖ Social Sin,
- ❖ Cultural Sin, and
- ❖ Structural Sin.

a) Temporary Grouping Sin

The population of Luba expresses this sin of pride. The population, like all groups, orientates itself in the direction of its culture; because the culture is full of pride, the crowd is orientated towards pride.

b) Social Sin

Pride is a characteristic of the Luba when he lives at home, but it also becomes a social problem when the Baluba lives with other tribes in the big cities, like Kinshasa, Lubumbashe and others. That is why the Baluba are called Muluba - boaster and arrogant. Arrogance and pride are tribal characteristics. In society, the people say that even when there is nothing to boast about, the Baluba people shout and praise themselves. Pride is found in Luba society, thus pride is a social sin.

c) Cultural Sin

As has already been said about this sin, it has become cultural as a result of a long history of a tribe in that environment. To be proud is good and acceptable to the Baluba. From childhood children are encouraged and stimulated to be proud in different ways. Pride is thus a cultural sin.

d) Structural Sin

The Luba tribe has not got its own government. From 1960-1962 the Luba of Kasai have been trying to obtain their own autonomous state in the south of Kasai. This state was untenable. Many causes have been identified but the main one is the sin of pride. The then leader proclaimed himself Emperor after some months of the state's existence. His name is Albert Kalonji. Other leaders were unhappy, also wanting to become President one day. This sin led some leaders into exile to destroy the autonomous state of Kasai, which thus became part of the Congo again, in the midst of the Congolese. It seems that almost everybody wants to become leaders.

In the national structure, the Baluba were among the best and hardest workers from 1963-1965. After this period a time of dictatorships started. This structure was affected by the pride of the Baluba. They wanted to be first in the structure of the country. Thus, for a long time, the deputy President, or Prime Minister, was always Muluba. This caused the Baluba to be even prouder.

The Baluba were the first group to revolt against dictatorship. The leaders of the revolution are from among them. Up till now the leaders of the opposition have been Baluba. Their pride gives them courage to struggle against the power structure of dictatorship and oppression.

4.5 SUMMATIVE COMMENTS

4.5.1 Evaluation

The many events the Baluba have experienced have produced these collective qualities which produce pride, a collective sin. Every time the Baluba have migrated, their movements have given them more and more courage and adaptability. Many attacks and wars have caused them to struggle in trying to face up to these new events. The harsh environment has required hard work so as to make a living. For these people, life has never been easy. Physical work

has developed a sense of excellence among these people. They strive to be the best and first in everything, including the wicked things that are done. Due to the fact that they strive to succeed through their own efforts, they also manage to obtain freedom of mind. When the Whites came into the country, the Baluba were able to adapt easily to accommodate these foreigners. The Baluba desperately needed the protection of the Whites against the Arab exploiters.

Today, in the so-called Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Baluba are counted among the most enterprising, the hardest working and most brilliant of all the tribes. Because of the fact that 'every cultural element denotes a certain growth and thus represents a positive step, even though it may sometimes have paradoxical results' (Kay, 1965:29), the Baluba qualities have progressively produced the sin of pride.

4.5.2 Comparison

All collective sins have the following qualities. The Baluba qualities are courage, openness, and the ability to produce good and hard work. These qualities are good, because these people are also God's creatures. They bear the image of God. Unfortunately, they are sometimes disobedient, due to the fact that these people are also sinners. Certain events within their environment are factors activating these collective sins. Certain physical factors can play a role in collective sin. Tall people cultivate self-confidence, they become leaders, workers and so on. Tribes with short people cultivate qualities such as humility, kindness, helpfulness and courtesy. But these qualities, under the influence of sin, may develop hypocrisy. Their intelligence is another advantage of the Baluba. In describing the Baluba as intelligent, it does not mean that clever people cannot be found in other tribes as well, or that all the Baluba are indeed clever. However, a general observation remains that, among the Baluba, there are many clever people. They look for and find solutions to nearly every big or small problem. Among these intellectuals are professors, doctors, engineers, teachers, politicians, business men, pastors, missionaries, as well as other kinds of leaders. Why are the Baluba so proud? What can the Church do about it? These are problems that will be discussed in a later chapter in this thesis.

“Tshitantshiste” indicates someone who has been rich for a long time, as noted earlier. When someone goes mining and is lucky enough to find a precious diamond, for which he can get a lot of money, he becomes rich instantly, but he was not prepared to be rich; nor is he able to manage such wealth. As has also been noted, “Tshitantshisme” is an exhibition of wealth. Whenever a Muluba gets money, everybody knows about it. He behaves so ostentatiously that everybody knows he has obtained wealth.

CHAPTER V

COLLECTIVE SIN IN THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

John Sachs (1991:59) rightly observes that ‘Christianity's teaching about sin has been called the most easily verified of its doctrines. This may be an exaggeration, but we are all well aware of the evil which marks our lives and for which we are responsible’.

5.1 SIN AS A THEOLOGICAL PROBLEM

At the heart of the doctrine of salvation (soteriology) lies the concept of sin. Therefore sin is one of the most important theological themes. It would be impossible in this thesis to deal in depth with the history of the doctrine, as well as with all the debates, which have taken place on the topic of sin, therefore only a few important aspects are mentioned. The purpose is to arrive at a good theological understanding of sin, and to indicate that the category of collective sin is neglected both in western theology and in theological debates. This study argues that the presence of collective sin in the Bible makes it an acceptable topic for theological discussion.

5.1.1 Towards a definition of sin

Definitions of sin can be classified into two categories: anthropocentric definitions and theocentric definitions. In the first category, there are the thinkers like Hegel who regarded sin as a necessary step in the evolution of man as self-conscious spirit. Schleiermacher regards sin as a necessary product of man's sensuous nature. For Mueller (quoted by Berkhof, 1974:227-231), sin is a free act of the will in disobedience to moral law.

This first category, the anthropocentric definitions, is close to the African understanding of sin. Some theological definitions, belonging to the second category are given below.

- ❖ St Augustine (quoted by Thomas, 1946:21), defines sin as ‘the will to retain or obtain what justice forbids’. He adds, ‘sin is nothing other than to neglect eternal things, to seek after temporal things’.

- ❖ Anselm (rpt. 1969:49) defines sin as ‘the refusal to render to God the honour due to Him and what is due to Him is essentially subjection to His will’.
- ❖ Berkouwer (1971:285), argues: ‘The word of God sees sin as something radical and total, and regards it as a missing of the mark, apostasy, transgression, lovelessness, lawlessness, and an alienation from the life of God’.
- ❖ For Emile Brunner (1955:129), ‘sin is defiance, arrogance, the desire to be equal with God, emancipation, a deliberate severance from the hand of God’.
- ❖ Stanislav Lyonnet (1970:13) states that ‘sin is considered to be essentially a violation of God's commandment, whereby man turns away from God, the sole source of life, and somehow passes into the servitude of Satan’.

The preceding paragraphs are intended to give sin a definition. Sin is a multidimensional concept. From the definitions above, sin can be seen as missing the target, the right point and purpose of life; missing life's purpose and missing the direction of life. Sin is debt, lawlessness, and disobedience to God, separation from God, straying from a norm, ignorance and transgression against the law of God. Sin is primarily an offence against God, but also against one's neighbour, and against the sinner him/herself (1 Corinthians, 6:18), and against nature.

5.1.2 Important questions about sin

It is not possible to discuss all the issues connected with sin, and to deal with them in depth, within the framework of this work. The purpose, in this section, is to demonstrate that the historical debates on sin have not yet dealt adequately with the problem of collective sin.

The first and thorniest debate within historical theology has been that concerning original sin. Although the most famous controversies of the patristic period were concerned with the trinity and the person of Christ, they could not ignore the problem of sin. Not all have been in agreement over their understanding of sin, but all have touched on the important aspect of original sin.

The Greek fathers, like Pelagius, denied all original sin. The Latin fathers, like Tertullian, on the other hand, regarded original sin as hereditary and a sinful taint of corruption, although it did not exclude the presence of some good in human beings. Ambrosius advanced beyond Tertullian in regarding original sin as a “state”, and distinguishing between the inborn corruption and the resulting guilt of a person. Augustine affirmed that the nature of human beings, both physically and morally, has been totally corrupted by Adam’s sin. A person cannot do otherwise than sin, as he or she has been corrupted by sin and stands guilty before God. This understanding of original sin has become the generally accepted doctrine.

During the Middle Ages, Anselm, in harmony with St Augustine, represented original sin as being the guilt of human nature, brought on by a single act of Adam. Likewise Thomas Aquinas addressed the problem of the existence, nature, transmission, and the propriety of sin. Others have taken an interest in the question of how original sin is transferred to new born babies. The body was seen as an instrument in service of the soul. How could one then assign responsibility for original sin to the body? If corruption, which is the punishment for the sin of Adam, resides in the body, why is the soul then condemned? Why are all people affected by original sin? How could the Adamite semen, little as it was, contain all the descendants of the first man?

Other questions have been asked. If, after the parents’ acceptance of forgiveness, sin is dealt with, why are their children still contaminated? Is original sin received in our body or in our soul? How is original sin transmitted? In short, there are problems in terms of the existence, the nature, the transmission, and the inheritance of sin. There are still other questions about original sin, like the gravity and degree of sin; sin against the Holy Spirit; unpardonable sin, greater and lesser sin.

During the reformation, Calvin (Institutes 2, 1-2, rpt. 1962,:1-2) stated that we bring our corruption into the world with us. He saw original sin as hereditary, a depravity of our nature, diffused into all parts of the soul, which consequently led to the total corruption of human nature.

Even today, the important questions with regard to sin remain those dealing with the origin of sin; the essence of sin; the connection between sin, the law and the gospel; the end of sin; as well as the cause of sin. There is still no consensus on what sin is; or on the classification of sin; or on why people sin; or whether sin be inherited? Other questions are: What are the effects of sin? What is the punishment for sin? And, What constitutes fatal or mortal sin?

These questions and debates have continued over the centuries. They have gone away and have come back again, each time with new aspects. But the collectiveness of sin has never received much attention.

From the outset, it can be said that collective sin was not a theological preoccupation. That is the interesting topic of collective sin is important. It is necessary to distinguish between collective sin and original sin. But before that, the problem of distinguishing between sin and evil should be addressed.

5.1.3 Some aspects of the problem of sin

This section deals with some aspects of sin as it is, are treated in Systematic Theology, and relates it to collective sin. The focus is therefore limited to those systematic problems, which could relate to collective sin.

5.1.3.1 The origin and cause of sin

Berkouwer (1971:15) states:

When we take interest in the causality of sin we are not engaged in an *a priori* innocent activity. We are not involved in something purely theoretical. Our interest is not analogous to the natural scientist's quest for the *causae* of new or strange phenomena. The man who looks for the human and personal and his interest can only be "existential".

The discussion about the origin and cause of sin began early and has continued through the centuries. That is why it cannot be discussed comprehensively. What is interesting, are the two explanations of the origin of sin: on the one hand the fall of man, and, on the other, the evolutionary explanation of the origin of sin.

The second position sees collective sin as having its origin in the evolution of man. Berkhof (1974:225) quotes Hulsean, who gives a detailed and interesting account of the origin of sin from the evolutionary point of view. He came to realise that man could not have derived sin from his animal ancestors, since these had no sin. Tenant (cited by Berkhof, 1974:225) argues: 'As the race develops, the ethical standards become more exacting, and the heinousness of sin increases. A sinful environment adds to the difficulty of refraining from sin'. Berkhof (225) adds: 'This view of Tenant leaves no room for the fall of man in the generally accepted sense of the word. As matter of fact, Tenant explicitly repudiates the doctrine of the fall, which is recognized in all the great historical confessions of the church'.

The evolutionary explanation of origin of sin to collective sin cannot be applied. In any case, the writer refuses to believe that the origin of sin is founded on the development of the human race through the ages. It can be argued that all sins have their origin and first cause in the fall of mankind. Collective sin develops from there. Collective sin is a reality and an existential problem.

5.1.3.2 Dualism

Dualism proposes a primordial antithesis between two original principles (namely light and darkness) in terms of which every form of good and evil is ultimately deduced' (Berkouwer, 1971:67).

The previous discussion was on the origin of sin. Dualism was and is one of the explanations to the question of the origin of evil and sin. An eternal contrariety of good and evil is posited. Because God cannot be the cause of evil and sin, it is necessary to accept a Devil as the one who created evil and sin.

This can be formulated simplistically as follows:

God and Satan are eternal opposites

Good and evil are eternal opposites

Virtue and sin are eternal opposites

Then, because God is the cause of Good

The Devil is the cause of evil

Because God is the creator of virtues

The Devil is the creator of sin.

Another situation of dualism is the soul and body. They have been seen as separated, even opposites; spirit and flesh are also in reality conceived as opposites; heaven and earth are seen as two contradictory realities.

When the church or the Christian is led by a theology of dualism, they will make a choice between the two. Most of the time the church works for the soul, the spirit, heaven, and not for the body, the flesh and the world. Most of the time, collective sin operates within the ambit of the reality of earth and world. Maybe that is why the churches were not interested, because they are working for the soul, the spirit and heaven.

This calls to mind the 20th century divide in the church of Christ: on the one hand, there are the ecumenicals, who are represented by the World Council of Churches (WCC), its African branch the All African Conference of Churches (AACC). And, on the other, there are the evangelicals by the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) and its African branch the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA). These two movements largely represent the two orientations: soul, spirit and heaven, on the one hand, and body, flesh and world, on the other. This is the meaning of ecclesiastical dualism. The church has to be one and has to present the whole gospel.

Another kind of dualism is the eternal separation of church and world. In dualistic theology the church and world have nothing to do with each other. The devil rules the world, and God rules the church. Thus dualism leads to the position that collective sin is seen as part of the world, outside the church, and has nothing to do with the church. The church has to work for the salvation of the soul and should not deal with collective sin, which is a problem of the world. There is yet another problem with dualism. Often there is a kind of dualism between the community and the individual. All kinds of dualism should be refused.

5.1.3.3 The riddle and essence of sin

The old question has been is sin *prevatio boni*, or did it penetrate God's creation? Nowhere in the Bible does it state that God created sin. That is why Barth (1961:119) asserts: 'Sin is not material but is parasitic on created reality. Therefore we call it deformation or non-being, a *nihil*'.

Whether the sin is parasitic on the created reality or not, it is deposited in human nature, but also in structures. If sin is deformation, it will also deform structures and collectivities.

Berkouwer (1971:134) comments on the enigmatic character of sin:

What men have usually meant by the riddle of sin, or the *mysterium iniquitatis*, has no shred of support in the New Testament. For though the New Testament ties this word mystery to the concept of revelation in an indissoluble bond, the *mysterium iniquitatis* refers commonly to the impenetrableness [*sic*] and unfathomableness [*sic*] of sin.... The riddle of sin is the riddle of the senselessness and motivelessness [*sic*] of sin.

Thus sin cannot be explained. It can only be confessed.

However, the inexplicability of the sin does not exclude the knowledge of sin. If the explanation of the essence of sin is impossible, and sin is a riddle; it is enigmatic, then it can be argued that this place where it lives is also enigmatic. When one says that the heart of the human being is the seat of sin, one also says that the collective heart of the collectivity is the seat of the collective sin. It is not unusual to talk about the collective soul, collective conscience and collective memory.

5.1.3.4 The connection between sin, law and gospel

Sin is disobedience to the law and is punished. Obedience to the law is blessed. The Gospel, being good news, is a blessing. As Berkouwer (1971:149) has noted: 'the riddle of sin is the motivelessness [*sic*] and senselessness of our own estrangement from God, his glory and fellowship'. To turn to God means to see the light and to know His Law. The knowledge of the Law clarifies what the sin is, and through the Law comes knowledge of sin. The collectivity without the law cannot have knowledge of sin.

To contrast the Gospel and the law gives rise to the problem of what Berkouwer, calls a "false dilemma". He cites Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth. Bonhoeffer reacts to a preaching of Grace apart from the law or apart from the concreteness of God's address to sinful men. He criticises the kind of Grace, which fails to take account of the law and disrupts the relation between the law and the gospel. Barth (1971:187-191) sees the law as a form of the gospel. He believes also that the law in the gospel, and the gospel in the law should be preached. For him, the law may be preached but only in relation to the gospel. According to Emil Brunner (1942:82), 'the law and sinfulness belong together'.

Also a collectivity could understand the grace of God, confess sin, and accept forgiveness when the law and the gospel are preached about as a unit. The gospel emphasises that forgiveness is attached to Jesus Christ, who was humiliated and punished on the cross, and liberated/blessed mankind in the resurrection *pro nobis* (for us), not only for the individual. "Us" is not just humanity, but also a collectivity.

5.1.3.5 Collective sin and Adam's Sin

Another important concept is that which Berkouwer (1971:424) calls "alien guilt". This present discussion is not concerned with a complete description of the problem of alien guilt, but considers only what is relevant to collective sin.

The connection between Adam's sin and the sinfulness of the human race divides theologians into two schools of thought:

❖ This connection is denied.

Here, there are four sub-groups, namely the Pelagians and Socinians, the Semi-Pelagians and the earlier Armenians, the New School theory, and the Theology of Crisis. (See the discussion of Berkhof, 1974:240-241.)

❖ The second opinion accepts the connection between Adam's sin and the depravity of the human being.

This second position is also divided but this time into three different theories: realism, federalism, and the theory of mediate imputation. For the purposes of the present study, this connection is accepted.

❖ Realism

‘The hallmark of realism is the conviction that all men are ‘co-sinners’ with Adam’s sin in the fullest meaning of that word’ (Berkouwer, 1971:438).

Elsewhere, Berkhof (1974:241) explains that

This theory is to the effect that human nature constitutes, not only generically but numerically as well, a single unit. Adam possessed the whole human nature, and in him it corrupted itself by its own voluntary apostatizing act in Adam. ...All men sinned in Adam before the individualization of human nature began.

If one accepts this position, one has to extend it to collectivity. In Adam was not the only individual represented; the group was too. In Adam there was already different races and when he sinned the different races sinned in him. Mankind has sinned in Adam as collectivities too.

❖ Federalism or representative conception

In federalism ‘the sin of Adam is imputed to us because he merely represents us as our covenantal [*sic*] head’ (Schilder, quoted by Berkouwer, 1971:439). This position ‘implies that Adam stood in a twofold relationship to his descendants, namely, that of the natural head of all mankind, and that of the representative head of the entire human race in a covenant of works (Berkhof, 1974:242).

When one accepts the notion of federalism, one invites a broad interpretation. Adam is not just the representative of each of us individually, but also each collectivity. He represents every race.

❖ The theory of a mediated position

This position is explained by Berkhof (1974:243):

Adam’s descendants derive their innate corruption from him by a process of natural generation, and only on the basis of that inherent depravity which they share with him

are they also considered guilty of his apostasy. They are not born corrupt because they are guilty in Adam, but they are considered guilty because they are corrupt. Their condition is not based on their legal status, but their legal status on their condition.

If one embraces this theory, it is to be considered that the group is also a cause of the corrupt condition. The collectivity puts one in a corrupt environment.

5.1.3.6 The metaphor of Adam and Jesus

In this metaphor Adam, as well as Jesus, is a corporate person. They not only represent an individual but humanity and a collectivity too.

In a sense, this justifies the basic assertion of Black Theology, namely that Christ is black because He assumed our condition, He is on our side. There are, of course, the limitations to this theology, but Christ can be part of a specific collectivity. What this theology misses is the awareness that Adam is also part of our collectivity. In another words, we are collectively sinners before we are collectively with Jesus.

5.1.3.7 Collective sin and original sin: resemblance and dissemblance

The aim of this section is to indicate the difference between the sinful heritage from Adam and collective sin. The Bible affirms that the nature of man is sinful and that this nature has come from Adam. What is this sin? This has been the question and theme of debate for centuries. It was generally accepted that the first sin of Adam was a free act, in which he surrendered his love to God and became subjected to spiritual blindness and spiritual death. Through the sin of the first man all men became sinners and as such subject to condemnation. The sin of Adam was unique. There has never been something similar to it, because it was the transgression of the law by an individual, who has included within him the whole of humanity.

During the reformation period, this was affirmed in the formula that Adam was not only the natural head of the human race, but also its federal representative, and that consequently his first sin is imparted as guilt to all his descendants. All are guilty in Adam and born in a polluted condition.

Therefore, traditional theologians as the cause of our sinful nature have confirmed Adam's sin. This sin is known as the first disobedience to God. Sinful nature is a world-wide heritage.

The term original sin is the bearer of two traditional understandings: original sin as the first sin, and as inherited sin. Brunner (1952:103-104) is not in agreement with the idea of hereditary or inherited sin. He says, 'This view is completely foreign to the thought of the Bible'. Barth (1961:510) also rejects the concept of hereditary sin when he states: 'It is perhaps better to abandon the idea of heredity altogether, and to speak only of original sin'.

The difference between original sin and collective sin lies in the fact that original sin is universal and collective sin is limited to one group. 'Sin belongs to our origin and therefore can rightly be called "original sin"' (Ted Peter, 1994:306), and collective sin is the sin related to all collectively.

Original sin makes the solidarity of human beings a reality, whilst collective sin makes the solidarity of a specific group of human beings a reality. Indeed, as Brunner (1953:141) notes: 'Certainly each person is a sinner as an individual; but he is at the same time the whole in its united solidarity, the body, actual humanity as a whole. In sin we are bound together as a unity, just as we are bound together within creation, only with a difference'.

From this point of view, and according to collective sin thinking, mankind is bound together and has become a united body in and through the collective group. In the words of Brunner (1953:143): 'The union of all, both in creation and sin', to which should be added, 'the union of all, in specific cultures and specific sin'. Original sin identifies humanity, collective sin identifies the group within humanity. Original sin is linked to nature and collective sin is linked to culture. Original sin is 'the sin of human nature' (St Thomas Aquinas, rpt. 1989:264) and collective sin is the sin of human culture.

Some theologians make a correct distinction between the state of sin (singular) and sinful acts (plural). This state of sin is original sin and sinful acts can be collective. Tillich (1954:1963:46) has stated that 'Sins are the expression of sin'. Thus collective sin will be the collective expression of sin.

The resemblance between collective sin and original sin is primarily that both of them are not individual, and secondly, they both precede man in the world – both were found to be present in the world.

5.1.3.8 **The gravity and gradation of sin, and sin against the Holy Spirit**

The discussion about the gravity and gradation of sin has divided the churches. The Catholics distinguish between mortal and venial sin. The Protestant churches tend to take every sin on same level; every sin is rebellion against God. It is not important to know which are graver or greater sins, because Christ is concerned with all sins.

There is some kind gradation in Scripture and in daily life. Hebrews 12:25 talks about those who know the truth, those who are enlightened, as having greater responsibility than those who live in ignorance. Some people were born and grew up with cultural and structural sin. The notion of greater responsibility goes hand in hand with that of greater sin.

The disposition of man's heart is emphasised in Scripture. God is not just interested in acts, but in hearts too. The disposition of the heart indicates sins in the heart Jesus talked about collective disposition when he denounced the unrepentant cities (Matthew 11:20-24). Jesus' conclusion was that 'it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgement than for you (the cities Korazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum)' (NIV Matthew 11:24).

There is deep hate for another group in some collective heart. This sin is greater than the empty threat between the two groups. This leads to the one group killing the other.

Sin against the Holy Spirit has been understood and interpreted in different ways. The question is: "What is this sin". Scripture makes a difference between this specific sin and all other sins (Matthew, 12:31, Mark, 3:28-28). One characteristic of this sin is that it is never forgiven. It is generally accepted that this sin is resistant to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a human being. The collectivity can also be resistant in this way.

5.1.3.9 Collective sin and punishment, forgiveness and the end of sin

Scriptural data indicates that sin results in punishment. Throughout the history of the church the distinction has been made between different kinds of punishment: spiritual death, the suffering of life, physical death and eternal death.

Spiritual death is the separation between God and man. Berkhof (1974:259) avers: ‘Spiritual death means not only guilt, but also pollution. Sin is always a corrupting influence in life, and this is a part of our death’. There is also collective spiritual death when this collectivity is separated from God.

Suffering in life is one of the visible penalties of sin. Diseases, physical suffering, hunger, war... these are sometimes ways of paying for sin. In Scripture, this kind of suffering is mostly collective. Berkhof (1974:260) rightly argues:

The evolutionists especially have taught us to look upon nature as “red in tooth and claw”. Destructive forces are often released in earthquakes, cyclones, tornadoes, volcanic eruptions, and floods, which bring untold misery on mankind. Now there are many, especially in our day, which do not see the hand of God in all this, and do not regard these calamities as a part of the penalty of sin. And yet that is exactly what they are in a general sense. However, it will not be safe to particularise, and to interpret them as special punishments for some grievous sins committed by those who live in the stricken areas. Neither will it be wise to ridicule the idea of such a causal connection as existed in the case of the cities of the Plain (Sodom and Gomorrah), which were destroyed by fire from heaven. We should always bear in mind that there is a collective responsibility, and that there are always sufficient reasons why God should visit cities, districts or nations with dire calamities.

Physical death can sometimes be the collective penalty of a collectivity. Nothing in Scripture excludes the possibility that God may punish the collectivities by eternal death. The Bible talks about the judgement of the nations.

Forgiveness is important in the message of the early church. The good news is the message of forgiveness for sins. If one confesses one’s sin, one will be forgiven. However, is collective forgiveness possible or is it only a personal matter? The answer to this question is easy: because there is collective sin, it is logical to have collective confession and collective forgiveness.

5.1.4 Sin and evil

Because sin and evil mean almost the same thing, it can be confusing. This will be discussed later, chiefly in the African context. Navile (1871:49) defines evil as 'that which ought not to be', and distinguishes between evil in nature and in humanity.

The evil of nature is not a question of the disorder of nature itself, like earthquakes, death and suffering of animals, natural catastrophes and so on, but it is the question of the suffering which nature inflicts on the community. Evil in humanity presents itself in three forms: error, which is the evil of reason; sin, which is the evil of conscience; and suffering, which is the evil of the heart (Navile, 1871:50-61).

One can therefore say that sin is one form of evil; sin is a part of the whole called evil. Thomas Aquinas (rpt. 1946:59) claims that 'there is, in the main, a supreme evil which can taint all good things, and apart from it you ought to fear nothing' (own translation).

The relationship of cause and effect between sin and evil will also be treated in the framework of the African context.

The following section demonstrates the presence of collective sin in the Bible.

5.2 COLLECTIVE SIN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Speaking about sin in the Old Testament means that it is necessary to study the religion of Israel and the development in Israel's understanding of God and sin. It is also necessary to talk about such things as cult, sacrifice and ritual.

At least two approaches are possible:

- ❖ The development of the understanding of sin during the evolution of Israel.

This approach will follow the four great periods in the history of Israel: the pre-monarchical era; the monarchical era, with the time of the united kingdom, as well as the divided kingdoms of Judea and Israel; the exilic period; and the post-exilic period, with its sub-periods of the Persian, Hellenistic, Maccabean and Roman periods. This approach would assist in the understanding of the significance of sin, but not so much about our theme which is collective sin.

- ❖ The understanding of the development of sin through the history as presented by the Old Testament.

This second approach is that which is followed in this study.

5.2.1 Collective sin in Noah's time

GENESIS 6 - 8

The story of the flood is the first manifestation of collective sin in the Bible. The first five chapters deal with individual sins and from Chapter Six collective sin is dealt with in detail. It was when the 'people began to multiply' (Genesis, 6:1) that sins multiplied also. The wickedness (6:5), corruption, violence (6:11) and so on are the collective sins of this generation. This collective sin is social sin.

5.2.2 Collective Sin and the Tower of Babel

The story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) offers a second view on collective sin. Some diverse theories about this story are advanced below, and a summary of these, by Walter Brueggemann (1982:9), follows thereafter:

- ❖ At some point, the narrative was no doubt aetiology for the diversity of languages. At some other point, it served as a polemical aetiology for the city of Babylon, even though the aetiology claimed in verse 9 is false.
- ❖ The theme of the tower may have originally referred to a Babylonian Ziggurat, a temple-tower presented as an imperial embodiment of pride and self-sufficiency (28:12). But that specific connection to the Babylonian factor is not prominent here.

- ❖ The story appears to be a polemic against the growth of urban culture as an expression of pride. But we shall see the narrative requires a more dialectical treatment. The interpreter needs not linger with these more historical points of reference, for these earlier functions have been superseded.

What is of concern is the fact that, from this narrative, collective sin becomes apparent. Were their actions sinful? Brueggemann (1982:98) says that: ‘The structure of the narrative shows that the resolves of humankind are in conflict with the resolve of God. The action of Yahweh responds to and correlates deliberately with the actions of humanity, though the two parts are presented as sin and judgment’. He adds: ‘Thus the tower and city are attempts at self-serving unity which resists God's scattering activity’ (1982:99).

Claus Westermann (1980:35) sees it in the same way: ‘If we examine the structure and primary motifs in the narratives of Genesis 1-11, it becomes clear that they are in fact dominated by the punishment motif which shapes the narratives. He adds: ‘What is clear, is that the transgression referred to in Chapter 11 was brought by human labour, by civilisation (Westermann, 1980:53).

Gerhard Von Rad (1972:142) describes the Babel action as "sin". He believes the same about the sin of Adam, Eve, Cain, Lamech and the angels, but he does specify that this sin differs from the others by one thing, that is collective sin. The others are individual sins. It is notable that Von Rad, who has been conditioned by western theology, nevertheless found collective sins here.

However, this collective act was not just by the people, but also by God. Von Rad (1972:149) points to this when he maintains:

Therefore, God resolved upon a punitive, but at the same time preventive, act, so that this degeneration should not progress. Man said “Come, let us”; God too said, “Come, let us”. The “we’ in ‘God's mouth presupposes the idea at one time of a pantheon, a council of gods. In Israel, this idea was a meeting of the council of the heavenly Kin, the notion of God which was perhaps most popular in the Old Testament (cf. especially 1 Kings 22:19; Job 1:6).

Whatever the interpretation of the narrative of the Tower of Babel, what stands out is the aspect of collectivity.

- ❖ They had one language and a common speech. This facilitates collective sin.
- ❖ They had spoken to each other. Collective sin starts with communication.
- ❖ The tower that reaches to the heavens and makes a name indicates a unity of mind against the will of God, and making a collective name.
- ❖ They built the tower with collective effort and action.
- ❖ Nothing they planned to do would be impossible for them; in other words, other collective sins were possible for them.

The sin of Babel was a collective sin, which can also be called a social sin.

5.2.3 The collective sin of Sodom and Gomorrah

GENESIS 18:20-33, 19:1-29

The problem of the sinful majority and the righteous minority is told in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Abraham sought to evoke the justice of God by saying, 'will you also cause the righteous to perish with the unrighteous?' (verse 23); 'Perhaps there are fifty righteous in the midst of the town' (verse 24). This indicates that collective sin can override the righteousness and virtue of the minority.

Abraham debated with God, starting with 50 righteous... 45... 40... 30... 20... down to 10 righteous people. More than revealing the righteousness of God, Abraham asked for a reversal of the decision.

What was the sin of Sodom? Many hold that it was homosexuality. What is clear is God's declaration: 'Their sin is enormous'. It is important to notice that sin is in the singular form which emphasises its collective nature. The word 'enormous' refers to the amount and frequency of this collective sin.

'And God speaks of the cry of Sodom'. Here, the singular form is significant in identifying the collective cry. Kidner (1967:133) explains it in other terms: 'The cry of Sodom (AV, RV) may mean the outcry against it (RSV) or simply the crying evil of the place'.

The sin of these cities was social sin. This collective sin can be seen when the angels came to Sodom and Lot's house. The men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter surrounded the house, called to Lot and said to him: 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally' (19:4, 5 KJV). The sinners' cities were punished, destroyed.

This text tackles the problem of collective sin and the innocents among the collective. Bruce Vawther has expressed the reality of collective sin in Sodom and Gomorrah well, as well. He also deals with the innocents and collective responsibility today, when he writes in his book *Genesis: a new reading* (1977:230):

[He spoke] about divine judgment and mercy in relation to a people among which both guilty and innocent might be found, and in doing so he has at least hinted at the idea of a redemptive power which the just have for the unjust - an idea which meant much in an age when collective responsibility was a concept taken for granted, and which can mean something today, not that the concept is being taken seriously again.

Social sin can also be seen here.

5.2.4 The Egyptians and collective sin

EXODUS 1

The first chapter of Exodus explains how collective sin evolves. Collective sin in pharaonic times is the focus here. The growth of population causes problems for the governors. Demographic growth is a natural phenomenon, but it led the Pharaoh to fear. This involved fear of the future and of the unknown as implied in: 'If a war should arise' (verse 10).

Taskmasters were appointed over the people. This was a structure meant to make it difficult for the people (verse 11). It was a structural sin of overburdening people. The king of Egypt also

spoke to the midwives (verse 5) and gave the order to all his people to throw all the boys into the river (verse 2). This was a sinful law. God's people, His children, were to be killed. Thus a war against God was started. The sin of Exodus 1 is a structural sin.

5.2.5 Israel during the exodus

EXODUS 14

What is of interest in these passages is the repeated reaction of the crowd on the problems encountered. Each time 'the children of Israel were terrified' (14:10). This is the collective sin of fear. They lost perspective and forgot about God's deliverance.

5.2.6 The golden calf

EXODUS 32

The narrative of the golden calf reminds us about six aspects of collectivity.

- People collectively came to Aaron.
- The time it took for Moses to return led to collective impatience. In this commentary on Exodus, Alan (1973:213) said the following: "Impatience lies at the root of the sin of Israel's hierarchy and structure".
- 'Come, make us a god'. It was a unity of mind.
- All people took off their earrings in a collective action, and the image was fabricated from materials contributed by the people.
- They said, 'These are your gods'... a collective faith.
- The Lord sent Moses down, because He realised that the people were corrupt and 'stiff-necked' (verse 9). This was collective condemnation from God.

The fashioning of a golden calf was a collective sin of the people at Sinai.

5.2.7 Collective sin and the request for a kingdom

1 SAMUEL 8

Some points are notable in this story:

- All the elders of Israel gathered together in collective action (verse 4).
- The collector worried about the ways of Samuel's sons (verse 5).
- 'Give us a king to lead us'. This is a collective request (verse 6).
- The collective refusal to listen to Samuel.

The desire for a king was not the will of God. Therefore it was a sin. But as it was not an individual request, the people collectively requesting a king. Therefore it was a collective sin.

5.2.8 Collective sin and the prophetic movement

The religions of antiquity all had prophets who spoke in the name of their gods. One major difference between the prophets of other religions and gods and the prophets of Israel was that the latter preached the three things: monotheism, morality and future salvation. This made the prophetic phenomenon in Israel unique. The prophets revealed a Holy God in opposition to sinful men. This is monotheistic ethics. One of the most important functions of the prophets was to make people aware of their sins.

Moses was one of the first prophets of Israel. He represented God, and spoke to the people about God and God's will for them. All the prophets in Israel could be called heirs of Moses. Joshua is the first heir and can also be called a prophet. During the time of the Judges, there was a prophetess Deborah (Judges, 4:4). Samuel was called a prophet of God (1 Samuel, 3:20, 9:9). After him the spirit of prophecy spread (1 Samuel, 10:5, 19:20). There are scores of prophets, well known or little known.

All of these prophets struggled against the collective sins of the people. Nathan, who reproached David, and Elijah, who dealt with Ahab, were the exceptions in this regard. However, it must be remembered that David and Ahab were kings, in other words, they were personally corporate, and they represented the people.

However, the most important prophetic movement started at that critical stage in the nation before, during and after the exile. These prophets can be classified in three groups according to the periods.

- a) The prophets before the exile: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah.
- b) The prophets during the exile: Ezekiel, Daniel and Obadiah.
- c) The prophets after the exile: Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

A few of these prophets will be discussed, not necessarily in chronological order, in order to show how they were involved with the collective sins of the nation.

The first prophet prior to the exile is **Amos**. He preached under the rule of Jeroboam II (783-743), which was a glorious time, a time of riches and luxury. At this time Amos preached against social injustice and oppression and his preaching had the character of a collective reproach. He called the sins by the names of towns: Damascus (1:3), the three sins of Gaza (1:4), the three sins of Tyre (1:9), the three sins of Edom (1:11), and the three sins of Ammon (1:13). In chapter 2, he speaks about the three sins of Moab (2:1); three sins of Judah and three sins of Israel (2:6).

Isaiah struggles against the moral corruption, which resulted from prosperity in Judah. He calls Israel a sinful nation (1:4). From the beginning, all his messages are against the collective sin of Judah and Israel. Isaiah 6:1-10 tells the story of the prophet's vision. He saw God, and the angels who called out the word 'Holy' three times. Because of this revelation of God's holiness the prophet cries out three times saying: 'I am ruined'. This is a confession of original sin. When he admits: 'For I am a man of unclean lips', this is a confession of individual sin. 'And I live among a people of unclean lips', is a confession of collective sin. When the Seraph responds: 'Your guilt is taken away', that is individual sin. And, he adds 'Your sin atoned'. And then, there is the third intervention, which is very important. The Lord's voice is heard saying: 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' The Lord said: 'Go, and tell this people...'. This is Isaiah's mission. Isaiah understood his mission as struggling against the collective sin of his people. (Isaiah's three answers will be discussed again later in the context of the mission of the church.)

Jeremiah continuously addresses collective sins: the two sins of the people (2:13); Judah's sin (17:1, 32:35); the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem (13:9); and 'idols of the nations' (14:22) – all of these are collective sins.

In Scofield's introduction to the book of **Ezekiel**, there is this commentary: 'The ministry of Ezekiel has two principal objectives: to bring to remembrance to the new generation born in exile the collective sin which provoked the fall of Israel (14:23); and to help the faith of the captives in the announcement of the judgment of their oppressors and their national restoration' (own translation from the French).

There are further indications of collective sin, like 'if a country sins against me by being unfaithful' (14:13); and 'now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen. Samaria did not commit half the sins you did' (16:49-51).

In chapter 22, he enumerates Jerusalem's sins. Also Ezekiel worked against collective sins.

Hosea struggled against social injustice, violence and the collective idolatry of Israel.

Micah prophesies against the sin of Samaria and Judah. He speaks of 'Jacob's transgression and the sins of the house of Israel' (1:5); and he says: 'But for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might; to declare to Jacob his transgressions, to Israel his sin (3:8). Jacob, Israel and 'the house of Israel' are the names, which symbolise the idea of "collectiveness".

Zephaniah, prophet of Judah; prophesied against Judah and against the sin of those who lived in Jerusalem (1:4). God was against the collective sins of Israel as a nation, but also Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashodon, Ekron, Kerethite, Canaan, Moab, Ammonites and so forth. The collective sins of the city are oppression and rebellion (3:1). The most prominent theme of Zephaniah is

'the Great Day of the Lord', but for Zephaniah that day of the Lord would be the conversion of the Lord's people, and the end of the period of sin. The end of collective sin is the great day of the Lord.

Zechariah has prophesied against the sins of different people. God was not only jealously concerned about Jerusalem and Zion, but also angry with the other nations that felt secure. They added to their calamity (1:14,15).

Malachi mentions Israel's sin (2:10-17) as a collective sin.

The same applies to **Nahum's** prophecy against Nineveh, as it was a city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder. These are Nineveh's collective sins.

Jonah is a special prophetic book about collective sin. God sent Jonah, commanding him: 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me' (1:2). It is clear that Jonah was sent to preach to the collectivity, because Nineveh had the collective sin of wickedness. He preaches to prevent collective punishment.

For Amos the collective sin is the offence against the God of justice; for Hosea it is against the God of love; and for Isaiah against the God of holiness. Speaking about the prophets, Emil Kraepling (1966:7) declares that: 'Their deep concern about their people, their realisation of the people's sinfulness, their belief that their God was the Ruler of the world and was accordingly active in a purposeful manner in the events of political history, has led them to inspired utterances at just such times'.

5.2.9 The sin of the generations

An interesting passage appears in Ezekiel (18:2-4, 20 KJV):

"The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge". "As surely as I live," declares the Sovereign Lord, "you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son – both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous man will

be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him.”

The first sentence is the current proverb in Jerusalem from the Babylonian exile. It also occurs in Jeremiah 31:29, with the same connotation. Because of this tradition, the people believed that they were punished for the sins of previous generations. This proverb made them irresponsible. The prophets fought against this. They assert that: ‘the soul that sins is the one that will die’. In other words, every single person was punished for his or her own sins.

5.2.10 Terms for sin in the Old Testament, and collective sin

Jacques Pons, in his book on *Oppression in the Old Testament* (1981), gives us an overview of the terms used for oppression, and classifies eight Hebraic roots: *hms-hamas*, *sdd-sod*, *sq-oseq*, *yuh*, *rss*, *lhs*, *nh* and *ngs*.

He has worked out a tableau for each of the terms. The actors are sometimes nations, sometimes a group of creditors (Deuteronomy, 15:2), or political leaders (Isaiah, 3:12). In the majority of cases, oppression is clearly understood as collective. Some are undetermined. Sometimes it is God’s doing. (In this case of God, He is not taken to be the sinner, but the one who uses power, which produces punishment). In the Pons study of these terms, one finds that from the total of 218 references, 151 are used collectively, fourteen are individual, and the remaining forty-three are undetermined, diverse and used for God.

5.2.11 The notion of the corporate personality or collective personality

The term “corporate personality” is used for the first time by Wheeler Robinson. He (Robinson, 1981:25) clarifies this notion in these terms: ‘The whole group, including its past, present, and future members, might function as a single individual through any one of those members conceived as a representative of it. Because it was not confined to the living, but included the dead and the unborn, the group could be conceived as living forever’

‘The corporate personality means that the individual in the community is part of it and belongs to it’ (Goba, 1978:178). In the same article, Goba calls it "collective personality". As Hobart Freeman (1968:68) says:

The concept of corporate personality as applied to Israel, views the one as identified with the many and the many as embodied in the one.... The strong sense of solidarity that prevailed in ancient Israel has been called the concept of corporate personality. The individual belongs to the family, tribe and nation to such an extent that he had no independent right or worth. The individual found satisfaction in the belief that immortality consisted in the hope that he lived on in his descendants and nation.

This notion is clearly visible in the Bible, for instance when David seeks the face of the Lord to know the reason why there was famine for three successive years. The Lord says, 'It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death' (2 Samuel, 21:1). There is another illustration of this concept in the history of Achan where the nation suffered due to the act of one man (Joshua 7:1). God says, 'Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep' (verse 11). Israel has sinned, not Achan. In the words of Gunther (1978:577), ‘The sin of the individual cannot be separated from that of the nation’. Therefore, the sin of Israel is understood as a collective act or an act, which engages collectivity.

The passages discussed earlier – Noah, the Tower of Babel, the Golden Calf, the demands for a king for Israel, as well as the work of the prophets – also serve to illustrate this concept. The objection could be raised that Jeremiah 31:29-30, Deuteronomy 24:16 and Ezekiel 18 and 33:10-20 speak about individual sins. These texts do confirm the presence of individual sin, but do not exclude the reality of collective sin in the Old Testament.

According to Gunther (1978:574):

Sin was felt in ancient Israel as above all, an offence against the social order of divine justice (1 Samuel, 3:23). Thus it affects the community, whose existence is most intimately connected with the preservation of divine justice. Hence, sin is regarded as something that destroys the community. For that reason, it is demanded of the covenant people that they purge evil from their midst (cf. Leviticus, 16:21; 17:4, 9)

In his article on **hamartia**, Gunther (1978:577-578) writes: ‘Yet sin, over and above the guilt of the individual, was clearly recognised as a reality separating man and nation from God’.

Collective sin is also referred to in the New Testament.

5.3 COLLECTIVE SIN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The presence of the phenomenon of collective sin may be acceptable to people when looking at the Old Testament, but they will reason that sin is generally understood to be individualistic in the New Testament. Owing to the fact that many people do not accept the existence of collective sin, this study emphasises the prevalence of references to collective sin within the New Testament.

The Gospel according to Matthew has been chosen to represent the gospels; Corinthians to represent the Epistles; and reference is also made to two other New Testament books: the Acts of the Apostles and the book of Revelation.

5.3.1 Matthew and collective sin

In general, it can be said that the purpose of this gospel is to completely win the Jews for Christ, that is, to gain those still unconverted and to strengthen those already converted. The Hebraistic character of Matthew's gospel is widely accepted.

When a person asks: 'What is the purpose of this gospel', he or she can best discover the answer by reading and re-reading the entire book. One answer to the question lies in the following four concepts: (a) translation, (b) transformation, (c) the vindication of God's truth, and (d) the evangelisation of all the nations. The concern, here, is for the second, namely transformation.

Before proceeding, the primary objective of the Gospel of Matthew should be established. David Bosch (1991:54) maintains:

Our first gospel is essentially a missionary text. It was primarily because of his missionary vision that Matthew set out to write his gospel, not to compose a "life of Jesus", but to provide guidance to a community in crisis on how it should understand its calling and mission. A Jew wrote this gospel, primarily for the Jews. It is the gospel for a specific community. For that purpose the writer had to know the collective sin of his society. His purpose has been the transformation of this society, with Jesus as the

Master of this transformation.

In the book of Matthew, there are some signs of collective living. Andrew (1990:95) notes that Matthew's community has been accurately described as a brotherhood. Matthew alone among the synoptic gospels employs in the term "brother" (*adelphos*) extensively in a metaphorical sense to denote a fellow member of the community. Matthew himself had to be a member of this community. Therefore it appears that this gospel is linked to the community. The gospel opens with a passage, which has no parallel in Matthew's source. An 'angel of the Lord' has named Mary's baby Jesus, 'for He will save his people from their sins' ([1:21] quoted in Carter, 1955:85).

The second sign of collective thinking is manifested in Immanuel – 'God with us' (1:23) – as the name of Jesus, this being the name which appears only in the gospel of Matthew. The 'us' has double significance: it firstly denotes humankind as a whole, and secondly the society in which Jesus was called to live. This was a Jewish society. When God came in the form of man, He brought about a transformation as well as a change in attitude towards sin. For God to be with us implies that the whole of our society has been changed from what it was, and will indeed be changed in future according to the will of God.

The book of Matthew also refers to the judgment on cities. This judgment is not individual, but collective (10:23). In the pericope in 11:20-24, Jesus denounced the unrepentant cities Korazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, and compared it to the punished cities in the Old Testament, such as Tyre, Sidon and Sodom. Jesus complained: had the miracles which were performed in you (collective) been performed in Tyre and Sidon (collective), they would have repented (collective repentance). One cannot have collective repentance without collective sin. He added that it would be more bearable for Sodom on the Day of Judgment than for them. This collective judgment implies collective sin, as already stated.

The pericopes 12:38, 39 and 16:1-4 refer to the sin of a generation. Jesus talked about 'a wicked and adulterous generation'. The sin of a generation is not individual, but indeed collective.

Another important characteristic of the first gospel is the struggle with the institutions of the time. These institutions have been created by the Pharisees and the Sadducees. After the exile, when the prophetic ministry stopped, the holy people, called the *chassidim* (holy), struggled to maintain the law (*Torah*) among the Jewish descendants who had come back from captivity. This movement disappeared into the Pharisees (those putting themselves apart) in the time of Jesus. The Sadducees, another Jewish group, did not believe in the existence of angels and spirits, nor in the resurrection of the dead. They were a rationalistic religious movement and very strong during the ministry of Jesus. These two groups opposed Jesus. Jesus told his disciples: 'be careful. Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees' (16:6), and they had to understand that he was warning them against the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees (16:12). The sin of a group, which can contaminate other people, is collective sin.

The parable of the tenants (21:33-43) exposes the evil things done by people. This parable concludes: 'Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it' (verse 43). In other words, the nation, which does not produce fruits, is sinful and these sins are national sins, or collective sins. Another collective expression is from Matthew 23:27, from the mouth of Jesus: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you'. Jerusalem is a collective name; the verb 'to kill' is here a collective sin.

Matthew 25:32 speaks about the time when the Son of Man will come in His glory: 'All the nations will be gathered before Him...' that is, nations, not individual people.

Another collective sin is clearly visible in the choosing between two prisoners (27:15-35); one is innocent (Jesus) and the other (Barabbas) is a symbol of the evil or sin. The crowds shouted, 'Crucify Him' (verse 22). 'Why, what crime has He committed?' Asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, 'Crucify Him!' (verse 23). When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but uproar was starting instead, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. 'I am innocent of this man's blood, he said. He is your responsibility' (verse 24). All the people answered, 'Let His blood be on us and on our children!' (verse 25). This is an individual sin within a collective act, which is called a collective responsibility. The people themselves

believed in the collective responsibility, when they said: 'on us and on our children'. To kill Jesus was a very acceptable and collective act because, after the crucifixion,

... those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying: "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God". In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked Him. "He saved others, they said, but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! ...". In the same way, the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him (27:39-44).

However, it does not mean that everybody was implicated. All had become involved in the refusal of Christ. To kill Jesus was a collective sin.

The end of Matthew (28:19, 20), deals with the so-called 'Great Commission'. But what has not often been considered are the 'make disciples of all the nations'. This is the nation and not the individual. This has been preceded by the affirmation 'all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me'. All the nations had to be brought into his kingdom, to obey his will, or else the nations will be judged. Their sins are collective.

This gospel is indeed the gospel of the group and, as indicated, many sins in this book are collective sins.

5.3.2 Collective sin in the Acts of the Apostles

Collective sin also occurs in this book. To begin with the church in the Acts of the Apostles was characterised by this: a multitude being reduced to one, as 4:32a: 'Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul'. The possibility of being one heart and one soul brings the possibility of committing one sin. That is why collective sin should be avoided. It can contaminate even the whole church. For example: the collective sin of Ananias and Sapphira led to their deaths.

It is notable to see the repetition of the term 'heart' in chapter 4 and 5 of Acts: 'one heart' (4:32); 'your heart' (5:3); 'Why have you conceived this thing in your heart?' (5:4). 'Your heart' and 'our (collective) hearts' were not in unison. Furthermore, the lying (5:3,4) was the individual sin which Ananias and Sapphira committed against the church. 'Such great fear came upon all who

heard these things' (5:11) that from then on the church was saved of the specific collective sin of lying.

Thereafter, in Acts 6 one reads: 'when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food' (6:1). When the church grows, the surrounding sin will be brought into the church. The collective sin of the context is the collective sin of its church. This collective sin divides or separates.

Where the cities were full of idols, like the city of Samaria (8:5-8) and Athens (17:16), this was also a danger for the church. In the city of Thessalonica the Jews were envious of the gospel of Jesus Christ, so they made a collective accusation against Paul and the apostles. The Jews also created disorder in the cities (17:5-8). Paul and the church often suffered because of the sins of lawlessness, disorder, and the materialism of the cities.

5.3.3 The Corinthians and collective sin

In 1 Corinthians 5:1-12 the apostle writes about the serious situation of sexual immorality in the church. Robert Gromacki (1977:x) observes:

In those days Corinth was at the crossroads for travel and commercial visits, both north and south for the Greek peninsula and east and west from Rome to the Near East. It had two seaports, Cenchrea on the Aegean Sea to the east and Lechaeum on the edge of the Gulf of Corinth to the west. Commercial ships, instead of sailing around the dangerous southern tip of Greece, were portaged across the isthmus from one port to another. This saved time and was less risky. Thus Corinth became a city of wealth and pleasure. People went there with money to spend and to indulge themselves in varied pleasures. On the highest point in the city stood the pagan temple of Epaphrodite, the goddess of love, full of religious prostitutes to serve the wishes of its devotees. The women also participated in the nightlife of the city.

Corinth had more than half a million people and it was a very prosperous city. It was a multi-racial society with many religions, the luxurious life of a scandalous minority, and the miserable life of the majority. It was an intellectual centre, but sexual immorality was the major characteristic of this city. These were the collective sins of Corinth. Glyn Simon (1959:20)

expresses this clearly when he writes: 'By St Paul's day, the great city had become proverbial for its luxury and immorality. If you wanted to describe clearly and briefly someone's completely abandoned and debauched life you said he was 'playing the Corinthian', the Greek word for this is *porneia*'.

The translation of this final word presents some difficulty: 'Immorality is quite a vague word for the Greek word *porneia*, which is regrettable, as *porneia* means "fornication"' (Bruce 1971:53). In classical Greek the word usually refers to the practice of seeking sexual favours.

Fornication is the most general word for all kinds of sins against the seventh commandment. It even speaks of the greatness of the fornication, when an extremely severe case surpasses the others (cf. also verse 11, 6:12). This particular sin was so serious that it did not even occur among the heathen, where the sin of fornication was not considered serious. *Porneia* is sexual immorality, promiscuity and fornication. So, in this chapter, one is reminded that the collective sin of the town, the country, the nation or group affects the church. One may even find that Christians are seduced to commit this collective sin to an even greater extent than the worldly people.

Hence for Paul *porneia* raises not only a moral question governing social behaviour, but also a theological question, a question of worship (Conzelmann and Merkel, 1993:139). The first letter to the Corinthians emphasises the differences between the mentality in the kingdom of God and the thinking of the world. 'We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual words' (1 Corinthians, 2:12,13 - NIV).

But apart from the Corinthian sin of fornication, there were other cultural sins in the city. Another kind of sin is expressed in 1 Corinthians, 1:22: 'Jews demand miraculous signs, and Greeks look for wisdom' (NIV). The letter deals with the sins of the Jews, on the one hand, and the Graeco-Roman culture on the other.

Jewish history is full of miracles. Because history moulds a culture and belief, Jews have difficulty in believing in something without seeing miracles. They demanded the miraculous (Matthew, 16:1-4; John, 2:18). Jesus himself refused to satisfy this cultural desire to impress them with miracles for the sake of miracles. When he did perform a miracle, it was in response to a need. Miracles don't necessarily create faith. In the Old Testament, God performed miraculous signs, but the people didn't believe. One instance is: 'The Lord said to Moses, how long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them?' (Numbers, 14:11 - NIV).

Thus one of the collective Jewish sins was to demand the miraculous. Paul stood in the way of this demand and called his Gospel a stumbling block to the Jews (1 Corinthians, 2:23).

The other sin, which Paul addresses in his Corinthian letter, is the dependence on human wisdom. The Greek culture (which the Romans accepted) was impregnated with seeking wisdom. To them wisdom was found in philosophy. The Greeks gave to humanity the great philosophers like Socrates, Aristotle, Plato and others. Because the Greeks thought that they had found wisdom in their philosophy, they could not accept God's revelation. This exaggerated search for wisdom, became the collective sin of the Greeks, which they brought to Corinth. In his gospel, Paul opposes the obsessive search wisdom among the Greeks, calling this foolishness (verse 23). For him any philosophy, wisdom or teaching, which goes against God's thoughts, is sinful. That is why the gospel and philosophy were in conflict. Theology should not be derived from an ideology, which is contrary to God's teaching. Theology and philosophy should be derived from God's revelations.

Thus, the Corinthian collective sins of *porneia*, the Greeks' satisfaction with wisdom, and the Jewish insistence on the miraculous were the collective sins against which Paul was obliged to struggle.

5.3.4 The Book of Revelations and collective sin

The book of Revelation has been interpreted in a variety of ways throughout the centuries. Here, it is dealt with it historically, and the focus is on the seven churches of chapters 2 and 3, which are historical churches in which collective sin may be detected.

God spoke through John to the following churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Although the letters were written to 'the angel' of each of these churches (presumably the leaders), these churches were collectively addressed. Each church was seen as a unity. For each of these churches, Jesus (through John) indicated what He appreciated in them: their deeds, their hard work, their perseverance, their affliction, their poverty, your love, and your knowledge. But then He followed with that which did not please Him with statements including such criticism as, 'Yet I hold this against you'; 'I have a few things against you'; 'I have this against you'; and 'I counsel you...'. In other words, He treats them collectively. He shows them their sins. The sins of these churches were not individual sins, but collective sins.

5.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the books of the Old and the New Testaments, from Genesis to Revelation, generally deal with the concept of collective sin. But this focus on collective sin does not exclude the presence and importance of individual sin in the Bible.

CHAPTER VI

COLLECTIVE SIN IN AFRICA

The objective in this chapter this thesis is to re-examine the African problem; to discover the causes of the crises in Africa today; to see whether the African problem is economic or political, or to determine whether it could also be a theological problem. The glaring negative African traits are dealt with and African sins are expounded upon.

Before discussing the collective African sins, however, it would be useful first to turn to African culture to see if there is a common threat in Africa.

6.1 COMMUNAL AFRICAN CULTURE

When one talks about Africa, it is necessary to clarify what one is talking about, because in Africa we find Blacks, Arabs, Berbers, Whites, 'Coloureds' and Asians! In America too, there are Blacks, called African-Americans. This study is, however, limited to a discussion of Black-Africans. Thus, in this work, the term "Africa" refers to Black-Africans. In Africa there are more than 5 000 tribes and cultures, so it is still not possible to talk about a united Africa. All these diversities make it difficult to speak of one culture and then define one common African. Although this is true, there are nevertheless many common cultural traits, which link all Africa.

6.1.1 Solidarity

Solidarity has already been discussed in Chapter Two. Here, the emphasis is on how general this solidarity is among all Africans. Relationship is more important than time. The responsibility toward the family is more important than any other responsibilities. The concept of solidarity as a mindset is well known from east to west, from south to central Africa. The people find it difficult to leave their African solidarity. The African sociologist, philosopher, ideologist, scientist, politician and even the theologian talks about it and regards it as a foundational theory. Solidarity is thus a common characteristic of African culture.

6.1.2 Communal belief

Africans also have their own characteristic beliefs:

❖ God

There are some differences between tribes in terms of their understanding of God. The names of God, in the different languages, reflect differences in the concepts like attributes, activities, relationships with man, human or spirit mediators, and so on. However, some things remain the same in almost all of Africa. John Mbiti focuses one work on *Concepts of God in Africa* (1970). Speaking about his previous work, he (1969:29) remarks:

In my larger work, *Concepts of God in Africa* (1969), I have collected all the information available to me concerning the traditional concepts of God. The study covers nearly 300 peoples from all over Africa, outside the traditionally Christian and Muslim communities. In all these societies, without a single exception, people have a notion of God as the Supreme Being. This is the most minimal and fundamental idea about God, found in all African societies

This leads to the conclusion that the concept of God is well known in all of Africa.

❖ Ancestors

Belief in ancestors is another common African cultural trait. All over Africa belief in ancestors is very deep. However, 'There is no uniform system of belief in ancestors in Black Africa', as Charles Nyamati observes (1984:15); but the belief in the ancestors is common to Africans. Mbiti (1969:83) points out 'These are the "spirits" with which African peoples are most concerned: it is through the living-dead that the spirit world becomes personal to men'.

Franz Kröger (1982:6), writing about the Balsa, says: 'Among the Balsa, as among many other African ethnic groups, ancestor worship is the focal point of religious life'. Also Allan Anderson (1991:141) points out that 'the ancestor cult is without question the most prominent aspect of African traditional religion, the heart of the African spirit world'. This belief is so strong that to become a Christian does not change it! Daneel (1971:96) has illustrated how among the southern Shona over 70% of those interviewed believed the ancestors to have protective powers over their living descendants. He affirms: 'In fact, the ancestry cult still plays

an important part in the lives of most Africans who are converted to Christianity' (1985:94). Therefore, belief in ancestors and the living-dead is one of the African characteristics.

❖ **Sacrifices and offerings**

Sacrifices are a common practice in Africa. Mbiti confirms this by saying: 'Sacrifices and offerings constitute one of the commonest acts of worship among African peoples; and examples of them are overwhelmingly many' (1969:58). None the less, the African practises sacrificial rites in different ways. The sacrifices differ from tribe to tribe. Most African tribes sacrifice a chicken. This can be sacrificed to God or the ancestors, but the idea of sacrifice is the same. Thus, sacrifice and offerings are common characteristics of Africa.

❖ **Witchcraft and Sorcery**

Witchcraft is a common belief throughout Africa. It is very difficult for an African to live without this belief. Buakasa (1973:31) writes in his book about witchcraft in the Kongo tribe: 'When dealing with witchcraft, we address a problem that is always present in Africa...' (own translation).

The question of witchcraft will be dealt with more fully later, but Africans do believe in witchcraft. There are also unique traits among Africans, but these demonstrate the many similarities. The similarities mean that Africa can also have the same collective sin or sins.

6.2 AFRICA: MOTHER OF THE WORLD

It is accepted today that Africa is the Mother of the World in two aspects: it is the birthplace of humanity, and of civilisation. It is not the purpose of this thesis to discuss all the views expressed about the birthplace of humanity and of civilisation, because it is not the field of interest. The focus is rather on collective African sin, and on an explanation of the root cause of the African crises and African problems, in order to determine whether it is a theological problem; in other words, the objective is to determine whether sin is the basis of the problem.

6.2.1 Africa: birthplace of humanity

As discussed below, many scholars today affirm that Africa is the birthplace of humanity. It is the continent of the first man. Some see this in the context of evolution, and others believe that Adam and Eve originated here. Either way, they are of the same opinion that Africa sheltered the beginnings of humanity.

Cheikh Anta Diop, in his interesting book *Civilisation in Barbary* (1981:19), affirms that:

Research in human palaeontology by the late Dr Leakey, in particular, have allowed us to locate the cradle of mankind in East Africa, in the Great Lake Region, around the Omo valley. Two consequences, which have not hitherto been emphasised, follow from this discovery:

- 1) Humanity born in the latitude of the Great Lakes, nearly on the equator, is necessarily pigmented and Negroid. Gloger's law demands that warm blooded animals be pigmented in a warm humid climate.
- 2) All other races are derived from the Black race by more or less direct descendants, and the other continents were populated from Africa, as much at the stage of *homo erectus* as at the stage of *homo sapiens*, who appeared about 150 000 years ago; the previous theories suggesting that the Negroes came from elsewhere are outdated.
- 3) The first negroids who went to populate the rest of the world, left Africa by the Straits of Gibraltar, by the Suez isthmus and perhaps by Sicily and Southern Italy.

Ronald Cole-Turner (in Cann, Stoneking and Wilson, 1987) notes:

New approaches to human evolution using molecular biology are yielding striking new conjectures about our evolutionary history and our proximity to other species. Analysis of mitochondrial DNA (which has a strictly maternal line of descent) suggests that all human beings may have descended from a common mother, appropriately referred to as 'Eve', living in central Africa some 200 000 years ago.

Using similar techniques to analyse the Y chromosome, which only males have, a group of researchers conjectured that there may have been a first human father, Adam, who also lived in Africa 200 000 years ago, and resembled present-day pygmies (Gibbons, 1991a:378-380). While these preliminary results are highly tentative, they indicate the kind of uses to which molecular biology will be put to in the future (Gibbons, 1991b:872-74).

Joseph Ki-zerbo (1963:09) is another African historian, who states.

It is in Africa that one finds the most complete prehistoric theories of skeletons, from Prehuman and Neanderthal (*homo faber*) to the skeletons of *Homo sapiens*. Numerous scientists think that Africa is the cradle of the human species; it follows that contrary to Delaphosse, who made the Blacks come from Asia, one can affirm that Blacks are of African origin even if their diverse varieties only occupied the whole continent in phases from certain centres of radiation.

To quote Cheikh Anta Diop again:

From all appearances the present African peoples are not at all invaders from another continent; they are all autochthonous. The latest scientific discoveries that show that Africa is the cradle of humanity exclude increasingly the necessity of populating the African continent from others.

Since the appearance of *Homo sapiens*, from prehistory to our day, we can retrace our origins as a people, without notable interruption. In early prehistory, in a powerful movement from south to north, the African peoples, having left the region of South Africa, slipped into the basin of the Nile. They have lived there in-groups, for millennia. In prehistoric times they created the Nilotic Sudanese civilisation (capital: Meroe), the Egyptian civilisation. These first Negro civilisations were also the first in the world, the evolution of Europe having been retarded by the last glacial period, which lasted 100 000 years.

6.2.2 Africa: birthplace of civilisation

Africa is not just the birthplace of humanity, but is also the birthplace of civilisation. Historians have demonstrated that the Greek civilisation, which gave birth to the Roman civilisation, which is the basis of modern civilisation today, has its roots in the Egyptian civilisation. Thus Cheikh Anta Diop (1967:97-103) notes:

In this very controversial subject the Egyptologist Sauneron states in his turn “in studying ancient Greek texts one cannot resist the idea that in the eyes of the ancient authors, Egypt was like the cradle of all science and all wisdom. The most famous of the Hellenic sages or philosophers crossed the sea to seek from the priests, initiation into new sciences and if they did not go, their biographers hastened to add to the episodes of their life this voyage which had become as well traditional as necessary.

The author gives a list of all these pioneers of a Greek science and civilisation, who first went as simple students to draw the knowledge from the sources which had become traditional in the Nile valley, and then returned to spread it in their fatherland. The long list of these students, who all became teachers and scholars, shows the Egyptian influence on Greek thought right up

to the mythical age when the first ancestors of the Hellenes lived, people like Orpheus (Dyodorus, I, 23, 2) who took part in the Dionysian mysteries; and Homer who also visited Egypt (Dyodorus, I, 69).

In the *Timeus*, Plato tells the story of the voyage of the historical Solon, including his stay among the priests of Sais, and the enquiries, which Solon made to the Egyptian priests:

Solon said that the people of Sais had received him very well and on enquiring about their antiquities from the most knowledgeable priests in this research, he had discovered that none among the Greeks, and especially himself, knew a single word of these questions.

... Solon, Solon, you Greeks, you are still children... What do you mean, asked Solon? You are young in spirit, answered the Egyptian priest, because you have no real ancient tradition, no notions whitened by time.

Thalesus of Miletus, according to his own Greek biographers, learnt geometry and astrology from the Egyptians (Diogenes, Laercus, Thalesus, 43, 24): He was the first of the scholars to calculate the period of an eclipse. The Greek disciples were not simply initiated straight away. They had to wait sometimes many years or even a large part of their lives, seeking to have opened to them the path of knowledge. The priestly Egyptian body, which was then the keeper of the secrets of science, kept it jealously, and only agreed to dispense it very parsimoniously to the disciples who, after submitting to a long series of tests, revealed themselves to be worthy.

When Pythagoras, counselled by Thalesus, went to seek science in Egypt, he was resisted for a long time by these difficulties. Porphyry, who lived between 233 and 304, relates the voyage of Pythagoras:

Having been received by Amasis (King of Egypt - 568-526), he obtained from him letters of recommendation to the priests of Heliopolis, who then sent him to those of Memphis, ostensibly more ancient than they - which basically was but a pretext. Then, from Memphis, he was sent on again to the priests of Diospolis (Thebes). These, fearful of the king, and not daring to find a red herring to remove the newcomer from their sanctuary, thought they could get rid of him by forcing him to submit to very bad treatment and very difficult commands, altogether strange in Hellenic education. All this was also calculated to push him to despair and turn him away from his enterprise. But, as he executed zealously all that was demanded, the priests finally developed a great admiration for him, treated him with respect and even permitted him to sacrifice to their gods, which had never been allowed to a stranger hitherto.

According to another biographer, Pythagoras spent twenty-two years in this way in the temples of Egypt, learning geometry especially [because 'many geometric problems are found with the Egyptians... all linear theories proceed from them' (Jamblique)], and astronomy, which he studied in the sanctuaries throughout his stay in Egypt. In short, he obtained from the priests of Thebes and Memphis the knowledge for which we generally consider him as a scholar (Jamblique), and he went so far as to keep in his own teaching the mysterious and symbolic methods which the priests, it is said, used (Plutarque, Isis and Osiris, 10).

The preceding paragraph, drawn from Porphyry, is interesting in that it reflects the spirit of the Egyptian priestly office, the attitude, which was generally adopted towards candidates for initiation. Here is indicated the weakness, perhaps a major one, of the Egyptian civilisation. This science which had been jealously guarded, never penetrated deeply into the spirit of the people who were receiving esoteric teaching. Knowledge was so precious in the eyes of the Egyptian priest that he preferred to keep it and extend it only to a few privileged individuals, rather than acting like his Greek disciple and disseminating it among population, to make a name for himself. The spiritual attitudes of the Egyptian priest are the opposite of the itinerant Greek professors, who tried to increase their clientele. That was an original trait of the Hellenic culture.

It is striking that almost no names of Egyptian scholars have survived. On the other hand, their Greek disciples are remembered for the inventions and discoveries of their anonymous Egyptian masters.

Plutarque's remark is equally interesting. It shows that Pythagoras alone, among the Hellenic initiates, was able to conserve in his teaching the symbolic and mysterious character so dear to the Egyptians. Thus Plutarque made the remark that Pythagoras is the most loved of all their ancient Greek scholars by the Egyptians. It seems that Pythagoras was the first to introduce, side by side with the mysteries of Eleusis and others, true secret sects in which only those initiated in the scientific and metaphysical domains could enter, sects which resembled in all points an imitation of a college of Egyptian priests. These Pythagorean sects became so

numerous in the Mediterranean that certain scholars asked whether Pythagoras himself was not a myth.

Unfortunately, there is no literature of that time which could make it easier to see that the decline of Egyptian civilisation was precipitated by this immense pride which prevented Egypt from spreading its teachings, and by the defective system of initiation. This last institution, which is fatal for intellectual development of peoples, was common to the rest of Black Africa, as well as in Egypt.

It is one thing to say that Egypt is the mother of civilisation and another to demonstrate that it was the Blacks in Egypt who were responsible for that civilisation. Cheikh Anta Diop (1967:32-33) claims that they were.

The Egyptians had black skins like present day negroes. I affirm this, grounded on my own investigation. I took samples from Egyptian mummies discovered by Mariette. The scientific examination of these samples easily proves that the pigmentation of the Negro-type and Egyptian-type is exactly the same. In Whites, who have been mummified, the skin remains unpigmented, a fact, which I demonstrated on a mummified White head from Egypt, preserved in the Museum of Man and many other mummies there. Appropriate scientific techniques were used to show the presence or absence of the melanin in the skin. Egyptian and African plastic art and painting both show the spontaneous choice of similar dark brown tones in representing both the Egyptians and Negroes.

Here, Diop's claim suggests that it can be argued that Egypt was black and that the first civilisation in Africa was a Black civilisation. Later on, African civilisation was manifested by the power of several empires scattered all over the continent, as for example the empire of Mali, of Ghana, and kingdoms such as Yoruba, Congo, Luba and others.

The Negro African culture gave the whole world an extraordinary vitality and vigour. All the vital concepts, religious as well as philosophic, have, I'm convinced, come from this source. The civilisation of ancient Egypt would not be possible without the great example of the negro-African culture and was, most likely, only its sublimation" (Georges Gurvitch, Professor at the Sorbonne: message to second congress of Black writers and artists).

6.3 THE AFRICAN CRISIS

6.3.1 The Irony

The concern of this study is this: if Africa is the mother of the world; if its civilisation was the first and the origin of modern civilisation; and if the Blacks were first in everything; why are they now the last, the ones who are suffering the most, being poorly developed and destitute?

Many explanations are given for this state of affairs. Cheikh Anta Diop (1955:302) attributes the African situation to colonisation.

Thus one sees there has been a real regression in Black Africa, especially with regard to the people, but it is due to colonisation. One can surely blame it for the regression in certain tribes, which were progressively bastardised and pushed back into the forests. It would thus be doubly false to state today that these people who have become primitive show that Black Africa was never civilised in the past and that the Negro has a primitive mentality which is non-Cartesian, and refractory to civilisation

It is only this regression which can explain that in a relatively primitive state, these populations still keep intact a tradition which reveals social organisations and a concept of the world, which no longer correspond to their present level of culture.

One can actually quote a similar situation in Europe: it is seen in the regression of white populations who today live in the valleys in Switzerland which are isolated by the snows, such as the valley of Lötchenthal. These populations today are savages in the sense of Bushmen or Hottentots: they create masks that are grimacing and tormented, revealing a cosmic fear which only the Eskimos can equal. The Geneva Museum possesses a beautiful collection of these masks.

On the other hand, one can notice that the serenity of Negro art reflects the kindness of the physical milieu, but also reveals a spiritual domestication of the forces of the universe. These forces, instead of being inexplicable phenomena which terrify the imagination, were already integrated in a general system of understanding of the world, which, when one thinks of the period, had the value of a philosophy. The Negro had dominated nature, partially by technology and totally by the spirit: it no longer frightened him. His art had to reflect his interior calm. Thus also, Negro expressionist art ... will not always be tormented, but appears like a kind of plastic game.

The scattering and immigration from north to south is another of the reasons given to explain the situation. But why this scattering from the Nile in Egypt to the rest of Africa? The answer lies

in the dryness of the Sahara. Those Africans who scattered all over Africa lost contact with the other civilisations of the world. Diop (1955:41).states:

Henceforth cut off from the motherland which was invaded by foreigners, they had to rely on themselves in a geographic situation requiring a minimum effort of adaptation, benefiting from favourable economic conditions, the Negroes orientated themselves to the development of their social, political and moral organisations, rather than towards speculative scientific research which their milieu not only did not justify but rendered impossible.

All these reasons to explain the retardation, the misery and the poverty of Africa face one difficulty. Europe, facing the difficulty caused by nature, fought to master nature, whereas the African preferred to migrate. In his migration he encountered new difficulties, such as illnesses, but he did not really tackle these. Maybe his position as the poor relative has other reasons. What about theological reasons?

This thesis does not subscribe to the opinion that the African has been cursed (Ham). This explanation is not biblically, nor theologically, nor historically tenable. Diop (1955:36) has this to say:

The inhabitants of Egypt, symbolised by their black colour, Kemit (equals Ham of the Bible) will be cursed in the literature of the people that they had oppressed. We thus see that this biblical malediction on the descendants of Ham has a totally different origin than that which it is given today without the slightest historical foundation. On the contrary, what one cannot comprehend is how one was able to make Kemit (Hamite) black, ebony (in Egypt itself) a white race. We see thus that depending on the needs of the day, Ham is cursed, blackened and becomes the ancestor of the Negroes. This is the case whenever one speaks of contemporary social relations. But he is whitened every time one seeks the origin of civilisation, because one will find him there inhabiting the first civilised country of the earth.

Another “theological” reason, which one could imagine, is the position, which sees Adam as black. Due to the fact that Adam (the Black) was the first to sin, the Black man is more sinful than others.

6.3.2 The dimensions of the crisis

Inspired by the writing of Cheikh Amidou Kane, Francois Falloux (1993:11) and Abdoulaye Sawadogo started their poem by saying: ‘I worry about all my continents, but you, poor Africa,

is [*sic*] the land of my deepest concern'. This is the expression of every African who wants to be responsible, whatever his perspective. Mike Faber said (1985:14): 'It has become fashionable to speak of sub-Saharan Africa as being in the grip of an economic crisis'.

As Samir Amin has written:

If the sixties had been marked by the great hope of seeing the start of an irreversible process of development across the whole of what was called the Third World, and especially Africa, our period is that of disillusionment. Development has stagnated, its theory in crisis, its ideology the object of doubt. This failure, alas, is agreed by all.

This is an unavoidable affirmation. Africa is in a profound crisis, which is well known both outside and inside the African continent. Some outsiders have a special interest in the African crisis, but the people of Africa themselves have not always been passive spectators of this crisis. Both have worked to find the causes and solutions of the situation.

The crisis shows itself at all levels and in every aspect of life:

❖ **Socio-Cultural**

There is a loss of cultural elements and an incomprehension and useful assimilation of borrowed cultural elements, thus leading to the cultural crisis.

There is the disintegration of the family and the instability of members of society. The African family, which includes uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, grandfather, grandmother, and so on., has difficulties in adapting to modern structures (like the urban structures of houses, which were built for small families). Africans grow up in an environment where a large family takes care of individuals, and this family expects to get attention, support and hospitality. The modern African living in a city finds it difficult to support and to give hospitality to the members of his large family. Therefore there is a social crisis.

❖ **Political**

Wars, successive *coups d'états*, absence of durable structures, the perpetual changing of systems and constitutions in the same regime are manifestations of the political crisis.

Eze Ogueri (1976:24-25) describes the African problems in these terms:

... corruption, assassination (assassination of dedicated leaders is one of the trump cards played by the forces of neo-colonialism against African nationalist movements), *coup d'états*, imprisonment.

The outstanding reasons include: 1. Genuine motives for change of government. 2. The rape of the constitution by civil political élite. 3. Extravagance. 4. Slow development. 5. Tribalism and ethnocentrism. 6. Foreign ideological contamination. 7. Capitalist versus social or communist economic systems. 8. The contagion of coups. 9. The lust of power and glory. 10. Unattractive conditions of service. 11. Power vacuums, the absence of military pacts, presence of expatriate military officers. 12. Traditionalistic extended African family life style. 13. Divine revelation (inspiration) theory.

❖ Economic

Much has been written about this aspect. Speaking of this crisis and the future of Africa, Camerounian thinker Jean Godefroy Bidima (1995:102-103) says the following:

The problem of the future occupies an Africa which is anxious because of an unfavourable present. It is because of this dissatisfaction of present Africa that there are obsessive fears, revolts, attempts of coups, disappointments, hopes, false starts, missed rendezvous, successes as well as a vicious circles...

This examination shows us an Africa without a plan. Forced back into the need to survive, the African has lost the auto-projection of the self in history. Thus follow the resentment, the anguish, the opportunism and the resignation. The plan whenever it exists, is confused with short-term economics, readjusted by small catechisms in the management. When Europe has its economic fantasies, its 'political utopias' (the construction of Europe), when America, with phallic momentum penetrates the world, at the time when the Asiatic world is assimilating the *logos economicus*, the Negro-African seems to have no message for the 21st Century. What is the message by which, beyond all the misery of the past, the Negro-African registers himself in time? One sees a dissolutioning [*sic*] of the social bonds; what is it that guarantees and legitimises the living together in Africa today? The state? It shows in what state it is! The grounds? The foreign multinationals know to whom it belongs. The family? Reduced to an association of shareholders the bonds are tighter when there is a material interest! African solidarity? Is that a gadget of western anthropologists and the alibi of the "intellectual dogma" of Africa in the splendid years of negritude? The tribe? Doubtful entity, manipulated by obscure logic! Religions? Here is an unlinking in the face of history (own translation).

A good number of book titles written either by Africans themselves, or by Westerners who are interested in the continent, express the dilemma. Here are some of these titles:

- *Africa Stalled* (Jacques Ciri, 1983)
- *Africa Strangled* (René Dumont, 1980)
- *Can Africa take off?* (Albert Meister, 1966)
- *Africa Betrayed* (Jean-Claude Pomonti, 1979)
- *Africa Disenchanted* (Gosselin, 1978)
- *Low Hand on Africa* (Jean Ziegler, 1978)
- *The African Stake* (Gerard Chaliand, 1980)
- *West Africa Blocked* (Samir Amin, 1971)
- *The Coveted Continent* (Elikia M'bokolo, 1980)
- *The Bankruptcy of Development in Africa and The Third World* (Samir Amin, 1989)
- *The Cry of the African Man* (Jean-Marc Ela, 1980) - translated into English with the title *African Cry* (1986)
- *Black Africa Has Started Badly* (René Dumont, 1962) - translated into English with the title *False Start in Africa* (1966)

Many such books have been written, and scores of workshops, conferences, symposia, scientific meetings are held to debate and pinpoint the problem of the African crisis. These debates can be divided into two large sub-themes: causes and solutions.

6.3.3 The Causes of the crisis

Several causes have been put forward and serious analyses have been made. The causes seem to fall into four groups: a) nature; b) culture; c) history, or the colonial inheritance; and d) the politico-economic structures on national and international level.

6.3.3.1 Nature

There are the natural enemies of man, like earthquakes, volcanoes, drought, poor soil, locusts, soil erosion and epidemics. Africa has been seriously shaken by natural catastrophes. The desert does not cease its advance to the north and to the south. The tropical forests are fast disappearing. A few years ago, drought occurred in Ethiopia, the Sudan, the Sahel,

Mozambique and other African countries. Drought has reduced many African countries to begging. René Dumont's (1966:25) analysis of Africa seems to be accurate. He observes:

None of the great economic powers - Europe, the United States, the Soviet Union, China or Japan - have developed under tropical conditions. Tibor Mende doubts that such development is possible. In his book *Les Pays Tropicaux*, Pierre Gourou discusses the many obstacles that faced tropical countries after the Second World War. Because of the unhealthiness.[sic] of the climate, there are a vast number of endemic diseases, unknown in temperate zones. Yellow Fever, Yaws, Leprosy and Sleeping Sickness are among the scourges that have been widely and effectively attacked, but have not yet disappeared. Malaria is on the wane. The most difficult problems are with Bilharzia, which irrigation projects helped to spread, Filariasis, Onchocercosis and similar diseases”.

Dumont has shown that there are also a wide variety of intestinal diseases, which render the unfortunate victims almost totally helpless. The expatriates who have suffered from dysentery will support this contention. Sanitary conditions and disease-control methods are still inadequate in spite of recent improvements. Africans are, of course, greatly hindered by widespread malnutrition, caused by the poor quality of food and sometimes by insufficient quantities of food. Often the inhabitants of the savannah region have serious food shortages in the period preceding their one cereal harvest. The problem is aggravated when a cash crop, such as peanuts or cotton, replaces food cereals, such as sorghum and millet.

Others talk about another natural problem: the intelligence of the Black people. They are often collectively considered as of inferior intellect. Their nature disadvantages them. These days this opinion is not acceptable. Intellect has nothing to do with skin colour.

6.3.3.2 Culture

Others have found cultural roots for the present crisis. Africans are, by and large, in communion with nature. Instead of dominating nature; they want to harmonise with it. Nature is part of their existence: they share their life with it. They see no reason to be above it, and certainly see no reason to destroy it, although they sometimes lack the impetus to conserve it. They depend on it, and even allow themselves to be dominated by it.

This attitude to nature is closely related to the African concept of time. This notion of time, as Mbiti (1969: 17) describes it,

does not promote development. Time is a two dimensional phenomenon, with a long past, a present and virtually no future. The linear concept of time in western thought, with an infinite past, a present and an infinite future is practically foreign to African thinking. The future is virtually absent, because the events, which lie in it, have not taken place, they have not been realised and cannot therefore constitute time.

How can one help people who don't look at the future? The culture envelops them in the present, they are turned towards the past of the ancestors. People who live only at the rhythm of the seasons are overcome by other kinds of happenings.

Fear and insecurity characterise the African people. They live in a world full of spirits and witchcraft. This fear does not permit them to risk new endeavours. In short, African culture is not favourable to development and, inserted in a modern system, Africa could not but find itself in crisis.

6.3.3.3 History, or the colonial inheritance

René Dumont is the man who, has exposed this cause clearly. Too many élite have interpreted independence as simply meaning that they could move into the jobs and enjoy the privileges of the colonialists: high salaries, beautiful furnished houses, palaces, with a large domestics staff on the expense account, and cars usually with chauffeurs (René Dumont 1966:86)

The colonisers left in the African continent a privileged class. Thus one finds ministers, deputies and other officials. The new ruling class is not an élite which developed from a traditional African society, but a product of the colonial school. This élite has no interest at all in the development of a strong class of urban or rural entrepreneurs. Such a class would constitute a threat to their precarious base. It does not matter what political system is chosen (socialism, capitalism, or another), there has been a multiplication of employees in the civil service. Speaking of French West Africa, René Dumont (1966:79) states: 'The former colonies confront

one with fifteen governments, more than 150 ministers, several hundred cabinet members and several thousand members of parliament'. In many countries there has been a strong promotion of African officials who are soon earning more than equally qualified or competent compatriots. The costs of the presidency in many countries, and the useless trips of ministers and their delegates, are exorbitant.

Forward planning and anticipation are foreign to Africans, hence the failure of all the five-year plans in Africa.

To the notion of time can be added to the so-called African solidarity. Africans prefer to be with the members of their family, rather than to be busy at work. Between a task and a relationship, the latter is preferred. Solidarity means that a large number of family members depend on the official's position and budget, a budget which is conceived as a product of western structures. Without having properly assimilated the western culture, the African sometimes imitates the European like a monkey, and much has been written on Manichaen ethics. Thus the necessary management does not happen.

African cities, which were developed in colonial times, have led to the destruction of villages. The cities are attractive. An urban society enjoys a relatively high standard of living compared to the rural populace. But this attractive urban life is a burden on the national budget when it is not productive. So, already after the second world war, labourers and employees in the cities became victims of the post-war inflation, and started organising themselves to insist on higher salaries. This urban dissatisfaction has always been exploited by nationalist movements. The African countries have been led to independence, but could not stem the population growth or the increasing unemployment. African leaders can make brilliant speeches on the evils of the rural exodus, and praise the attractions of village life, but these do not counteract the fascination of the city.

In the agricultural domain, the colonialists developed an economy based on the export of raw materials, and had little interest in the production of food. The new states inherited this approach. It is extremely difficult to convert this into production, which would be directly useful to the population. The industrial domain is generally poorly developed. The new urban

society is usually composed of low and middle rank officials and labourers, small merchants and commercial employees. There is often local industry being developed, because the large businesses are monopolised by colonial companies and foreigners like the Lebanese, Syrians, Portuguese, Greeks, Indians, Chinese, and so on.

Jacques Giris (1986:86) makes this bitter statement:

The weight of the African manufacturing industry in world commerce is still negligible. The major part of products manufactured in Africa is consumed locally, and the value of exports is not more than two billion dollars (this figure includes added value). Two billion dollars represents about 5% of the industrial export of Belgium, or 10% of the export of Hong Kong or Korea... The whole of sub-Saharan Africa does not export more manufactured products than a country of medium industrialisation, like Thailand, which has little more than 50 million inhabitants. This means that the presence of Africa in the world markets in this domain is non-existent. Many European industrialists complain of the competition from the Third World. If there is competition, it certainly is not the African industries that can cause them much anxiety. (own translation).

‘Freightage, duties, insurances, commercial bank commissions, licenses, transfers of technology and other “invisible factors” never cease renewing these forms of exploitation’ (René Dumont 1980:22-23). Terms like imperialism, paternalism, neo-colonialism are so well known, they do not need to be developed.

Pan-African organisations turn out to be servants of the international structures. They were either conceived or rescued by these structures. Thus one can notice that even with changes in political regimes and of ruling groups, the system remains the same. African life remains miserable and full of suffering; foreign aid merely serves to increase the dependence. ‘The African continent *par excellence* is one of extreme vulnerability to external interference’ (Samir Amin, 1989:185). Most of the analyses are limited to economic observations, as Bade Onimode (1989:1-2) explains:

The African crisis is not merely an economic crisis in the bourgeois or Marxian sense. It is much deeper than a bourgeois economic crisis of threatened starvation, massive unemployment, growing deficits and debts, disequilibria in different markets and sluggish economic growth. These are merely the surface manifestations of the crisis. Neither is the deepening crisis in Africa just a Marxian crisis arising from under-consumption, disproportionality and related factors, which are commonly associated with the contradictions of industrial capitalism. This is because most African countries are either pre-industrial or semi-industrial, the capitalist contradictions are still muted and mediated by

their dependence on metropolitan capitalism, so that much of the symptoms of Marxian crises they exhibit are essentially spill-overs from the industrialised countries.

It can be said that the African crisis is fundamentally one of under-development, the central problematic of the African continent and the Third World generally. This makes the crisis basically structural and historical. But although under-development is largely an economic phenomenon, the African crisis is also marked by serious social and political problems, as well as an intellectual crisis.

- The intensification of the contradictions of under-development are visible in the food crisis, deplorable mass poverty, decimating disease, pervasive illiteracy, technological backwardness, prostrate external dependence and mounting foreign debt.
- The social trauma is exhibited in the sharpening social divisions, arising from widening distributional inequalities, ethno-religious primordiality, rising crime and cultural degradation.
- Correspondingly, the African political contour is disturbed, with widespread and growing repression, resulting in massive refugee problems, coups and counter-coups, apartheid oppression and external subversion.
- Then, too, there is the intellectual crisis, which results not merely from the lingering colonial mentality and foreign intellectual domination, but from the dominant, bourgeois scholars' fundamental irrelevance to African social reality, especially in the imported social services.

The structural roots of these contradictions of the African crisis are anchored primarily in the relations of exploitation, domestic class structures, prostrate external dependence and the distortion of the dominant neo-colonial social formation in Africa. The pliant-class structures, production relations and forms of exploitation that sustain neo-colonialism, and the nature of the client post-colonial state that these class structures have developed, also operate to intensify the crisis.

These structural deformities of the African milieu are inexorably bound up with the continent's historiography. As this history is an integral part of the global history of imperialism, a clear

understanding of the major eras in Africa is essential to the correct appreciation of the idiom of the African crisis.

There are, however, also other legacies of the colonial era. Corruption had already commenced during the colonial period, but had reached frightening proportions after independence. Another problem is nepotism. Giving jobs or promotion to friends or relatives has increased to such an extent that it will be difficult to stop it. Alcohol is a colonial inheritance, even though one may argue that the Africans drank potent beverages even before the arrival of western ways. René Dumont (1966:48) correctly states: 'Before the arrival of the Europeans, Africans only drank fermented beverages with a very low alcoholic content. Palm and raffia wine contain Vitamin C and have about 4% alcohol; millet or maize beer average around 3.5% alcohol and also contain proteins and Vitamin B12... Alcoholism was the first gift presented to Africa by Europe'

The independent states inherited an economy which was bound to the colonial power, and helped by it as far as administration and public works was concerned. They inherited an economy in which the germs of mal-development were present. No one felt guilty about it, because the colonial powers abandoned the colonies before these problems became apparent. The great demographic growth had only just started, the urban explosion hardly begun, the problem of food did not yet exist, the ecological imbalance was not yet very apparent, development was expanding. Yet the critical situation of modern Africa was already there in embryo, but few realised it, neither the Africans, full of the joy of independence, nor the colonial powers in their flight.

Schooling was an important aspect. Again René Dumont (1966:88), makes a useful statement:

Present education obstructs progress. This statement may appear paradoxical to many readers, particularly coming from the pen of a professor, since education was the essential foundation of development in Europe, America, Japan, the Soviet Union and China. In Africa it has a certain utility, but this is greatly curtailed by the social milieu onto which the educational system was grafted. For most African children, in town and country alike, school represents, above all, a means of entering the elite class. Even in the most backward areas of the bush everyone has grasped the fact that the official with clean hands earns more and works much less.

Pushed by his parents, a peasant child quickly realises that he can never go very far in agriculture; the only way to get ahead is to get out. He goes to school and works very hard to this end, sometimes at the price of incredible sacrifices. I have heard of a child in Chad who walks twice a day the 20 kilometres that separate his house from school...

Add to that an educational system which is not geared to the needs. All these are colonial inheritances.

Speaking specifically about France, René Dumont (1995:97) affirms:

To some extent the French have pushed the Africans into this unpromising situation. When French authority weakened, France sought to prolong it through African élite, to whom it gave these excessive privileges.... We impose an administrative superstructure on a backward economy that could not support the weight, and a trade structure which benefits industrial countries but which blocks African growth.

6.3.3.4 National and international politico-economic structures

National structures:

The new political class that inherited power from the colonial has been discussed above. This class acted as new colonisers. They built a system that permitted them to direct, control and dictate its choices. The structures allowed them to have the absolute power also over the economy, whatever political options were chosen: African socialism, scientific capitalism, neutralism, patriotism, and the like. All these were slogans in the service of selfish national structures. Thus it is that one will see that whatever the political option in nearly all African countries, there is effectively always one party rule. Thus the party state is no different whatever the political system.

This has permitted the managers to satisfy their needs for luxury without being controlled. The élite are concerned primarily with their own selfish interests. They establish structures, which would respond to their needs. Most of them are in the service of international structures and powerful countries, while satisfying their luxurious tastes with prestigious cars, sumptuous villas surrounded by gardens and security enclosures, and this, in the face of blatant inequality in Africa. This élite saves their treasures in foreign banks to ensure their future, in the case of a collapse of the system. The structure itself does not seem to meet the needs and culture of Africa. This has led Basil Davidson (1974:6), to see the African crisis as a 'continental crisis of institutions'.

International structures

The first visible structure is that umbilical cord which ties the ex-colony to its former colonisers. As René Dumont (1980:35) observes: 'They want to remain friends of the ruling élite, who guarantee the prolongation of their privileged economic and political ties; thus the continuation of their exploitation'.

The pillage of the Third World has not ceased since slavery and colonisation. It continues today by unequal exchange: under-valued primary agricultural produce and minerals and over-charging for manufactured products and equipment from the factories of the developed world.

6.4 THE AFRICAN STRUGGLE

The African struggle reveals some perception of collective sin. There is a realisation that something is wrong somewhere. A start is made to define it and to correct it. Some light, but not total understanding of the problem, is evidenced. Africa perceives some mistakes (sins), and struggles against them in a number of ways.

6.4.1 The History of the African struggle

Since the seventeenth century African Blacks were exported to the Americas. 'The first Black people who were brought to British colonies on the American continent came aboard a Dutch trading ship that stopped at Jamestown, Virginia in 1619. Twenty Black people were exchanged for provisions. Between that year and 1660 several thousand more Black servants were imported' (Rodney Carlisle, 1972:64).

At that time, Blacks were sent to many places, like Haiti, Brazil and so on; their diaspora. In America slavery was formalised by law. It seems that discrimination was present even before the institution of slavery. This means that the social sin preceded the structural sin of slavery. One must remember that slavery is an ancient practice, or collective sin, that existed in Babylonian,

Egyptian, Greek, Hebrew, Roman and Arab societies. Racist ideologies became an integral and structurally necessary component of these societies.

The Religious Struggle

At that time, in America, 'a few whites saw slavery as a social evil. Before the American revolution, Quakers and some Methodists argued that slavery was unchristian' (Rodney Carlisle, 1972:65). They started the abolitionist movement. Many abolitionists were motivated through their Christian outlook, which was part of the revivalist spirit sweeping the churches at the time.

From the oppressed group, some people started to defend their sense of humanity and began to fight against the social sin. Some of those who perceived this sin and started to struggle against it were theologians. The Reverend Ernle Gordon (1991:137-138) declares: 'Therefore, it is important that we remember the excellent work of Bishop Henry McNeal Turner of the AME Church (1834-1915) who, according to Edwin S Redkey 'was without doubt the most prominent and outspoken American advocate of Black immigration in the years between the Civil War and the First World War.'

An African professor, Edwin Blyden, originally from the West Indies, having been denied entry into Rutgers Theological College, urged black people not to be ashamed of their black skins and woolly hair; sought to foster the verification of all true African people, rejected interlopers; stressed the fact that Liberia was a civilised state, a home for all black men and unapologetically preached black repatriation.

An episcopalian priest, Alexander Crummell, born in New York in 1819, was one of the first black theologians to be critical of the agape doctrine of orthodox Christianity: black people should espouse self-love in order to cast off the chains of oppression and gain the same equality as the white nations of the world. He was influential in articulating the responsibility of black intellectuals to the cause and became the first president of the American Negro Academy.

Another black theologian, Martin Delany, although a theoretician of black nationalism and emigrationism [*sic*], more than anyone else helped to clarify in the 1850's the cultural vocation of the black church, particularly its responsibility to assist in the redemption of Africa.

In the late 19th Century, black nationalism came into being. Many black preachers in the US denied the inferiority of the black man, because many white churches used the Genesis story of Ham to formulate a racist ideology. Black clergymen who studied in the

US, returned to Africa to establish churches, such as The Rev John Chilembwe of Nyasaland, who led his people in the Nyasaland rebellion in 1915. In South Africa, Ethiopian preachers were involved in the Zulu uprisings in 1906, and a Baptist preacher, the Rev Lotin Same, organised anti-European agitation in the Cameroons. Garvey's philosophy and theology and ideas cannot be divorced from the influence of Booker T Washington and many other persons who preceded Garvey.

Others factors should also be mentioned: the black slaves on the plantations who continued the African religious culture; the Baptist deacon Sam Sharpe's uprising in 1831; the Morant Bay Black struggle led by another Baptist deacon called Bogle in 1865; the successful gorilla war of the Cameroonians against the British army; the excellent work done by Baptist, Methodist and Moravian missionaries; and the three Anglican priests who were imprisoned for their anti-slavery views. The Black theology of Alexander Bedward was a threat to the status quo. Therefore, when Marcus Garvey's concepts began to be articulated, there was already an historical matrix, a socio-economic and political climate that concretised his views.

But it was not only in North America that the Blacks rose against oppression. Kimbangu is an African church in the Congo, which has extended to Congo-Brazzaville, Central African Republic and others. The church was born in the African context and named after their prophet Kimbangu. He was born and grew up in the Protestant Baptist Church. According to Susan Asch (1983:19),

it was during the time of the war in Europe, when Simon Kimbangu preached among his people, decimated by illness, wracked by poverty, joblessness, poor salaries and hunger and the weakness of the Belgian administration which characterised this time. He healed sicknesses and preached against the colonial system. He said: "The blacks will be white and the whites will be black", which means that the conditions in which we now live and those of the whites will be changed. He brought hope to the people. This was the beginning of the idea of liberation.

Susan Asch continues (1983:21-23):

A climate of insecurity reigns in the colony. Revolts break out in the district of Sankuru and of Equator, fermented by fetishists. Several scandals burst in Kinshasa: a Black American, Wilson, working at HCB is expelled for having spread the ideas of Marcus Garvey published in the Negro world. Immanuel John, a member of the BMS, sends a

dossier to John Panda Farnana, demanding the participation of Blacks in the colonial council held in Brussels, because he took part in the Pan-African Congress and had contacts with WEB, Du Bois and the NNACP at the United Nations. André Yengo, member of the BMS and a businessman, founds an organisation with military-type hierarchy, based on Garvey's ideas and called The Congo Men.

It is said that Simon Kimbangu never received a salary while working as a 'pointer' at the HCB, that he was forced to go down to the village of Kasangulu to stock up on *Chikwangue* (manioc paste) which he resold in Kinshasa to earn his living, and that he had business links with André Yengo head of a prosperous construction company, which furnished him with breeze-blocks of cement to resell in the villages of Bas-Congo. Did he know his co-religionary Immanuel John and his American colleague Wilson? At least at the BMS and at HCB, he must have heard talk of them and their ideas of a Pan-African movement, published in the *Negro World*, which was circulating in Kinshasa.

These ideas can be summed up as: 1. Black civilisation is a root of European civilisation, 2. the Blacks must break their chains and become again the guides of humanity; 3. Christ himself was black; and 4. He calls Blacks to create their own religion, based on their own traditions.

Having learnt that everyone interprets the Bible according to the inspirations he receives from the Holy Spirit, and knowing that his people were suffering from epidemics, exploitation, joblessness and famine in rural as well as urban areas, Kimbangu took these new ideas to heart. How could one be surprised? What is certain is that Simon Kimbangu left for Nkamba enriched by his experience and by his contacts in Kinshasa, even if he was obliged to take up his agricultural work again. Shortly after his return to the village, he went to the market at Kenge with his eldest son, and stopped on the way at the village of Ngombe-Kinsuka. On that day, 11 March 1921, he cured the woman, Nkiantodo, by the imposition of his hands and by his prayers. The news drew a huge crowd to Nkamba on 6 April when Kimbangu for the first time, publicly accomplished his mission in preaching the gospel and healing the sick. These acts of power caused rumours to run throughout the region: henceforth he was called Ngounza, the healing prophet.

From 5 April to 6 June 1921 his words and his deeds drew thousands of people of all conditions to Nkamba, across the Bas-Congo and Kinshasa-Leopoldville. Peasants, labourers, artisans,

employees, domestics, unemployed, the sick of body and spirit all came to Nkamba to seek salvation, healing and hope. Abandoning their work, the Bakongo left their factories, their plantations, their offices, their villas; they deserted the army, the churches and the hospitals.

This reveals how the perception of collective sin among the African Americans helped the Black African to see the same thing. It was religious people who started to act against it in the context of the church, by preaching, doing exorcism, miraculous healing, and so on.

The Cultural Struggle

In this category should be mentioned all intellectual work dealing with the domination of Whites over Blacks. These were in the areas of African philosophy, African literature (such as poems, novels, history, and academic works), conferences, . This characterised the period between the two world wars and thereafter. During this time this philosophy of ‘the African personality’ or ‘negritude’ was born.

The movement of legitimate defence, inspired by Leon Damas and his friends, constitutes an important cultural lobby promoting the idea of negritude. One can also say that after this movement other lobbies, which were more or less cultural in character, were constituted by student movements. This was the case with FEANF (Federation of Black Students in France). The cultural lobby consisted essentially of pressure groups whose voice could be heard loud and clear and spread everywhere. At this time, a group of poets and authors like Senghor and Aoun Diop (both Senegalese), Aimé and Cesairé (from Martinique) and many others carried the ideals in their literary works. They developed the first African school of literature. This movement was started in Paris, the gathering place of the educated élite of the French colonies. In 1932 the struggle was taken up by the journal of the group *Legitime Defence* and *Presence Africaine* which struggled against assimilation. Negritude was the primary cultural movement and gradually many cultural actions came into being (both in the French and English speaking countries) which worked for all forms of independence in Africa.

The influence of Pan-Africanism in the African cultural movement is evident. One of the biggest among them and founder of the important movement called Negritude is Leopold Senghor. Colin Legum (1965:102) observed that: “Leopold Senghor is a bridge person between Africa,

Europe and New World". Thus the African cultural movement has the same roots as the Pan-African movement.

The Political Struggle

The cultural movements became more and more political. Jon Woronoff (1970:17-18) observes:

In September 1956 the first international congress of Negro writers and artists met in Paris. The delegates, stressing the need to restore Negro values, expressed the wish to be truly African and not an extension of Europe. Although rejecting western ideas and institutions, they hoped to use them to their own ends. And the most valid end seemed the redemption of African man and the strengthening of the African personality. Before separating, the congress pledged to 'Defend, illustrate and publicise throughout the world the national values of their own peoples'. The growth of culture, they added, required an end of colonialism, oppression and racialism

Many people who were engaged in the cultural struggle became political leaders, for instance Leopold Senghor, Kwame Nkrumah and so on. At the sixth Pan-African Congress in Manchester in 1945, the future political African leaders, like Kwame Nkrumah, later president of Ghana, Jomo Kenyatta, later of president of Kenya, and other African political leaders talked expressly about African independence. The Manchester congress offers many clues to the developing ideas of Pan-Africanism. For the first time one encounters the forthright challenge: 'We demand for black Africa autonomy and independence, so far, and no further, than it is possible in this one world for groups and peoples to rule themselves subject to inevitable world unity and federation'.

Nkrumah is generally regarded as the greatest leader of African independence. He struggled not just for Ghana, his own country, but also for all Africa. He initiated the new leaders into the problems of Africa. One of them was Patrice Emery Lumumba, who was the national hero of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Nkrumah, however, was also a product of the Pan-African movement and its leader, Garvey. In his autobiography, Dr Nkrumah says he: 'was influenced more by Garvey's ideas than by anything in the United States' (Colin Legum, 1965:25).

The African struggle in its three categories - religious, cultural and political - had its origins in the Negro theological world. The African's need was perceived firstly by theologians and

preachers. It does not mean that the Africans themselves did not see the bad things around them at the time of colonisation. At that time there were revolts from time to time in some tribes or groups. However, insight into the evil structures of colonialism, exploitation, and repression, the development of continental strategies, and the use of intellectual and political means of vindication was developed after contact with the Negro-American world, where the theologians and preachers were the first to give direction.

6.4.2 The Failure of the African Struggle

The central question in the failure of the African struggle was: ‘What happened after the theologians and churches disappeared from the struggle?’

Religious schisms

Africans were looking for an African messiah, someone who could help them out of their misery, poverty, exploitation and social malaise. Thus every African prophet, like Kimbangu, Harris, John of Malaga, and others, has been very welcome. Most of these prophets were from Protestant churches. They already knew the Bible and could perceive the need of the people and show them Jesus Christ, heal them, and promise them a change in the political structure. However, after the prophets moved to the cities or died, many of these African independent churches took the way of syncretism.

They had the qualities that the traditional churches missed. They had a living African culture and could easily en-culture the churches. However, the cultural sin from the African tribes became part of the life of the churches. For instance, in some African churches more time was devoted to talking about witchcraft than about Jesus, and to seeking out witches in the church rather than edifying the Christians. In many, polygamy was encouraged or tolerated, and sometimes there are sins specific to that tribe. These churches needed in their early days not just healers, prophets and other miraculous gifts, but also theologians, teachers and doctors of the churches.

The cultural struggle

In this category of struggle, the leaders developed terms like Africanness and Blackness or Negritude. Take the example of negritude. Negritude was defined by Jean-Paul Sartre as ‘an anti-racist racism’ (Jacques Louis Hynans, 1971:13). In other words, it was a sin against the sinner. The idea of syncretism was the thesis and antithesis of Hegelian philosophy, which could lead to an ultimate synthesis of a common humanity without racism. The theological question is; ‘Can sin be dealt with in this way?’

Negritude was defined by Senghor himself as:

the whole complex of civilised values, cultural, economic, social and political which characterised the black peoples, or, more precisely, the Negro-African world.... The sense of communion, the gift of myth-making, the gift of rhythm, such are the essential elements of negritude, which you will find indelibly stamped on all the words and activities of the black man (John Woronoff, 1970:17).

This definition includes the term “values”. The question arises as to what has value or not? What are the criteria to distinguish value and non-value? Thus the need of the church and theologians is evidently to distinguish between values. Be that as it may, negritude helped the Africans to retrieve their own pride and feel acceptable and have dignity as an African.

The Pan-Africanist movement, however, was open to criticism. Bidima (1995:16) declares that:

Founded on the idea of African unity and of a strong democracy aiming to combat imperialism, Africanism restores or gives itself the mission to restore the dignity and the sovereignty of the continent and of the black Diaspora. Cultural, economic, political and linguistic unity is a guarantee of this liberation. Its revolutionary aspect collides with a conservatism which idealises the African past.

Appiah (1992:5) was critical: ‘Pan-Africanism is bound too much to Grunmel’s vision of the world founded on the racial community. There is the danger, after Nazism, to base social solidarity on the notion of race’. The fact is that the collective sin of racism could also be seen here. Sin was fighting sin. Racism was against racism. Unity on a racial foundation could bring separation and war.

The church was not present in the black cultural struggle. Although the church did make some theological statements, the struggle was not its real concern. In all the cultural activities like conferences, abundant publications of novels, poems and the like, the church was basically absent after the Second World War. Some books were very critical of churches and missions. It is true that there were things to be criticised, but the presence of theology and the church was actually necessary in order to clarify some issues.

The Political Struggle

Some leaders were Christians and even theologians. Kwame Nkrumah called himself a Christian. Joseph Kasa-vubu, first president of the Democratic Republic of Congo, was a priest from a well-known catholic seminary. Yulu, the first president of Congo-Brazzaville was a priest. Bongando, the first leader of Central African Republic, was also an ex-priest. They were in politics, but retained some Christian ethics. However, independence was generally obtained in the name of the power of the people. That is the first social sin in Africa: to believe that the people are strong by themselves.

The failure of the African struggle has to be analysed. In the religious field the independent churches, which were previously struggling against the evil structures of colonialism, lived peacefully with the bad structure of dictatorship in Africa. For instance, the Kimbanguist Church was against the Belgian system, but was living like a privileged church under the dictatorial Mobutu regime. The result was that the Kibanguists had no prophetic voice when the people suffered under the new regime.

Regarding culture, there were some positive developments in terms of the Africans' affirmation of their own culture. However, these were not really accomplished. Today too many Africans still live without dignity. Negritude gave the French language to Africa, which was not in all respects positive for the continent. It became a protection for the dictators of Africa.

Pan-Africanism, which may be considered the political branch of negritude, has never become a reality. Nkrumah himself changed the term into 'consciencism', that is, 'disappointed hope'.

This consciencism was to overcome tribal limits and this ideology was to mobilise Africans in the larger project that he called "The African United States". He was also disappointed in that. However, that dead project gave birth to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), a body with no power, no real projects, and an inability to stop tribal warfare and political conflicts. It is unable to resolve crises. In reality, it has no present.

The political struggle did give Africa political independence, which was a cause for great joy and hope. However, the present situation of some countries in Africa is worse than it was before colonisation. Africa, south of the Sahara, is the poorest part of the world. There is more oppression and exploitation than ever before. Ahmoud Abubakar (1989:1) declares: 'The oppressive and exploitative nature of colonialism provided the African elite with a convenient scapegoat for their failure in managing their economies after independence. It is true that colonialism was oppressive and exploitative, but it was overthrown twenty-five years ago'.

Again theology and the church were absent when the people needed guidance.

6.5 PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

6.5.1 The Five Strategies

Taking into consideration the causes and the depth of the African crisis, five solutions have been proposed which are considered in the following paragraphs:

The 'each for himself' solution

This first solution, which is called 'hopelessness' and 'every man for himself', characterises much African thinking today. The 'international structures and the Superpowers weigh down on the African, making him or her feel hopeless. Even the national structures are burdens too heavy to carry; the malaise is too deep; nothing can be done; one simply awaits death. Sometimes this despair is hidden behind terms such as 'perhaps we will get out of it one day', and 'one never

knows'. This solution has never been debated in a conference or argued written in a book, but it is a reality.

Many therefore seek a purely private and selfish solution: either to flee Africa, if possible, and send the children abroad, or try to share the booty of those in power. Africa being in an impasse, these are palliative solutions to prevent a catastrophe, at least for a while. Some individuals – but only a few – do find their personal solutions.

The 'breakaway' solution

Some want to break relations with the rest of the world, especially with the West, and foster self-reliance. This breakaway from the outside world would then advance Africa. Samir Amin, Clive Thomas and Walter Rodney advocate this solution. The advantage of this approach is that it recognises the sinful structures of the world economic order and the sins of the great powers. It would also give Africa a chance and permit it to utilise its human and natural potential. It would not allow the great powers to insert themselves and exploit Africa at will.

Insertion into the world economy solution

This solution proposes a major insertion of Africa into the world economy. It emphasises the development of exports. The World Bank and the Berg Report support this solution. This option would have the advantage of quieting the Western powers. In emphasising exports, Africa could shortcut the path of development, and would in the end also be able to import the necessary goods and services.

The Lagos Plan Solution

The leaders of the OAU proposed this plan at Lagos in 1985. It emphasises internal trade and exchange. The Lagos plan of action opted to change Africa through endogenous self-reliance and national and collective self-sufficiency. The Lagos Plan did not go all the way like the

advocates of the breakaway solution. It proposed a partial de-linking from the world economic system, but without rejecting exchanges with the rest of the world, nor external aid.

In this way Africa would rely on its own strength, become self-sufficient in food production, and reduce its dependence with regard to its exports and foreign technical assistance. The African would take his future into his own hands.

The development of the informal sector solution

This solution proposes to develop the informal sector to become very efficient, and to make it the motor of development, to cause new political forces to emerge and to orientate aid towards productive investment.

This solution brings to the fore a system which is often forgotten and yet sustains a large part of the African population. This system can, without being controlled by external economic powers, cause Africa to advance. Giri is one of the defenders of this solution.

6.5.2 Criticism of these solutions

The 'each man for himself' solution remains an irresponsible way forward, one of hopelessness which threatens to bring the continent into a perpetual catastrophe. It is selfish. Africans will remain in a world of speeches without being sure of tomorrow.

The 'breakaway' solution could only work under the leadership of strong people who really love Africa and give strong direction. It would require collective resistance to the sinful, western structures that continue to exploit Africa. It would demand a unity of spirit, a single aim, something that is lacking in an Africa riddled with tribalism. The love of luxury that has captured many Africans today will not permit them to forgo the imported goods. This solution risks remaining a hollow theory, which rots in the drawers of the thinkers; in one word, it is unrealistic.

The major insertion into the world economy has been vigorously criticised by responsible politicians and African intellectuals. The Berg Report emphasises development with a view to exporting. There is nothing new in this plan. It tries to introduce that which has already failed. Many Africans have lost confidence in the structure of the World Bank, even though their governments find their salvation there. This mistrust is an important factor in making commitments. The Berg solution does not take into consideration the unfair international environment into which Africa is plunged and which in all probability will remain like that. Nor does it consider the wars in Africa, nor the profits made by western multinationals, for example. This solution puts confidence in a world market in which Africa itself is powerless.

The solution of self-reliance does not seem to be achievable. It does not take into consideration the African independence, which is developing and the internal crises (Jacques Giri, 1994:111). According to Asante, (1991:61) 'the plan fails to specify practical policy measures that might make a realistic contribution towards the attainment of its long-term objectives. Possible sources of finance, potential implications for a self-reliant strategy are not fully considered, as well as the absence of any consideration of the political obstacles to the implementation of the Lagos Plan'. Asante (1991:63) adds: 'Thus the Lagos Plan as an alternative development strategy for Africa is not in doubt; however, its viability in terms of practical implementation has not been fully demonstrated'.

Berg and Lagos totally neglect the political dimension. The political roots of the African crisis are obvious. There is also a important association between African politics and the power of its Western clients.

In the solution of the development of the Informal sector, the protagonists still count on external aid, even while they proclaim its unacceptability.

6.6 THE THEOLOGICAL SOLUTION

After having noted the weakness and unattainability of all the proposed solutions, the question is: what solution remains? The great solution for the African crisis is theological. God (*Theos*) is concerned with all aspects of life. Therefore theology has something to contribute. Theology should be holistic and also engage in the economy, politics, society and other aspects of life.

The theological solution encompasses all the proposed solutions while combating their weaknesses. It is pertinent to review the solutions proposed thus far from a missiological perspective. The 'each man for himself' mentality offers the advantage that the individual takes responsibility, but its weakness is that he wants to save himself alone. Selfishness is a problem.

- ⇒ The breakaway solution would be acceptable, if only the selfishness of the politicians, the business world, and the fear of tribalism could be removed.
- ⇒ The insertion into the world economy could only work if Africa was allowed to offer its uniqueness to the world, and if the international world would stop its oppression and exploitation.
- ⇒ Self-reliance suffers under the same weaknesses. The political problems and the selfishness that characterise them will have to be dealt with.
- ⇒ Even the development of the informal sector can only be a solution if the selfishness of those directing it is removed.

The word 'selfishness' recurs in these solutions. It remains a major obstacle to the accomplishment of any solution. Selfishness and fear of the future are the mothers of other sins, like oppression, state terrorism, the emphasis on the tribe, fear, love of luxury, separatism, neglecting the poor, participation in building oppressive structures, serving unjust systems, these are called sins. As sin is a theological problem, the foundation of the African problem is theological. These sins characterise today's Africans, and that is why they are called 'collective African sin', which is analysed below.

There is also a debate about the distance of the road to development. Some think that Africa must duplicate the long journey of the west. Others think that, walking with the west, which has already walked this road, will shorten the distance. Proponents of these contrary propositions are quoted below.

Jacques Giri (1986:191) states that: 'African societies are not at all obliged to take the long technological journey which we ourselves have taken and they can take part in the enormous accumulated acquisition'. In contrast, Coran Hyden (1983:182) argues: 'There is no short cut to progress and these qualities have to be reconstituted in a new setting where the relations among people are organised differently'.

Both proponents are partially right and they are both partially wrong. The first statement is right because Africa, with progress close to it, has to borrow, but is also wrong because Giri does not take into consideration the collective sin of the providers of technology, who would be looking at their own interests. The second is wrong also because the short cut would be possible if we could overcome the sin of selfishness. But Hyden is right in that Africa must follow its own long journey of progress and must overcome its own collective sin.

6.7 COLLECTIVE AFRICAN SIN

Throughout this chapter, the collective sins of Africa have been noted. The first part points out that the Africans have many things in common, thus also sharing the same collective sins. In the second part, Africa is described as the mother of the world, and to a large extent as sharing a common history and culture. Cultural sins are found. The third part deals with the failed struggle.

The first problem of Africa is a human problem. Diakite (1986:65) re-expresses it very clearly when he remarks:

But it is especially at the level of the African man himself that one should now question oneself. One fact is clear. The behaviour of African leaders does not any longer allow us to hold colonisation responsible for such a delay because beyond natural cataclysms, geological crises, whether ecological or climatic, as well as the results of history, there is one domain where the African leaders of today should have taken control for the destiny

of their people and their nations: that is, all that relates to human resources.

The human factor is the primordial element of all development. Yet, it is precisely this aspect that seems to be the least considered in Africa, as is easily attested by the analysis of some meaningful areas: administration, hospitals (or health politics), schools, peasants, politics, democracy, rights of man

After saying this it is necessary to emphasise how dramatic the situation of Africa is. Failure to make the right diagnosis and to give the right treatment is fatal. False diagnosis and false cure is the same. To look for and find a scapegoat is another dangerous treatment for Africa. Diakite (1986:52) notes:

It is important to consider that the states of black Africa have had more than 25 years to dress “their wound” and perk up Africa. And a wound that does not get better in the space of a quarter of a century is a wound which is not properly treated, or not treated at all and which could be fatal to the one whom has it. It is time for Africans to look at themselves face to face, and to seek in themselves the truth and to stop imputing to others, to the Europeans in this case, that all is not well with them. There is some feeling of independence in putting one’s own lacks on someone else’s account. It is also high time that Africans have a bit of clarity towards themselves and include in their modern culture the salutary idea of self-criticism which is indispensable to individual and collective progress.

The need in Africa is thus to look at our problem before God, in other words, at our sin.

Africa is a continent of conflicts - conflicts between tribes, between leaders; and these conflicts lead to wars and the annual death of thousands. Timour Dmitricheb (1990:3-4), listed twenty-nine major causes of tensions and conflicts, which he classified as follows:

- 1) Military: interstate aggression, annexation, or hostile intervention for example supports for the rebels of other states, or for separatist movements.
- 2) International politics: ideological or political campaigns, territorial claims, religious expansionism against other states, regional rivalries, terrorism, coercion or discrimination, respecting the trade or economies of other states.
- 3) Domestic politics: power struggles, hostile groups, over-population, economic or religious disparities, oppression, demands for democracy, communal or ethnic violence related to economic, social, religious, cultural or ethnic issues.
- 4) Persecution: violations of human rights, mass movements of refugees, poverty or instability caused by the mismanagement or ineptitude of the government. (One could

add here: evident and perceived levels of corruption by the government beyond any acceptable limits of traditional toleration.)

Based on the above, collective sins can be classified into three categories:

- ❖ Structural sins, like state aggression like state terrorism.
- ❖ Cultural sins, like hostile groups.
- ❖ Social sins, like corruption and power struggles.

An important source dealing with African sin is Professor JA van Rooy's booklet in which he analyses African sins such as government corruption, belief in witchcraft, magic, jealousy, fatalism, ancestor veneration, and tribalism. These can again be classified as structural sin (government corruption), cultural sin (belief in witchcraft, belief in magic, ancestor veneration), and social sin (jealousy, fatalism and tribalism). Some social sins, like jealousy and tribalism, naturally overlap with cultural sins.

It may be useful to describe some of these sins.

- 1) Corruption, whether in government or society, is a social sin in many African countries. This is especially marked in certain countries. Corruption is one of the major's African sins today.
- 2) Witchcraft is practised all over Africa. To believe in the existence of witchcraft is not sin, because it is a reality. However, the influence it has in Africa is bad. Almost every child in Africa grows up fearing this witchcraft. Witchcraft is used in many situations. The witch harms development, and kills people. On many occasions, witchcraft usurps the place of God.
- 3) Magic is not so different from witchcraft. Van Rooy (1986:13-14).observes:
On the one hand magic all too often furnishes an excuse for failure. Instead of examining one's methods of working, planning, marketing techniques, principals of production, or perseverance, in case of failure, it is very easy to look for and find a scapegoat in the person of someone practising black magic against one. This not only leads to endless animosity and jealousy, but it also robs one of the opportunity to face

reality and profit from a realistic assessment of one's mistakes'

- 4) Fatalism, in limiting God, is a sin. Many Africans are fatalists.
- 5) Veneration of the ancestors is another African custom. 'Ancestor worship is concerned with society, with a total group, and any deviation by the individual becomes dangerous for the whole group, because it affects everyone' (Geoffrey Parrinder, 1969:20). Ancestor veneration is **the** sin of Africa.
- 6) Tribalism is also a sin of Africa. To live in a tribe is something good when one talks only about solidarity, but to refuse another because he is not from one's tribal group, is sinful. This sin is found at all levels in Africa, from the president of a Republic to a rural group, in companies, schools and universities, in fact, in all walks of life. People are often employed not because of their qualifications and skills but because they are from the same tribe as those in power. Thus, many talents, that could help the countries, die unused because of nepotism. People lacking in competence, qualifications, experience or special talents are given responsibilities just because they are from the same tribe as the director. That does not help Africa. Tribalism is partly a sin of injustice and also a sin of idolatry. In a tribe people feel security, but tribalism is not love, it is selfishness. That is why some thinkers dispute the idea that solidarity is a hallmark of the African. Bidima (1995:13) argues:

The African is not fundamentally characterised by solidarity, he is like every other human being caught up in a net of calculation; the thought of the gift is there, a "non-encore", a horizon, a perpetual starting up again. We refuse this substantialism [*sic*] that insists that the African is fundamentally this or that, he is ordinary like all other beings. There are moments of solidarity, but this is not a fundamental given. The famous African communality, which is so attractive, is but the tree, which hides the forest (we write in 1994 after Ruanda!). This communality is an inverted version of racism, assumed by the Africans, who insist that they, in the name of social harmony, should never go against their group. This has legitimised single parties, 'the famous collective thought' and unanimity of Africans! The solidarity and communality are not already here in Africa, but are horizons to be sought after....

Tribalism is one of the sins that is killing Africa.

- 7) Fear: witchcraft, fatalism, ancestor veneration, tribalism and jealousy give rise to another sin, namely fear and uncertainty. Africans have no certainty of tomorrow. The invisible world is feared. Even the educated African lives in this fear and so do those African, who are rich. That is why rulers stash money in foreign banks.

- 8) Jealousy: van Rooy is quite correct when he declares that 'Africa is a jealous continent' (1986:9). In Africa, to be successful is dangerous. Some people limit their work to match others, just to avoid jealousy. Van Rooy (9) observes: 'People who surpass others are viewed with suspicion; why are his crops better than mine? Why did he get a better job than me? Why did he escape the disease that infected me? Why are her children more successful than mine? Why does the manager like him better than me?'

These sins are socio-cultural, but have affected many structures in Africa, which are thus founded on fear, tribalism, protectionism, jealousy, witchcraft, and all the rest.

CHAPTER VII

COLLECTIVE SIN IN THE WORLD AND IN THE CHURCH

7.1 COLLECTIVE SIN IN THE WORLD

7.1.1 Every collectivity is susceptible to collective sin

In the preceding chapter, the collective sins in Africa were discussed. This could lead to the conclusion that 'sin is black and virtue is white'. This is not the argument here. Pointing out African collective sin does not imply that Africa is the only continent, which has collective sin.

The objective, in this chapter, is to show that every collectivity is susceptible to its own collective sin. The collectivity can be a continent. Thus there is continental sin, for example, there can be European sins, American sins, Asian sins, and so on; or it could be the sin of a nation or country - thus Belgian sin, German sin, Swedish sin, French sin, or Indian sin, for instance. It could be a particular group in the country, such as Black American sin, White American sin, Flemish sin, Walloon sin and so on. It could also be the professional grouping or social movement in a specific country or anywhere in the world. This group of collective sins can be structural, cultural or social sin.

7.1.2 Western collective sin

It is not possible, here, to describe all the collectives of western mentality and to point out their various collective sins. However, their best-known mentality and collective sin must be revealed here.

a) Materialism: Western mentality is materialistic. The European or American cannot live without his material possessions, the loss of which often leads to suicide. Material goods have become idolised. Materialism and luxury are, metaphorically speaking neighbours.

a) Materialism: Western mentality is materialistic. The European or American cannot live without his material possessions, the loss of which often leads to suicide. Material goods have become idolised. Materialism and luxury are, metaphorically speaking neighbours.

As defined by Verner Sombart (1967:59),

Luxury is any expenditure in excess of the necessary. Obviously this is a relative definition which becomes intelligible only when we know what constitutes the necessary.... Luxury has two aspects: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative luxury is synonymous with prodigality; such as the keeping of a hundred servants when one would do, or the simultaneous striking of three matches to light one cigar, etc. Qualitative luxury is the use of goods of superior quality. These two types can be and in most cases are combined.

Luxury can be a sin when it leads to the neglect of the poor. As is written in 2 Corinthians, 8:15 (NIV), 'He who gathered much did not have too much and he who gathered little did not have too little'.

b) Atheism: Some European countries, such as France, live in atheism. Most of the people do not believe in God, and Jesus and the Church are nothing for them. To be an atheist is to miss the point of life and that is sin.

c) Libertinism and free-thinking: Western countries live with complete freedom. There is an excess of freedom. Even children have power over their parents. The young live in sexual liberty, couples have freedom to divorce. Western society is human rights orientated to the point where duty is forgotten. Abortion is a manifestation of freedom and lack of responsibility and neglects another life, in this case that of the child or future child. Divorce is freedom made manifest, but a lack of responsibility towards children and the partner. Sexual liberty, divorce and abortion are the western collective sins. Some of these are accepted in the structure of the country, thus becoming structural sin, while some are social sins.

A number of specific sins of the most industrialised countries are singled out, such as those described in *The Citizen* (one of South Africa's newspapers) of 8 November 1998, in the Reuter report:

A Swedish survey cast Spain as the most sinful nation among a group of leading industrialised countries. It ranked 19 nations according to 7 modern deadly sins - smoking, drinking, drugs, gambling, lavish eating, nightlife and prostitution. Spain was the clear winner... France was the second most wicked country with the highest per capita consumption of alcohol. United States was third on the list. Its drug abuse problem was the worst out of the 19 countries. Prostitution was most prolific in The Netherlands, which was ranked 5th in the vice list after Britain. Germany was listed 7th followed by Austria, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Greece. Japan was second worst in the smoking stakes.

There is also the American sin of grandeur. Everything must be larger than life: great men, great musicians, great houses, great roads, great food, and so on. American society is a great society and so it leads to the politics of national greatness, the opposite of humility. Europeans have a philosophical mindset, Americans a practical one. Europeans are problem orientated and Americans solution orientated. Thus Europeans look at the problem where there is no solution and Americans look at the solution where there is no problem. The excess of this leads to collective sin that can be the sin of solution without God and the sin of a problematic life.

Collective alienation is a terrifying historical phenomenon. Instances are many: the hunting and torturing of witches, which was sanctioned, even by the church. All forms of collective intolerance and fanaticism found in colonialism, the superiority complex of some races, especially of the European and North American cultures; the massacre of the Indians of North and South America; neo-colonialism and ethical-colonialism, where one culture seeks to impose its norms on others as absolutely binding; a totally oriented economy; the myth of consumerism with the artificial creation of needs and wants which in no way serve the human person; the refusal to co-operated in a better distribution of earthly goods and capacities. The list is inexhaustible. Consider the example of racism in Australia, which keeps out virtually all oriental immigrants. Responsible men in Australia thus become partially accountable for the millions of abortions plaguing Japan in the last decade. It is, above all, collective prejudice, poisoned public opinion, which is a greater evil than air and water pollution. This should suffice to give some idea of the alienating power of sin.

d) Ecological sin: This does not involve a complete description of ecological problem. The writer's knowledge in this matter is limited. As Richard Land (1992:18) states: 'Ecology has been defined as the study of the balance of living things in nature, but in recent decades, people have expanded it also to encompass the destruction man has wrought upon nature'. The modern world has an ecological crisis: air pollution, toxic waste, tropical deforestation, depletion of the ozone layer, and so on. The ecological crisis is the result of collective human work. There are links between environmental degradation and the structures of social, economic and political power. The tenant of one collectivity, wanting to maximise profits, has started to pollute his own environment. This leads to ozone disintegration, soil erosion, ground water pollution, acidification, destruction of forests and lakes, for instance. This ecological problem is a modern theological subject; it entered theology because God is the maker of creation and He has something to say about His own creation and the manner in which human beings manage it.

Leonardo Boff (1995:43) provides useful comment in this discussion of theology and ecology: 'The ecological challenge also confronts theology. Doing theology always means asking what connection there is between this situation and God'. This, then, is the question: What is the connection between God and this ecological crisis? As already stated, this ecological degradation is the creation of human beings and therefore it relates to God. This problem has to be called as William H Becker calls it: "ecological sin" (1992:152). Because the ecological sin is not the sin of one person, it is logical to call it collective, ecological sin. William Becker (1992-1993:159) affirms it:

Recognition of our ecological sin will also require the revision of fundamental Christian doctrines, beginning perhaps with the doctrine of sin itself. If we humans, through over-population, greed and selfishness should render the earth uninhabitable for ourselves and many other creatures, would that be a sin, would that be a sin only against future human generations and against God, as some Christians now argue? Or would that be a sin against all our neighbours, all fellow creatures who are dependent on our deeds, whether they are human or not?

The ecological problem affects humanity, nature and God. To treat it, there are three different orientations, which Richard Young (1994:115) calls anthropocentric, biocentric or theocentric perspectives. He argues (1994:116) that:

Anthropocentrism is a way of viewing reality that places humanity at the centre. Everything in the universe is seen in terms of human values and human interests. It perceives humanity as the final authority and arbitrator of values, meanings, ethics, rights and the direction society should take. In other words, anthropocentrism in its secular form defies humankind. There is no higher authority to restrict human manipulations and exploitations of nature.

He (1994:124) also clarifies also the understanding of biocentrism:

Biocentrism teaches that the entire natural realm with its interlocking chain of dependencies, is a nucleus of all existence on earth and the ultimate reference point for all meaning, purpose and ethics. The earth's ecosystem is to be valued for its own sake, since it is the fountainhead and sustainer for all life. Biocentrism emphatically denies that everything on earth is for human benefit; instead, everything exists for the sake of the whole. This gives ultimate value to everything in nature, because when working in harmony with everything else, the whole supposedly has the potential to sustain the life and structure of the entire biosphere.

With regard to theocentrism he states (1994:129) that: 'Theocentrism teaches that God is the centre of the universe and that he alone is the source and upholder of meaning, purpose, values and ethics, as well as the unifying principle of the cosmos. Everything finds existence, value, purpose and meaning in the infinite and transcendent God'.

Sometimes the church is neither anthropocentric nor biocentric but anthropocentric, meaning that 'everything revolves around God and humanity' (Young, 1994:118). The two first orientations have these difficulties: 'All forms of anthropocentrism, including the anthropocentrism and secular anthropocentrism, have as their common denominator the centrality of the human race' (Young, 1994:122). Anthropocentric thought is rebellion against God, stemming from Adam's rebellion in the garden. The independence of humanity from God is derived from this. The autonomy of the human race from God is sin. The independence of humanity is a perversion. That is why seeking solutions for the ecological crisis in anthropocentrism is itself another crisis.

Biocentrism does not provide the answer as to who or what makes decisions regarding nature. Even if there is bio-equality, it is the human being, who discusses the future of nature. Therefore man seems to be the caretaker of nature even though his decisions seem to be motivated by human survival and human welfare. To reduce the human being to the same level of nature depersonalises people, showing ignorance of the endowments of the human

being. The human being has intelligence, reason, rationality, freedom and morality as well as an awareness of the destruction of the earth, which all nature does not possess.

The unique alternative is theocentrism. In God are grounded all values and ethics. Theocentrism preserves humanity from anthropocentric arrogance. Theocentrism provides the accountability without which all responsibility fails. Theocentrism gives direction in resolving environmental problems as well as any problem in human life. This direction is found in the Creator. Because He is the Creator, He gives direction as to how to use Creation. That is why He made it.

Young (1994:129-130) offers ten reasons why theocentrism surpasses anthropocentrism and biocentrism.

- i) It resolves the ethical dilemma without giving humanity absolute rights to legislate values and without dissipating value structure altogether.
- ii) Theocentrism preserves the uniqueness of humanity without yielding to anthropocentric arrogance.
- iii) Theocentrism alone provides the basis for true stewardship. A steward is one who has been delegated the responsibility of managing the estate of affairs of another.
- iv) Theocentrism provides direction in resolving environmental problems. That direction or model is indicated by the divine intent in creation, that is, for every relationship in the cosmos to be ruled by peace and harmony.
- v) It provides hope of an ecological utopia or future kingdom where peace and harmony will be restored.
- vi) Theocentrism encourages us to place faith and trust in God for the ultimate solution to our problems, rather than trusting in our technology and ourselves.
- vii) Theocentrism provides a reason for the existence of every creature.
- viii) It provides the only plausible rationale for a sustainable environment. In all other systems, the source for sustainability must be found in the contingent and degenerating universe.
- ix) Theocentrism is large enough to encompass the concerns of both anthropocentrism and biocentrism without doing injustice to either one and without acquiescing to their shortcomings. The one, who serves humanity, tends to neglect the earth; the one who serves the earth tends to neglect humanity; but

the one who serves God is sensitive to the needs of both humanity and the earth, for that person will think as God does, and God is concerned about His entire creation.

- x) Theocentrism produces a holistic view of life. Not only is everything interpreted by our concept of God, but also everything is related by virtue of its being created by God.

From the above analysis, it can be clearly seen that theocentrism is the solution and that the biggest problem of God and humanity is sin; the ecological problem is the sin of humanity.

Ecological sin is structural, cultural and social sin. As has already been pointed out, political power, aggressive economical exploitation makes self-serving structures. These egotistical structures are sinful and they harm the earth and nature.

Ecological sin is socio-cultural. The love of luxury, a life of abundance, the desire for novelty and consumerism, readily disposing of old items to replace them with others, are evidence of man's participation in collective ecological sin. Mass media and billboards create desire for new products. Children are also inculcated to want more and waste more.

William Becker (1992-1993:153) observes: '...we are socialising ourselves to sin ecologically. Our present ecological behaviour is thoroughly rooted in the social context, actively supported and promoted by a powerful process of socialisation and education'.

The question arises: Does Africa participate in collective ecological sin or is it just a western sin? Often people think that the ecological problem is western and therefore ecological sin is a western sin. That is not true; the ecological problem is world-wide, it is an earth problem from which the poor countries also suffer.

K C Abraham (1994:65) argues:

There was a time when we in the poorer countries thought that the ecological crisis was not a serious problem for us. Our problem, it was assumed, was poverty and economic exploitation; the environmental issues were a 'luxury' of the industrialised countries. Social action groups and peoples movements in third world countries showed relative indifference to the whole world - rich and poor countries alike. The threat is to life in general. The life of the planet is in danger. The ecological crisis raises the problem of

survival itself. Moreover there is growing awareness of the organic link between the destruction of the environment and social, economic and political injustice.

The destruction of forests in Africa leads to the spread of deserts, the lack of wild life conservation, and a failure to conserve water resources. These are examples of the African collective participation in ecological destruction.

African independent churches show how the African is involved in collective ecological sin when, for example, in Zimbabwe there is: i) the earth keeper's ethic; and ii) Confession of ecological sins.

i) The earth keeper's ethic was not formulated in detailed theological statements, but it surfaced in the political objectives in the AAEC (Association of African Earth-keeping Churches) which was established in 1997, as specified in their constitution.

- Afforestation
- Wild life conservation
- Protection of water resources

ii) Confession of ecological sin. The AAEC has an innovative liturgy in connection with the emergent environmental ethic by having a tree-planting Eucharist. This ceremony is ecumenical and different ritual officiates share it. The sacrament is preceded by the public confession of ecological sins. Here follows part of the liturgy read out to the congregation in Shona, but here translated into English: 'In the liturgy, Christ is presented as the one whose blood works reconciliation between humanity and the rest of nature, the one who brings salvation to all creation' (ML Daneel, 1994:260). This means that Africa is concerned with collective, ecological sin.

7.1.3 General collective sin in the world

Apart from the west, there are collective sins in other parts of the world. Some collectivities are selected for discussion. Benedict (1946) has described the plain Indian temperament as dionysian, the Pueblo Indians, as Spolloman, the Dobuans as paranoid, and the Kwakiul as megalomaniac. Kroeber (1948) demonstrates that Burmese men are vain, lazy, pampered,

gossipy and often destructive. As Nida (1954:142) notes, the Eskimo and Choukchis of Siberia are well known for their habit of lending their wives to visitors.

All collectivities have their own collective sin, whether they are small groups or large groups or much larger groups as, for example, in the clan, in a tribe, in a country and in a continent.

There are two sins that characterise all collectivity: collective pride and collective egoism. Ted Peter (1941:95) affirms that for the rest of the world, the problem of pride is that it is divisive. He says also one of the ways pride most commonly manifests itself is that it denies man's sense of belonging (1941:93). Uniforms initiate a feeling of pride (see Ted Peter, 1941:95). One's own group is always high, superior, strong, intelligent, wise, and so on. This is confirmed by Ted Peter (1941:102), who asserts: 'The first thing to note is that the tribe considers outsiders to be less than human'.

The biblical Hebrews thought of themselves as the chosen people of God, and this separated them from all Gentiles, the Goyim. The Navahos called them Dine, meaning the people. No non-Navaho was regarded as an equal. Turning to the other side of the fence, the European settlers in North America began to speak of Navahos and other native Americans as savage, a rank decidedly below that of the so-called civilised Europeans (see Ted Peter, 1941:102-103). Pride plays a prominent role in the history of thinking about sin (Ted Peter, 1941:86). Pride is narcissism and insensitivity. Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall as indicated in Proverbs, 16:18. 'Pride is idolatry' (Ted Peter, 1941:89).

In discussing idolatry, it is noted that the world seems full of idolatry. The country is idolised; the tribe is idolised and that is why there are excesses of patriotism and tribalism. To love one's country is good, but to love it to the extent of hating others is the idolising of a country. Even ideologies can be seen as idols.

Bernard Haring (1986:xi, xii & xiv), quoting Francis Bacon, provides this description:

According to Bacon, idols and collective prejudices have roots in basic idols:

i) *Idola tribus*, the idols of a tribe, that is all ideologies caused by the frailty of human nature as such and re-inforced by the misery of a closed, tribal society. (I should like to

add that all this flows from collective sin and from individual sin in the past, a reality which in theological terms, is called the sin of the world and/or the original sin.)

ii) *Idola specus*, the idols of the cave, caused by the limitations of the human intellect of men that plunges into all kinds of darkness because of their own particular constitution, education and habits, accidental circumstances and past sins;

iii) *Idola fori*, the idols of the market place which derive from society and language. Today we are reminded of the ideologies, tradition and precepts, which have supposedly been sanctioned by the religious sphere. This distinction corresponds to the traditional distinction between sins against the theological virtues of faith, hope and love of God against God's right to be worshipped and on the other hand, sins against those moral values and virtue which were always understood to be sanctioned through faith.

7.1.4 Collective sin and spiritual territoriality.

The problem of spiritual territoriality is controversial, and will not be discussed in detail. It is mentioned only in relation to and in support of the phenomena of collective sin.

Some collective sins in some places are not caused by culture itself, or by structure or by social life or environment or circumstance or situation, but by territorial strongholds. The theology of spiritual territoriality still needs to be developed deeply and systematised. What is true is that the Bible talks about the invisible, and even the visible is not explicable. God himself is invisible, as are the angels, demons and Satan. That is why theology cannot be silent about it. Certain sociological phenomena can have their roots in spirituality.

After accepting that it is not just visible things that theology has to deal with, one can accept the presence of demons but still refuse the notion of spiritual territoriality. Some theologians think it extra-biblical. George Otis, J C (1993:35) gives the following answer:

Those who are frightened away from spiritual territoriality by claims that the concept is extra-biblical should remember there is an ocean of difference between that which is extra-biblical and that which is un-biblical. Extra-biblical is a yellow light that requires travellers to halt in the name of the law and common sense. To date, I have heard no one claim that spiritual territoriality is *un-biblical*. The simple reason for this is that it is not.

One of the theological leaders in spiritual territoriality is Peter Wagner who affirms that:

The idea of evil spirits dominating territories surfaces time and again throughout the Old Testament. For example, in a Song of Moses in Deuteronomy, 32, the Septuagint reading of 32:8 is as follows:

When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance
When he separated the children of men,
He set the bounds of the peoples
According to the number of the angels of God.

F F Bruce, who suggested that the Septuagint reading resembled the original text, says: 'This reading implies that the administration of the various nations has been parcelled out among a corresponding number of angelic powers... In a number of places some at least of these angelic governors are portrayed as hostile principalities and powers - The world rulers of this darkness of Ephesians. 6:12'.

One of the most cited chapters in the Old Testament is Daniel, Chapter 10. Here one finds in verse 13: 'The prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me 21 days' (NIV). In this chapter there are three princes: two evil princes and one good prince. The last is called one of the chief princes and is named Michael, while the two evil ones are princes of Persia and Greece, respectively. Because the good prince was on a mission from God to bring the good news and happiness to people, he met the territorial prince, who brings evil and sin.

In the Old Testament one also finds other data like Joshua 24:14, where Joshua prohibited the Israelites from worshipping the gods their forefathers served beyond the river in Egypt (NIV).

In II Kings 17:30-31, there are the names of certain nations and their spirituals that had already been manifested in II Kings 17:17: 'They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practised divination and sorcery and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, provoking him to anger' (NIV). This demonstrates that it was not just human initiative but that there was a real power over that nation. But this power is here called that of the [pagan] gods. In verse 29, each national group makes its own gods in the various towns. The Babylonians made Succoth Benoth; those from Cuthah made Nergal; from Hammoth they made Ashima; the Annivites made Nibhaz and Tartak; while the Sephanites burned their children in the fire as sacrifices to Adramelach and Anammelech, the gods of Sephanaim (NIV II Kings 17:30-31).

God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah concerning Babylon and the land of the Babylonians in these words: ‘Babylon will be captured. Bel will be put to shame, Marduk filled with terror. Her images will be put to shame and her idols filled with terror’ (NIV Jeremiah, 5:2).

Bel and Marduk are the idols, princes, gods and powers of this territory called Babylon. In the New Testament, from the book of Matthew, Jesus teaches about the strong man, and Peter Wagner (1990:78) reminds us that: ‘Jesus, in his explanation of the coming of the kingdom of God, referred to the binding of the strong man’ (Matthew 12:29). It is clear that the strong man refers to evil spirits by Jesus’ statement that leads into it: ‘If I cast out demons by the spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you’ (Matthew, 12:28 NKJV). Jesus illustrates this passage by referring to the control the strong man has over the house. It would seem reasonable that the principle could be applied to a nation of a city or a people group, as well as a house. The house is the territory controlled by Satan on his delegated authorities, and territory cannot be taken unless the strong man is bound. But once the territorial spirits are bound, the kingdom of God can flow into the territory and plunder the strong mans goods.

In Ephesians 6:12, Paul demonstrates clearly that: ‘Our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms’ (NIV). In Chapter 2:1-2, one reads: ‘As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient’ (NIV).

The first verse demonstrates these spiritual forces of evil are not in one person as a possessed man, but they work in the heavenly realm. One also encounters the term “prince”, as in the book of Daniel to which reference has previously been made; the other is *kosmokratoras*: world rulers. The evil spiritual power, which provokes the evil and collective sin in a given territory, recurs as different names in the Bible as we have seen: prince, strong man, ruler, authorities, powers of the dark world, spiritual forces of evil. This power keeps men in collective evil, captivity and sin.

The tactics, that Satan employs to keep groups in the dark dungeons of collective captivity, says F Douglas Pennoyer (1990:259-269) are: ‘Demonization of the leadership, demonic bonding, cognitive captivity, demonic counteraction against divine intervention and dominant societal characteristics’. In the same context, he develops each of the facts and features of collective captivity:

1. *Demonization of the leadership.* Household, village and larger territorial group leaders may all be demonized, as well as a variety of specialists, in societies like the Tawbuid. This means that the social, religious and political leadership of everyday events is effectively manipulated by demons. Individuals may also be demonized at different levels, so that both leaders and followers are demonized. Strong territorial spirits may attach themselves to the big-men leaders in their territory (see Wagner’s territorial spirits).

2. *Demonic bonding.* Another feature of collective captivity is that many individuals in the society or sub-culture is not only demonized, but they are bonded with their demons. This bond of friendship may be especially strong with generational or kin spirits who are passed along family lines. The demon can reinforce this bond by acting as a family historian and reciting real or fabricated facts concerning the individual ancestors. In some societies, the people with powerful demonic gifts are feared and even avoided by the ordinary people. These specialists, who may be lonely for human companionship, develop strong friendship and dependency ties with their evil spirits. They bond with their demons and breaking well-established bonds can be extremely difficult.

3. *Cognitive captivity.* This can also be called the *busy-mind syndrome*. There are two main ways that demons keep the individual mind or thoughts captive. First, demons may monopolise the individuals time with intensive rituals and lengthy interaction with the spirit world. Memorisation of long passages, that must be repeated verbatim, and meditation or chanting of repetitious phrases is techniques that keep the mind busy and focussed on the spirit world. Second, demons may work to a deeper depth of perception in the thought processes through elaborate symbolic systems. These tactics may trigger both conscious and sub-conscious responses of worship to demons.

4. *Demonic counteraction against divines intervention.* Throughout history the divined and the demonic have waged battles over the human mind, will and emotions. Yaweh is a jealous God who demands worship with all our heart, soul and min (Matt 22:37) - that is total concentration. The Old Testament sacrifice and worship systems were designed to keep the peoples thoughts away from the one true God to a multiplicity of false gods (Ps 106:35-37; Deut. 32:16-17; 1 Cor. 10:19-22).

Whenever God has intervened and interacted with humans, the devil and demons have worked in opposition, counteracting God’s institutions or gifts. Demons working through human minds have inspired or promoted major counter offensives against Gods strategies. These demonic counterattacks are designed to keep people in collective captivity.

5. *Dominant societal characteristics.* At the risk of recycling well-worn and sometimes discarded anthropological theories that some cultures can be described in terms of a set of distinct characteristics or themes, I want to cautiously open the possibility that demons may tighten collective captivity by initiating or reinforcing certain societal characteristics. The Tawbuid are characterised by a dominant theme of fear. It is the single most powerful motivation in Tawbuid society. Children are taught fear in lullabies and adults daily act out their real fear of each other, spirits and strangers. This all-pervasive fear kept the gospel light out of the highlands of Mindoro for years. Doubtless the demons preyed on this societal characteristic by intensifying individuals' emotional reactions and by compounding this paranoia of strangers.

In other societies demons may strive to accentuate illicit sex, deceit or other sinful activity. These may be the dominant societal characteristics that emerge as the result of individual acceptance of this demonic prodding. Do these shared traits reflect the speciality or emphases of powerful demons in the area? It is possible. Whatever the reason for the emergence of particular themes, it is evident that demonic empowerment of dominant societal characteristics certainly contribute to collective captivity.

These five facts and features of collective captivity can be divided into three collective sins:

- ❖ Demonization of leadership corresponds to structural sin, because political, economic, social and religious systems are conceived and manipulated and controlled by demons acting through individuals. It can be conflict between the concept of demonic structures and demoniac leaders of the structures. It is true that the structure itself cannot contain personal beings as demons. However, it is also true that structures can be inspired by demons and therefore be demonic structures. The demons inspire and control the thought of the leaders and carry these out even when there are changes of leadership. The individuals may change, but the structures carry on in the same bad way. Thus survival is guaranteed by the demon. That is why in the changing of dictators in some countries even though he may be elected or have gained power through a *coup de état*, he will continue with the same dictatorship. Some good structures can be manipulated by demons through bad and demonized leaders.
- ❖ Dominant societal characteristics correspond to cultural sin. The dominant societal characteristics become features of collective captivity with time and through the generations. The evil dominant societal characteristics are sometimes signs of demonic activity. Even some good dominant societal characteristics are appropriated by demons, for example where the good dominant characteristics of a given society is trade, the

demon can make it so compelling that love is sacrificed. If the society is active, its people can become activists.

The cognitive captivity and demonic counteraction against divine intervention are designed to keep people in collective captivity through leadership, the demonic bonding of many individuals in society, or the dominant characteristics of society, which are an element of culture. Then the tactics of demons are manifested in structural sin, social sin or cultural sin.

7.1.5 Profession as culture and collective sin.

Currently, people with a common profession often make one body, as they have the same education, training and orientation. They have a common path and similar circumstances of life and so they share certain components of their culture. If this component is sinful, they share the same sin. Sometimes, their profession leads to a particular sin, for example, when a lawyer lies to exonerate his client; the hypocrisy of politicians to remain successful in his politics; the manipulation of the manager. The informal workers have a tendency to lie in underdeveloped countries in an effort to ensure their future. There is also the egocentrism of trade unions, which who do not consider the interest for others.

7.2 COLLECTIVE SIN IN THE CHURCH

7.2.1 Collective sin in church history

The history of the church is full of examples of collective sin, even in the early church the symptom of collective sin was manifested. In Acts 6 it is written: 'In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of daily food' (NIV). The church was thus experiencing the sin of separation.

In Acts 11:3 one reads: 'So when Peter went up to Jerusalem the circumcised believers criticised him and said He went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them'

(NIV). The rejection of others because they were not circumcised was disobedience to the last commandment of Jesus Christ: 'Make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19).

The early church was not far from environmental sin.

Collective sin in the early church has already been demonstrated in the discussion about collective sin in the Bible. It is now important to turn to the history of the church.

The story of the church can be divided into six periods:

- ❖ Primitive Christianity,
- ❖ the patristic period,
- ❖ mediaeval Roman Catholic,
- ❖ the Protestant reformation,
- ❖ modern enlightenment,
- ❖ the ecumenical period, and the period of missionary endeavour.

In each period, the church suffered from some collective sin, whether it be an encompassing sin or not. It is not possible in this work to detail the entire history of the collective sins of the churches. The church of Christ is 2000 years old and it developed differently in various places, leading to different collective sins. The purpose, here, is to demonstrate this thesis by means of representative examples of collective church sin.

1) Primitive Christianity

This period has already been discussed in the theological section, in Chapter 5.

2) The Patristic Period

In the first four centuries, the church lived through very difficult times of persecution. The number of martyrs and their sufferings were greatly exaggerated; the stories of their deaths were embroidered with all sorts of fantastic, miraculous happenings and superstitions. Many newly converted Christians converted from paganism brought with them pre-Christian ideas so that in the church the martyrs began to take on the role the gods had earlier played in the old religions. Relics of the martyrs were superstitiously cherished. Their graves became sites

of pilgrimages and prayer. The people believed that these relics and graves enabled miracles to occur and guaranteed special blessing. It is something that all church leaders approve of such things. The veneration of martyrs and other saints took an ever-greater place in popular religion. The sins of veneration of things other than God and of the making of man an idol were the collective sin of this early church. Paganism left its imprint upon the Christianity, which had converted it.

The patristic era was also a time of conflict. The fathers are frequently divided into four groups: the apostolic or post-apostolic fathers (95-150); the apologists (140-200); the polemicists (180-225); and the scientific theologians (225-460).

The apostolic fathers are characterised by edification; the apologists by defence against the attacks on Christianity; the polemicists by attacks against heresy within the church; and the scientific theologians by a scientific study of theology in an effort to apply to theological investigation, philosophical modes of thought then current. All of them fought against the collective impetus of sin. In particular, the apologist fathers and the polemicists clearly fought against the sin of attacks against Christianity. The polemicists fought against heresy within the church.

In this period, the Christian church demonstrated its vitality and the church grew. After the persecution of the church, Constantine issued the so-called Edict of Milan. Christianity became a legal religion alongside non-Christian cults. From that time, it became fashionable to be a Christian. Hypocrisy and formalism flourished to become the new collective sin in the church.

3) The Mediaeval Roman Catholic era

In the middle-ages, the church was free to work as it wished but then, as Philip Schaff says (1910:328): 'The church was unfavourably affected by the state of the surrounding society and often drawn into the current, prevailing immorality'. Speaking about the necessity of a reformation in the middle ages, Schaff (1910:8-9) adds: 'The corruption and abuses of the Latin church had long been the complaint of the best men, and even of general councils. A

reformation of the head and the members was the watchword at Pisa, Constantinople and Basil, but remained a *pium desiderium* for a whole century’.

It is pertinent to review the dark side of the condition of the church at the beginning of the 16th Century, briefly.

It is no wonder that many cardinals and priests followed the scandalous example of the popes, and weakened the respect of the laity for the clergy. The writings of contemporary scholars, preachers and satirists are full of complaints as well as the exposure of the ignorance, vulgarity and immorality of priests and monks. Simony and nepotism were shamefully practised. The bishoprics were monopolised by the youngest sons of princes and nobles without regard to qualifications or merit. Geiler of Kaiserberg, a stern preacher of moral reform at Strassburg (d.1510), charges all Germany with promoting ignorant and worldly men to the position of chief dignities, simply on account of their high connections. Thomas Murner complains that the devil had introduced the nobility into the clergy, and monopolised the bishoprics for them. Plurality of office and absence from the diocese were common. Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz was at the same time Archbishop of Magdeburg and Bishop of Halberstadt. Cardinal Wolsey was Archbishop of York while Chancellor of England, and received stipends from the kings of France and Spain and the doge of Venice. He also had a train of 500 servants. James V of Scotland (1528-1542) provided for his illegitimate children by making them abbots of Holyrood House, Keslo, Melrose, Coldingham and St Andrews, and entrusted royal favourites with bishoprics.

Discipline was all but ruined. Whole monastic establishments and orders had become nurseries of ignorance and superstition, idleness and dissipation, and were the objects of contempt and ridicule, as may be seen from the controversy of Reuchlin with the Dominicans, the writings of Erasmus and the *Epistolæ Virorum Obscurorum*.

With regard to slavery, ‘the mediaeval church inherited the patristic views of slavery. She regarded it as a necessary evil, as a legal right based on moral wrong, as a consequence of sin and a just punishment for it. She put it in the same category with war, violence, pestilence,

famine and other evils' (Philip Schaff, 1910:335). Thus, the church evidently tolerated slavery, as it did not fight against it.

4) The Protestant Reformation

Then came the reformation at which time there were great events, wars, and persecution by the Catholic Church and so on. An important problem, which still characterises the Protestant Church to this day, is the sin of division. This division started with different understandings of the Lord's supper among the leaders of the reformation. Archbishop Cranmer went to Lambeth Palace, and invited Calvin, Melancthon, Bullinger and Bucer in 1552 for the purpose of framing a consensus creed for the reformed church. They were willing to cross ten seas for the purpose of Christian union. However, it was not possible for them to be reunited. Luther refused any compromise. The confessional division in the Protestant camp arose very early.

Other differences gradually appeared such as with the understanding of predestination, baptism, and so on. All these fragmented the body of Christ and gave Protestantism a tendency towards individualism. Reformation churches felt free to formulate and organise their differences into theological parties and schools. Thus the Protestants enjoyed the sin of division.

From that time, the sin of division has been one of the characteristics of Protestantism. Sometimes Protestants like this division, justify it and even defend it. The historian, Carl Mayor (1969:159-160) confirms the beginnings of this division:

The growth of sectarianism and separatism characterised the spread of Protestantism. While baptism proved to be somewhat divisive, the doctrine of the Lord's supper, the sacrament of unity became the greatest cause of division among the conservative Reformers. They all agreed in denying transubstantiation and demanding the bread and wine for the laity, but they did not agree on the mode of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. Luther took the words "This is my body" to mean that Christ was corporally present in, with and under the bread and wine in a sacramental union: he taught the Real Presence. Zwingli and Oecolampadius adopted the position taught by Corelius Hoen in the Netherlands. In his *Commentary on True and False Religion (1525)*, Zwingli set forth the symbolic interpretation that the bread and wine symbolised the body and blood of Christ. In the pamphlet, warfare [was declared] between Luther and Zwingli, others pleaded for peace; and Philip of Hesse moved to bring the conflicting parties together.

They met at Marburg in Philip's castle at the beginning of October 1529. Zwingli, Oecolampadius, Bucer, Melancthon and Luther were the main theologians present. A statement of fifteen points contained fourteen that were acceptable to all. On the fifteenth, which is about the Lord's supper, they could not reach agreement. Doubtless there were personal factors that prevented agreement, but it was not simply stubbornness or intransigence on the part of one or more of the parties that kept them apart. There was genuine respect for the Word of God on which interpretation varied. Calvin later added another interpretation and others adopted variations of interpretation. The issue has divided the churches to the present day and is still regarded as divisive by those churches, which retain a regard for doctrine.

This early sin grew up with the church and three centuries later it was obvious to the point where Philip Schaff (1960:48) declares:

Thus Protestantism in the 19th Century is divided into half a dozen or more large denominations, without counting the minor divisions, which are even far more numerous. The Episcopalians, the Lutherans, the Presbyterians, the Congregationalists, the Methodists and the Baptists, are distinct and separate families. Nor is the centrifugal tendency of Protestantism exhausted, and may produce new denominations, especially in America, where no political power can check its progress. To an outside spectator, especially to a Romanist and to an infidel, Protestantism presents the aspect of the religious chaos or anarchy, which must end in dissolution.

5) Modern enlightenment

At the time of the enlightenment, the people placed high store on the role of reason. There were many orthodox Christian thinkers throughout history, from the early apologists to the Protestant scholastics, but their thinking was focused principally on revelation until about the 18th Century. Reason in religious matters received its greatest support in the 17th Century from René Descartes (dd. 1650); and the discourse on Method was produced in 1637. Others elaborated on Descartes' methods elsewhere.

In the Newtonian era (1642-1727), the revolution was in the area of physics. All these revolutions led to affirmation by reason and natural religion that revelation can be judged. Many thinkers multiplied, such as John Locke, George Berkeley. Others like John Tolard,

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emmanuel Kant all contributed in different ways to the Age of Reason. Reason became the idol.

There are cults of reason, which proclaim the emancipation of people from all religious teaching. Even in theology, rationalism and reason were promoted and the church sometimes suffered from the lack of the Word of God more than from reason. Sinful reason led the church in the time of the 'Enlightenment'.

6) The ecumenical period and the period of missionary endeavour

The church, at this time, enjoyed a period of revival. It was characterised by foreign missionary activity. This missionary movement was a very good thing for the church. Unfortunately the sins of exploitation, colonialism and imperialism were also associated with this activity and affected the church as well. Delavignette, in his book about Christianity and colonialism, distinguishes three categories:

- i) Christianity favoured by the colonial authorities;
- ii) Christianity, if not persecuted, at any rate neglected by these authorities, which supported a different religion;
- iii) Christianity regarded by the colonial authorities as being entitled to the same treatment as any other religion.

These three categories cover the many different cases where Christianity and colonialism were in contact, or even in conflict, with one another.

A fuller understanding of these categories stems from a key idea, which at first sight seems to only have a slight connection with them, namely, the relationship between Christianity and the customary law of the colonial peoples. It becomes apparent that in the three sub-categories, outlined immediately above, it is points of customary law that are at the heart of the problem (Robert Delavignette, 1964:79).

The concern of this section is the compromising relationship between the church and the colonialists. As David Bosch (1991:74) describes it:

Since the time of Constantine there was a symbiotic [relationship] between church and state, manifested during the Middle Ages in the interdependence between the pope and the ruler of the Holy Roman Empire. Even where pope and emperor were at loggerheads, they both continued to operate within the framework of interdependence and of the Christian faith - in other words, within the framework of Christendom or the *Corpus Christianum*. The Reformation dealt a severe blow to this symbiosis since the western church was now no longer one. In the meantime, the Holy Roman Empire had also begun to disintegrate into several nation-states. The idea of Christendom remained intact however; in each European country the church was established as in the Netherlands, Lutherans in Scandinavia and some of the German territories, Roman Catholic in most of southern Europe, etc. It was difficult to differentiate between political, cultural and religious elements and activities, since they all merged into one. This made it completely natural for the first European colonising powers, Portugal and Spain, to assume that they, as Christian monarchs, had the divine right to subdue pagan peoples... and that therefore colonisation and Christianisation not only went hand in hand, but were two sides of the same coin.

The church was thus living in the sin of those times.

David Bosch again reminds us (1991:304) that, 'When the famous French Cardinal Lavigerie (1825-1892) sent out his "white fathers" to Africa, he reminded them *nous travaillons aussi pour la France* [we are working for France as well as for the kingdom of God]' (cf. Neil 1966:349). This indicates that the missionaries were working for the kingdom of God and were advocates of the colonial power from which they came.

A Jesuit monastery at Luanda in Angola possessed 12 000 African slaves, and when the slave trade was at its height between Angola and Brazil, nearly 10 000 slaves each year were being shipped out of Angola. The Bishop of Luanda was regularly carried on his episcopal chair to the quayside in order to bless the ships and crews, and to exhort the cargo to accept baptism and the Christian religion. In the Portuguese sphere of influence, Africans found it impossible to accept the gospel according to the Portuguese, or a gospel which proclaimed slaves and salvation, gain and grace, gold and God, mammon and God.

There can be no doubt that many ecclesiastics owned slaves and that some participated actively in the slave trade in Angola as elsewhere. Almost all Portuguese clergy were effectively [dependent] upon it for their financial support (Andries Hastings 1994:124).

David Bosch (1991:305) quotes two missiological writers of whom the first is a German, (Moritzen, 1982:60), who identifies the three C's of colonialism as: 'Christianity, commerce and civilisation'. The second is French (Spindler, 1967:23) and identifies the 'three M's:

militaires Blancs, mercenaires Blancs, missionaires Blanc (white militaries, white mercenaries, white missionaries).

Missions, which were to bring the good news to people, were bringing good and bad news at the same time: good news of salvation and bad news of colonisation. Mission work was in the service of God and colonisation, as already intimated. Mission work was thus under the power and authority of Jesus and at the same time under the power and authority of colonialists. The then German colonial secretary, Dr W H Solf (quoted by David Bosch, 1991:306) states: 'To colonise is to missionise [*sic*]'. Rosenkranz (quoted by David Bosch, 1991:306) affirms that: 'mission and colonialism belong together, and we have reason to hope that something positive will develop for our colonies from this alliance'.

So British missions were serving British interests; Belgian missions were serving Belgian interests; Portuguese missions were serving Portuguese interests; German missions were serving German interests; and French missions were serving the French interests. All had two masters.

There are two opinions among missiologists about the guilt of church involvement in imperialism and colonialism: some think that it was indirect guilt and others think that there was also direct guilt. Ernst Langhans defends this first opinion; and the second is defended by Blanke. Both quoted by David Bosch (1991:306). In indirect guilt, what is defensible is that in their ignorance the missionaries worked for colonialism. They were looking for the peace provided by a powerful government in order to accomplish their own mission. For that they remained silent to all atrocities, exploitations and colonialism. That silence is a sin.

Even indirect guilt is a sin. E D Morel (quoted by Jules Marshal, 1992:99-100), who is an English journalist and untiring fighter against the misdeeds and atrocities committed by King Leopold II against the independent state of Congo (EIC), writes an article condemning the silence of the Baptist Missionary Society and Congo Balolo Mission as well as all the English missions. Here are a few passages from that article:

The BMS and the CBM assume officially what we can call a negative attitude. In this way play in this matter the role of political agnostics.... But these societies know the nature of the system.... It is certainly their duty to help the British public to understand ... Is it possible that they do not understand that their silence and their timidity are the most precious weapons at the disposal of the state of Congo against those who criticise it? ... The effect of this negative attitude on the part of missionary societies is simply deplorable.... By their attitude they contribute to the stabilisation of an evil, which they know only too well exists. It is a terrible responsibility that they assume before God and man... Are the missionary societies going to stay in retreat in the battle for elementary human principles, for decent government and political foresight? (own translation)

When this journalist refers to responsibility before God he understands that there is a sin. All the silences of missions and churches are sins.

Direct guilt has been proved many times as seen, for example, in the earlier discussion about the Bishop of Luanda and slavery. Jules Marshal takes up two volumes to describe the atrocities, and the terrors, such as the confiscation of ground and crops as state property or that of concessionary societies; the imposition of compulsory donations of food, chopped wood, work in state posts, paddling boats and working as porters. Military expeditions were undertaken to collect taxes and to punish offences. These expeditions are often repressive and punitive. Their consequences have often been bloodthirsty, such as massacres accompanied by pillaging and burning. Children were even collected or captured to be brought up in the colonies. This happened in the Congo at the time of the independent state of Congo. Leopold II, the Belgian king, was responsible for these most abominable crimes. Marchal shows the complicity of the Catholic Church. In order to exploit rubber, they introduced Christian sterilisation, through their missions. Throughout its history, the mission has thus been associated with imperialism. There is, therefore, no question about the direct guilt of the missions, which is the sin of the church in the missionary era. The structural sin of that time was also the sin of the church.

Another sin, at that same time, was that of cultural superiority or the sin of pride. This is an ancient sin. In ancient Greece, other nations were called *barbaroi*. The Romans looked down on other civilisations. The Hebrews too felt superior to other nations. Western culture felt the same when it came into contact with non-western cultures. The terms, which described others, are significant: primitive, barbaric, and so on. The missionaries adopted this attitude

even as they brought the gospel of Christ. This sin of cultural pride caused the gospel to make slow progress in Africa, for example.

This is what Jules Marchal (1996:70-71) observes in connection with a certain Morel, who compared the evolution of Christianity and Islam at the end of the last century. In the last two chapters of the book about Islam, Morel underlines the great importance of this religion in the French and British colonies where it is still making progress, whereas Christianity is taking off with difficulty. He praises Islam as constituting a great strength in Africa for unity as it transforms conquerors and conquered (like the Fulane and the Hausa) into a harmonious entity. He affirms that the African Muslim is a magnificent person, full of pride and confidence in himself, perhaps arrogant and over-proud, but extremely dignified and showing in all circumstances a conscious sense of superiority. He affirms also that the success of Islam, perfectly illustrated by growing groups of pilgrims to Mecca, is not due in the first instance to the practice of forced conversion, but to peaceful efforts of Muslim priests and teachers.

To this simple form of propagation of the faith, Morel contrasts Christian evangelism by people who could not imagine themselves living like the Blacks. This evangelism, having also taken upon itself the utopian duty of suppressing polygamy, thus weakened the confidence of the blacks in their own abilities by the omnipresent, but not always intended suggestion, that their race is inferior. Africans, who call themselves Christians, are thenceforth often uprooted and are mocked by the whites for their varnish of civilisation, their vanity, their presumption and their unfortunate habit of following the latest whims of the European sartorial fashions. These Christians look bad, not only in comparison with the Muslims, but even in comparison with the heathen, who has often showed himself or herself to be internally a good man or woman, a natural gentleman or lady, hospitable, friendly, simple and polite. In addition, Morel continues, it does not escape the blacks that there is an enormous distance between, on the one hand, the Christian doctrine of peace and love and, on the other hand, the actions of the whites intruders, always ready to seize the sword, to resolve misunderstandings, stamping out the traditions and customs of the Blacks and not showing in their conduct a high esteem of the morality of Christian Europe.

Morel sees no future for Christianity in East Africa unless a West African style church arrives, conceived to answer the needs of East Africa, which are not those of Europe. Such a church would be served not by Europeans, but by West Africans, imbued by the instincts and the patriotism of their race. While awaiting the eventual arrival of such a church, Morel continues, the present efforts of evangelisation, whether Catholic or Protestant, cannot be described as other than profoundly discouraging, while they mutually treat each other as Satan's followers with regard to the African.

The sin of pride has retarded the spread of the Christian faith. This shows that all collective sin in the church has a result somewhere, which will be discussed further later. This section closes with the words of Eugene Smith (1968:72-79):

No one can write honestly about the Christian mission without dealing with the tragic compromises that handicap it. These compromises result primarily from three related human factors:

- i) The first cause of compromise is man's deep tendency to sin. This fact hardly needs elaboration. Perhaps the most convincing evidence of the divine element in the church is the amount of sin within its own ranks that the church has been able to survive.
- ii) A second cause of compromise is the variety in patterns of human need. Every group experiences certain specific pressures in its life, which cause a specific kind of responsiveness to the gospel. The element in the gospel that may elicit greatest response in one generation may be quite different from the element that most effectively touches its children. Effective expressions of divine truth differ widely from one generation to the next, and no generation comprehends the whole of the gospel. The truth we transmit is always limited by our own limitations. Our very humanness inescapably compromises the gospel and illustrates anew in every generation our need for an active Saviour, who through Scripture and the Holy Spirit, continually seeks to lead us into all truth.
- iii) A third cause of compromise is the fact that in proclaiming the gospel, we continually encounter unavoidable and unanswerable dilemmas. Man has not yet found an ultimately satisfactory answer to the relationship between authority and freedom, or between the universal and the local, or between the individual and the communal. No Christian group has found a way to deal with such dilemmas, which does not leave some unanswered questions, some thorny problems. An even more fundamental dilemma is the unavoidable tension between the gospel and the world. Every human way of doing things is always under judgement.

- iv) Compromising relationships. The major compromises of the Christian mission, across the centuries, have occurred in four relationships: with the state, with culture, with disunity in the church, with money. The nature of some of those compromises will be indicated here. No attempt will be made to indicate what an ideal relationship might be in each of case. The problems are far too complex for any honest treatment to promise any pat answers for them.

The four compromises, suggested by Smith (1968:72-79) correspond to three collective sins:

- ❖ compromise with the state corresponds to structural sin;
- ❖ compromise with culture corresponds to cultural sin;
- ❖ compromise with money corresponds to social sin, and
- ❖ disunity in the church corresponds to all three collective sins.

Disunity was also encouraged by the origins of the churches; for example, there are the Anglicans from England, the Lutherans from Germany, Belgium and France, and the Catholics from Portugal. Disunity is also cultural, for instance, when it becomes traditional to be Presbyterian, Reformed, Catholic, or Lutheran. Disunity is also a social sin: in a country where missions are active they sometimes criticize and oppose each other; that is social sin.

The Protestantism was born and grew up in the sin of disunity. It is disobedient to will of God and against the prayer of Jesus: 'That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me...' (NIV: John, 17:21-23). This prayer of Jesus relates to the sending of missions. Disunity gives unbelievers the opportunity to refuse the gospel. Jesus said that the world would believe and that the world would know... if there were unity.

7.2.2 **Apartheid as collective sin**

One of the most quoted collective sins of the church is apartheid. Apartheid is Afrikaans or Dutch meaning separation or setting apart. It has been superseded by the phrase "separate development".

It was separation between four different groups that composed South African society. The basis of the difference was skin colour, that is, white, black, coloured and Indian. South Africa is the only country in the world in which racialism was written into the constitution and the only country in which skin colour irrevocably determined the place of a category of the national community. Merle Lipton (1985:14-15) recognises this when she outlines ‘the defining characteristics of apartheid (also known as segregation and “separate development”)

[which] were:

- a) The hierarchical ordering of the economic, political and social structures on the basis of race, identified by physical characteristics, such as skin colour
- b) Discrimination against Africans, and to a lesser extent Coloureds and Indians, who were excluded from many of the political and economic rights enjoyed by Whites, such as the vote, freedom of movement, and the right to do certain jobs or own property in much of the country.
- c) Segregation in many spheres of life: they lived in separate areas, went to separate schools and universities, used separate buses and trains; there was little social mixing; sexual relations and inter-marriage across the colour line were illegal.
- d) The legalisation and institutionalisation of this hierarchical, discriminatory and segregatory system which was enshrined in law and in force by the government.

This description emphasises two ideas, which are important for this work: structure and sin. The sin of discrimination, segregation and separation which was legalised and institutionalised was in the structure which involved economic, political and social life. All were therefore sinful. Apartheid had many sinful consequences such as brutalisation, impoverishment, exploitation, injustice, killing, various atrocities, lying, and so on. What is interesting is that this structural sin of apartheid and the sinful acts committed by those caught up in it were supported by the church. Marianne Corvenin (1980:41) states that:

Malan then made very adroit use of the research done at Stellenbosch University on a system of total racial separation or apartheid; this system had the approval of two eminent NGK theologians, who contributed biblical quotations justifying such divinely ordained separation to G Cronjés major book on the subject, published in 1947 ... It is therefore not surprising that in the 1950's the Dutch Reformed Churches continually and wholeheartedly supported the doctrines of apartheid.

Ngubane (1963:12) says:

The majority in the Dutch-Huguenot community were Calvinist fundamentalists. They accepted the pattern of society in which the whites were the masters as a visible expression of the divine will; they took every word in the Bible as revealed truth and believed that the African Negro was the delinquent descendant of the Semitic Noah. Hence, the blacks have been created to serve the whites.

Anthony Lemon (quoted by de Gruchy, 1979:8) confirms that: 'Separate development within the NGK has a long history. Several synods from 1829 onwards refused to allow race to determine church practice, but social pressures eventually proved stronger than synodal [*sic*] resolutions'. Since 1948 the Dutch Reformed Churches enjoyed close access to policy makers of the state. Their members included a majority of members of the House of Assembly and the Provincial Councils, and they virtually controlled many town councils. The majority of the white government employees, including the police and the military, also belonged to the Afrikaans churches. The NGK has also traditionally had considerable influence over the black and coloured members of its daughter churches, which are heavily subsidised by the parent body. Such an assured position and the access it brought to the corridors of power made the NGK an important factor in South Africa's political development. In the 1950s, all three Dutch Reformed Churches 'were almost constantly busy trying to justify, reconcile and pronounce on the matters of apartheid and Scripture' (de Klerk, 1975:252). In a series of conferences, reports and statements, various church bodies concluded, though not without anguish at times, that the policy of separate development could be accepted as a healthy basis for co-existence and one with scriptural justification (1987:68-69).

In order to go deeply into what the situation of apartheid involved, one would have to know the history of the Afrikaner. We cannot here describe four centuries of history; however, we can choose some illustrative points. Of particular interest for this study is the history of collective feeling.

The Afrikaners are descendants of religious refugees. That is why, collectively, they can keep two cultures: the religious culture and the feeling of the refugees. The whole history of the Afrikaner is full of violence and wars. After being persecuted in France, the Huguenots came to Africa and at that time war started in Europe between France and Holland. There was a fear of repercussions of the French and Dutch living in South Africa. Thus Bernard Lugan states that: 'The 12 June, Simon van der Stel wrote to the Council of Seventeen our aim is to amalgamate them with our people' (1988:95). In 1795 the first frontier war started and they continued till the sixth war against the blacks in 1834. On 11.10.1899 the Anglo-Boer War

started, as a result of British colonisation of Afrikaner territory. During the Great Trek there were many clashes with the Bantu and the British with much loss of life and land. All these factors gave rise to a feeling of solidarity among the farmers thus giving rise to the development of Afrikaner nationalism.

Van Jaarsveld (1961:221) confirms this when he writes:

The development of Afrikaner nationalism, revolving round the first war of independence, brought certain characteristics to the fore, that were observed among all the groups. These characteristics can now be analysed. In essence, Afrikaans nationalism was a question of the heart. As a result of British politics in South Africa, nationalism developed that showed signs of a feeling of injustice and frustration. There was a feeling of inferiority of having been insulted, of having been looked down upon and of having had honour and dignity offended

Van Jaarsveld (1961:157) adds that:

The factors that caused the people to grow together in spiritual unity and to appreciate their common destiny, were in the first instance their dependence on one another, their powerlessness against the enemy, their common aim of regaining their independence, their mass meetings, and the reading of newspapers.

In another book, van Jaarsveld (1964:35) affirms again that:

In their indignation at the threat from outside they gave thought to themselves and their history. The Great Trek, its causes, their treatment by the British, the struggle to sustain an existence, these were all recalled and served to emphasise the importance in the pages of the Afrikaans-speaking Free Staters. Questions were posed as to their origin, place and future in South Africa and the answers became facts in a collective sense of identity that united the community in sentiment from within.

From the beginning fear characterised the White community, as Bernard Lugan (1988:95) notes: 'Forming a community welded together by persecution and by unhappy common trials, the Huguenots feared being separated. Their dearest desire was to found a centre of colonisation where they could conserve their French identity'. So, before becoming structural apartheid, there was the question of the emotions and sensibilities. This collective feeling was fear. As Buthelezi (1979:106) says:

Apartheid or separate development to me is a way of life based on the fear of the neighbour. As in all forms of human behaviour motivated by fear, so in the instance of apartheid, distance becomes the measure of security. We know that when what we fear does not fear, does not run away from us, we behave in two ways: first, we try to run away in order to widen the distance between what we fear and ourselves. If that does not

help, or if we feel a little less courageous, the other alternative is to assemble resources of power in order to neutralise the threat we fear.

Thus collective fear is the primal cause of the sin of apartheid. The Afrikaners, being linked to the church and the theologians blinded by the same fear, they looked at the theological and biblical foundation of apartheid. As the church is part of society, it often shares the same sin as the society. Fear and separation preceded the legalisation of apartheid. The fear was transmitted from generation to generation and became part of the culture. This fear is cultural sin, while racism is social sin and apartheid structural sin.

Today apartheid is abolished; thus the structural sin is abolished, but fear among the Blacks, Whites and other ethnic groups has not ended. Racism remains in some hearts and behaviour patterns. Social and cultural sin is still present among all South Africans. Yet the church is still at work? This will be discussed later.

7.2.3 The church of Christ in the Congo

The Church of Christ in the Congo is the national organisation of all the Protestant churches in the Congo and is composed of sixty churches called communities. When missionaries from western churches came to work in the Congo region, the Belgian colonial government would not give them facilities and they struggled from the beginning against the Catholic Belgian Government. As a result, the Protestant churches created The Council of Churches of the Congo. Ten years after independence, those churches belonging to the Council amalgamated. This was in 1970. Within the one structure there were different communities, for example, Baptist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Salvation Army, Methodist, Assemblies of God, Lutherans, Anglicans, Mennonites, and Evangelical Churches. These denominations, called communities in the Congo, have formed one church for such purposes as synod deliberations and evangelic development. This is a unique experience of church unity in the world. It is the ecclesiastical reality of the Congo. This unity gives strength to the church *vis-à-vis* the government. They work hand in hand in the field of evangelism, medicine, community development, and in institutions like schools and universities. This church is a force and a visible testimony of unity at work.

However, this church has reproduced three sins: i) Corruption, ii) Tribalism and iii) Compromise with the dictatorial regime.

i) Corruption. At many levels, the Church of Christ in Congo was not always a good manager of management resources. There is a General Secretariat composed of different departments. There are the schools, universities, centres of development, hospitals and health centres, offices at the level of communities, and provinces at the national level. Many, but not all, are corrupt. The country, as a whole, is subject to corruption. As noted earlier, corruption was the social sin of the Congo at the time of the old regime.

ii) The second reproach is that of tribalism. When the missionaries divided the territory of the Congo among them, they did so according to tribal divisions. For example, the Presbyterians work among the Baluba, the Baptists in Bandundu, the Methodists in Katanga and among the Tetela, Evangelicals among the Bayombe. Since the missionary era, the church has retained virtually the same system, so that each denomination still belongs to a particular tribe. The division in the church in Africa in general and in the Congo, in particular, is not a matter of doctrine so much as a matter of tribalism. A member of a particular denomination is identified as a member of the particular tribe. Leaders are also elected because they are from the same tribe, clan or village as those who voted. Thus people from the same tribe or clan fill vacancies in church structures, showing that tribalism is a collective sin in Congo, in particular, and in Africa generally.

iii) The third reproach is compromise with a dictatorial system. In the face of exploitation, killing, injustice, corruption, dictatorship, absence of respect for human rights, the Church of Christ of the Congo has been totally silent. Every time the Synod meets, it sends a letter of congratulations to the President. Sometimes the leaders of the church defend the political system and its leaders. Sometimes the President of the Republic is glorified. They even worked secretly for the dictatorial system and its President.

These three sins of the Church of Christ in the Congo are the three sins of Congo. These sins are:

- i) Social sin of corruption; social because it is not from generation to generation and it characterises the time of the dictatorial system.
- ii) Cultural sin of tribalism: cultural because it is derived from previous generations.
- iii) Structural sin of a dictatorial system: it is in the structure. The Congolese society lives in this system and so does the church.

7.2.4 *Katanga Yetu*

Katanga yetu is a Swahili phrase meaning 'the province of Katanga belongs to us', the so-called natives, and the original people of Katanga. The province of Katanga is a part of the Congo and is composed of different tribes. The Luba were living in Kasai at the time of the start of mining enterprises. The big mining company was called *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga* (UMHK). After the independent state of the Congo became a Belgian Colony at the end of 1908, this mining company - which soon represented half of the economy of the Belgian Congo - had a prodigious copper industry in Katanga which necessitated a massive labour force. Thus it was that it brought in men from among the Luba. To summarise, Jules Marchal (1996:38-39, volume two) states that after the EIC became a colony of the Belgian Congo at the end of 1908, On the 1 September 1910, Katanga ceased being administered by the CSK representative and was re-integrated into the Congo, as a district headed by a vice-Governor General. 1910 was also the year when the railway, coming from South Africa, reached the point where the preceding year Elizabethville [Lubumbashi] had been founded, near the copper mine, The Star, opened in 1908 by the *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga*. This society had been created in Brussels at the end of October 1906 in conformity with the Williams-CSK agreement of December 1900. Its development capital was furnished 50-50 by the *Tanganyika Concessions Limited* and the *Société Generale du Belgique*, whereas the identical dividend capital was shared between the CSK and Williams on a pro-rata basis of 60% and 40%. This was the tool created by the Scot, Williams, to operate without hindrance in a future Belgian Colony. The *Union Minière*, which would soon represent half of the Belgian Congo economy, was the creation of an Englishman like Alfred Jones, whereas it was the craze of the EIC (*état independant du Congo*) propagandists to vilify the English. Leopold II, dreaming of rubber and of the Nile, with no interests in Katanga, did not play a determining role in this society which dictated its law to the Belgian administration.

By means of this society, Williams launched the prodigious copper industry of Katanga. What has never been said is the manner in which the mass of labourers necessary for this industry had been recruited. This mass was no longer composed of the Bemba, who had come voluntarily from the then Rhodesia beyond Luapula, as in the time of the *Tanganyika Concessions*. According to a report of the substitute Andre Hoornaert, dated 22 November 1913, this labour force had been recruited by force in the country of the Luba. This territory extends along both banks of the Lualaba, and the left bank portion had been open to the white man by the surrender of the Vahuni in 1908. The recruitment was done by means of an organisation called *The Katanga work market*, from which the White recruiting agents received a payment called man months. This was calculated according to the number of months the employee worked effectively for the employer to whom the market had delivered him. The recruiters often shared this bonus with the territorial agents with whom they were often in collusion.

There has been much boasting about the social benefits that the *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga* provided for its labour force. These did not exist at the time of Hoornaert's report which mentioned the absence of women and a high mortality in the labour camps, deplorable food and lodging and their return to their villages without indemnity when there was an accident at work.

The Luba were treated in a particularly odious fashion in the mines and by the "compound managers", that is, by the Whites who were responsible for overseeing the camps and all of whom were English at that period. In this connection, Hoornaert notes the Baluba, who made up the majority of the Blacks employed in the mines in the colony, are real pariahs. They are, it is true, inferior - as labourers - to the general run of Rhodesians (Black) who are often accustomed to mine work before coming to the Congo. The situation is aggravated further by the fact that nearly all the captains (Black) were also Rhodesian. The Congolese Blacks are completely disoriented and have precisely the feeling that they are considered as belonging to an inferior race at the service of strangers. Even the name of their race has been made an insult. Frequently a compound manager, who wants to insult a Rhodesian, calls him *Baluba*.

One thus sees that the large Luba population in the mining region has been implanted there in blood and tears.

This was the first wave of Baluba in Katanga. The Congolese estate agents came to fetch them in the villages of Kasai to take them to Katanga. The construction of the railway also brought other recruits to Katanga. From that period onwards, the Baluba, living in Katanga, became part of Katanga and contributed to its construction. They also occupied higher posts in the mining society and in other enterprises and public administration. They were considered as being among the most reliable.

Two years after independence, Katanga declared itself a separate country and chased away all the Baluba. After relations had been normalised and Katanga re-integrated into the Congo, the Baluba returned. Until 1990 at the time of the elections for the Prime Minister of the Provisional government, the Baluba and all the people originating in Kasai were maltreated, killed, persecuted, expelled from work, ridiculed, concentrated in camps to be returned by train to Kasai. It was a collective sin of tribalism, regionalism, separatism, assassination, persecution and injustice, for example.

What is of particular interest here is the reaction of the church. First the Catholic Church was involved in the action itself. Priests and religious Sisters, chased from Katanga, who presently reside in Kasai, were interviewed and they confirmed that which can be summarised as follows:

- ❖ The political speeches provoked hatred against the Baluba and Kasai people. These speeches had excited all the Katangese nationals including the Christians.
- ❖ There was a change in the attitude of Christians towards their Christian brothers and sisters and their priests in the same parish who had come from Kasai.
- ❖ An allergy developed in the Christians to the message of love and there was an insistence that the non-Katangese priests should leave.
- ❖ The leaders of basic communities, those responsible at parish level (all lay people) were sometimes leading the groups that attacked the Kasai nationals.
- ❖ All the students in the big Catholic seminaries, preparing to become priests, were chased away.

- ❖ The friendship between the priests in their convents and the religious sisters in their convents was damaged.
- ❖ The sermons were censored.
- ❖ The elders of the church justified their actions in these following ways:
 - ❖ Pharaoh expelled the people of Israel to make room for the poor.
 - ❖ Jesus had his Jerusalem.
 - ❖ Amos was the prophet of the north.
 - ❖ Katangese priests are capable of doing anything a priests from Kasai can do.
 - ❖ The theologians taught Katangan liberation theology.
 - ❖ Some of the priests were the spiritual advisors of the governors and the activists.
 - ❖ The bishops conditioned the Kasai priests and nuns to return to Kasai.
 - ❖ The bishops obliged the Kasai priests and nuns to leave Katangan soil.

As to the Protestant church, there was a total silence. There was no reaction apart from a few sermons against secession, but the provincial synod of the Church of Christ in the Congo did not react at all.

Many of the ministers who were chased away were brought back to Kasai in an inhuman condition. The church thus participated in the collective sin of tribal hatred and animosity. As to the question of how political speeches of hatred lasting an hour could efface the preaching of love during several years, priests and pastors answer that they do not know. What is known is that the politicians exploited the social sensitivities and frustrations. All found that their evangelistic efforts were blocked. If the bishops and simple lay people, as well as leaders and pastors are all involved in this collective sin, it means that the church has failed in its mission in bringing love to the world. The church has lost its universality and has shown its inability to be above the *mêlée*.

7.2.5 Church structure or church government

Church structure often plays a role in collective sin. There are three systems of government in churches.

- ❖ Episcopalianism
- ❖ Congregationalism
- ❖ Presbyterianism

Each system is derived from the socio-cultural environment. Episcopalianism came from the time of the monarchy and absolute power in Rome. This continued in England where there was a queen and the Church of England. Congregationalism was born of democratic thinking and Presbyterianism with the idea of delegating power to elders. Each of these systems can facilitate the entry of collective sin into the church. Episcopalianism can introduce structural sin. Many dictatorial systems work easily within Episcopalianism. If a bishop is won to the cause of a dictator, his church members will follow him. If his mind has been influenced by collective sin, he may cause this sin to become acceptable to his flock. Congregationalism and Presbyterianism can resist structural sin, but can find it difficult to resist social or cultural sin. If it is a sin that is acceptable by society or transmitted down through the generations, it can easily be brought into the church. That is why in Africa it is very difficult for the congregation to elect a pastor from a tribe other than that to which the individual belongs.

Church structure is not in itself sinful, but it can be the channel of collective sin in a given place.

7.2.6 Collective sin in churches of powerful countries

Collective sin in the history of the church has already been discussed; and now the main concern is to show the involvement of the church in collective sin during this century. Three nations are chosen as illustrations, that is Germany, the USA and the former USSR.

The reason for this choice is that Germany had a great history of collective sin during the Second World War. The USA is a powerful country which influences the whole world today and specifically Africa, while the former USSR is the largest atheist country, which was also influential in many African countries, before the demise of communism.

Colonialism has been mentioned briefly in relation to selected countries and to the churches that belong to them, that is, Belgium, France, England, Portugal and Germany. These countries always displayed their collective sins. However, the Germans had a special collective sin that clashed against the whole world: Nazism. The USA and the former USSR influenced the world and Africa. The question to look at is how the church was involved in the collective sin of their countries and how these powerful countries influenced Africa.

Nazism was the collective sin during the Second World War, as already noted. Frederic Spotts (1973:89) reminds us that:

In 1945 the great moral issue for the German nation, whether it was faced squarely or not, concerned responsibility for the Third Reich and the crimes carried out in the name of the German people. Although the victorious powers made it clear at the Nuremberg trials that they did not in any formal sense charge the German people with collective guilt for these crimes.

At the time when it was debated whether the people should be held responsible for the national crime or not, the church was even more reproached for its silence.

Another author (Conway, 1968:45) states:

The criticism has been frequently levelled against the leaders of the German churches that they failed in their Christian duty by not making a firm stand against the Nazi movement from its inception. They are accused of having been so busy with their task of saving souls, that they remained silent while their people were being seduced by Nazism; by grossly underestimating the Nazis nihilistic designs against Christianity.

Conway (1968:46) emphasises the guilt of the German church when he says: 'The German churches were trapped in a situation which exposed their every weakness and encouraged every temptation; humanly speaking, their leaders, by collaborating with the Nazis, were no more and no less guilty than the rest of their fellow countrymen'.

It is also true that there are many theologians, who have opposed the collective guilt of the Germans as Frederic Spotts (1973:91-92) points out:

Not surprisingly under the circumstances, the Catholic Church - from the Pope to the parish priest - was utterly emphatic at the end of the war in rejecting the notion of collective guilt. If anyone today contends that the entire German population and each of us made himself guilty through atrocities committed by members of our population during the war, that is unjust. Bishop von Galen declared in his famous July sermon: If

anyone says that the entire German population and each of us is implicated in the crimes committed in foreign countries and especially in the concentration camps, that is an untrue and unjust accusation for many of us. That was the churches first reason for opposition: sociologically it did not fit the facts. The second reason was equally simple: collective guilt is not possible in Catholic theology. Guilt in its deeper sense, the Bishop stressed, is an individual matter to be confessed before God rather than man.

These reasons have been given as a protection against the vengeance of other people's nations. The nation was engaged in deepest sin, and national sin before God, and many Germans shared the feeling of the powerful nation when Germany was powerful. Even the Christians also shared the same feeling and sometimes the same acts. There is guilt by association, and the consequences of national action affect the whole nation.

The second country chosen is the former USSR. This country was communist and its biggest problem was the refusal to believe in the existence of God. It was an atheist country. It is true that communism and religion are viewed as bitter antagonists.

The communist regime poses two problems for the church: i) as an unbelieving country, which brings national sin to the country. ii) Lack of freedom of choice with regard to belief with the consequences of persecutions, imprisonment and the blood bath of Christians. At the same time the Christians and the underground church were persecuted in the former USSR and other communist countries, there was also a church affiliated to communism, made up of communist sympathisers. Communism as a system is not bad; communism is not satanic, just as capitalism is not equated with Christianity. The problem is the refusal to believe in God. The question was how could the church sympathise with this system and work together with it, becoming the church at the service of the sin of atheism, which persecuted the Christians and was anti-freedom. Several African countries were bound by communism through the former USSR, for example, Angola, the Congo Brazzaville, and so on, although the African is culturally a believer.

The USA is the last country chosen in order to describe not only its national collective sin, but also the collective sin in the church. American society is characterised by four features:

- i) Liberty
- ii) Spirit of greatness
- iii) Materialism
- iv) Imperialism

These four socio-cultural features characterise the structure and politics of the country. This country has:

- i) a free market, free elections, freedom in everything;
- ii) America has the politics of national greatness;
- iii) abundant production provides ample materials to the materialist; and
- iv) Americans want to be leaders of the world and impose their will on other countries.

These features become sin when they exclude the seeking of the will of God. In their liberty, Americans accept abortion and homosexuality in their structure and social life. Liberty without God is sin. The spirit of greatness becomes sin. The Americans would have difficulty in living without their material benefits, which are plentiful for him, and some kill themselves when they are not able to get all they want. For them, life is linked to possessions.

Imperialism: killing people in other countries in order to dominate them is a national sin. José Comblin (1979:64) observes:

In 1947, the United States created two new political institutions which established a new pattern for the state, and, in the long run, a new pattern for society. The National Security Council (NSC) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) both established by the Security Act, were organs invented to fulfil and further the new imperial role the United States had undertaken. Thus, secretly, and sometimes publicly, the United States dominates the world: that is sin. They use the weakness of weak nations to exploit and to pillage. They impose a president without consulting the will of the people of the country. This is one of the causes of African under-development.

The concern, here, is the presence of collective American sin in the church. It is good to remember here that the church influenced America more than most countries in the world. Among all the so-called Christian nations of the west, the USA probably has a higher percentage of Christian church members, more missionaries with greater budgets, more Christian service, and more people attending worship services and church functions than any

other nation. Many Congressmen, ministers, politicians and even the president are members of churches. More Bibles and Christian literature are sold in the USA than any other country in the world. GK Chesterton (quoted by Perry Cotham, 1976:127) describes America as: 'A nation with the soul of a church. The only nation in the world founded on a creed'.

However, American Christians share with their nation its national sin. As a result of liberty, the Americans have legalised abortion and homosexuality in the name of liberty and freedom, and some churches have accepted this. The spirit of liberty results in a great deal of independence, and so there are independent businesses, independent political actions, independent social movements, as well as independent churches, independent evangelists, independent interpretations of the Bible and independent translations of the Bible. That is why there are more sects in America, than anywhere in the world.

The spirit of greatness has imbued the American mind. Americans want everything to be big: big houses, big cars, large amounts of food, and so on.. When one visits America, one's introduction might be something like this: this is the biggest building in the world; this is the highest skyscraper; the biggest road in the world; the longest highway in the world; the biggest company in the world. One may also be shown the biggest evangelist in the world, the best-known pastor, the most read Christian writer, or the greatest church in the world.

Materialism has thus affected the American Christian. Even missionaries cannot be sent out without being provided with houses, cars, computers, and other material goods. Many American missionaries would have difficulty accepting their calling without their material possessions.

Imperialism: This is also manifested in the attitude of some American Christians and missionaries, some of whom are characterised by a spirit of superiority and domination.

The CIA has already been mentioned. Some missionaries were and are in their service as secret agents. They came to the mission field to serve the kingdom of God and America. They contribute to the empowerment of the people who bring the gospel of salvation. They bring joy and sorrow, happiness and suffering, blessing and exploitation, freedom of God and

domination of America. American churches live in silence with regard to the exploitation of weak countries. After a beautiful service with gleaming instruments, sweet music in a splendid church building, magnificent in every way, they also take Holy Communion, which is composed of the blood of Africans and the body of Africans.

African theologians might say to the American churches that, because of their silence about the many wrongs perpetrated by the USA, including enriching itself at the expense of other people, when they come together, it is not the Lord's Supper they eat (1 Corinthians, 11:20), but the body and blood of Africans.

7.3 THE CHURCH AS PART OF THE COMMUNITY

The church, or church members, belongs also to the community in which they live. They all share their daily life together as they have many things to do together. They share culture, social life with their collectivity. The church is a sociological reality in the social community. One of the social realities is communication. The term communication has the same origin as communion, which leads us to say that because the church communicates with the community in which it lives, it has in one sense communion with it. What they have in common, however, can be sin. Sometimes the church communicates with the community and these results in some change in the community, or the community may communicate with the church and also change something in the church. Such interchange is possible. The church is permeable to external sin. In Africa, communication uses words mostly in the form of proverbs, fables, parables, histories, or riddles. Elsewhere in the world, the mass media: television, radio, newspapers, books, or the Internet, for example, are used. All these communicate culture.

Relationships: all relationships such as family, clan, tribe, friendships are the means of communication of church members and outsiders. Activities, drama, theatre all contribute to the communication between church members and the community. For instance, the communication of history of wars between tribes can be transmitted together with the tribal hatred, which is a collective sin. So the church absorbs from the community and is influenced by it.

7.3.1 Theological justification of collective sin

Every collective sin seems justifiable by the collective sinners. This hypocrisy is called wisdom. Drunkard's calls it the joys of life; the arrogant call it openness towards life. Materialism of the western world is called happiness, and the fear of the African is called prudence. This is a socio-psychological defence mechanism. In the church also, collective sin finds theological justification; data can always be found to support it. Jacques Ellul (1986:125-126) demonstrates it very well when he declares:

The church is a political power but it is always at the service of the political power that is either in place or in the course of being installed. It goes on to serve the Holy Roman Empire, but also the kings of France who split off from it. It will bless all the monarchs that seize power in ways that are tragic, tempestuous and often bloody and unjust. It legitimises everything. This is logical once it associates itself with the existing power. It will be republican under a Republic, as it is monarchist under a monarchy. Irrefutable theological arguments are always found. A monarchical regime reflects the monarchical unity of God. A republic reflects the people that God elects for himself on earth. Democracy shows that God associated himself with the will of the people. The tradition was already well established when in the 6th century the idea was formulated that the acts of God in history were performed through the Franks (the gesta Dei per Francis). The church could then become national socialist (the German Christians) when Hitler came to power. It could become communist (with notorious figures like Berecxki and Hromadka) in communist countries. Each time it develops a theological argument to show that the power that has been set up is good.

And he (Ellul, 1986:143-144) adds: 'Because of sin all the works of civilisation are marked by the infamy of their origins. All that issues from society is evil and ought to be destroyed. Christians convictions have prepared the ground for terrorist outrages'.

Talking about South Africa, John Tooke demonstrates that:

There is a crisis in the church in South Africa in the area of hermeneutics. Whereas Jesus unites us as a church, the Bible divides us. We cannot agree about Biblical interpretation. This is most obvious obstacle to me in bringing the structures of society into conformity with the Bible. How can we bring the Gospel to bear on our deliberations about alternative forms of political structures, when we cannot agree about what the Bible says to us about them?

Theologians of the Dutch Reformed Church, perhaps the most orthodox and evangelical church in South Africa, have produced a theology of apartheid, or separate development, which many label heresy. Black Theologians reply with an Africanisation of theology that seeks to establish black identity and which others say is bent on syncretism. White capitalists seek a theology of the status quo, black revolutionaries extract a theology of Marxist analysis. And so the interpretations become entrenched positions. They become the truth to a particular group of Christians and because these views are so diametrically opposed to one another and so pervaded by the self-interest and ambitions of differing groups, the church becomes divided against itself and incapable of bringing change.

As already noted in the preceding sections, the theologians from Katanga justified provincialism and tribal hatred by their theology of liberation. The theology found in interpretations, adaptable hermeneutics, new exegesis and biblical exegesis for justifying the collective environmental sin. There are spiritualisations sanctifying collective sin, for instance, the uncorrupted society. Terms used to sanctify collective sin are those such as spiritual corruption, spiritual dishonesty, and spiritual arrogance.

7.4 CONCLUSION

Without doubt all collectivity is susceptible to having its own sin. This sin can be founded in the organisation, system and structure which leads to these collectivities cultural or social sin and are part of the life of each collectivity. It can be a small group with its sub-culture, or large groups, even as large as the country, continent or bloc of countries. Modern communication, mass media or air travel has shrunk the world today into a global village, where the interchangeability of collective sin becomes easy.

Territory is a factor, which influences the collective by providing its own spiritual atmosphere. The church is often involved in the collective environmental sin.

Many collective sins in the world influence Africa and some are the cause of suffering in this continent. Africa has suffered from those sins, which have affected the churches.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

This chapter examines the mission of the church with regard to collective sin. This requires a good understanding of both this mission and the different tasks given to the church. The way in which the church is to work is also important. The discussion begins with an outline of the understanding of mission.

8.1 THE UNDERSTANDING OF MISSION TODAY

There have been many shifts in the understanding of mission in the church. However, most of the definitions of mission have a biblical foundation. This means that these understandings are mostly aspects of the one mission given to the church to use in a given time.

The general definition can be like this: mission is the task given by God to a collectivity called the church, for the salvation of the world. It is necessary to define these two words, salvation and world. But before that, David Bosch's definition (1991:512) of mission is used to clarify an understanding of mission today. 'Mission is a multifaceted ministry in respect of witness, service, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, peace, evangelism, fellowship, church planting, contextualisation and much more'.

Actually mission is understood as the function of church at each intersection with the world. In this context, an interpretation of two words is particularly important. These words are: "salvation" and the "world".

8.1.1 Salvation

Salvation is defined by Anne Sovik (1973:44) as 'Forgiveness, redemption, reconciliation, acceptance, peace, joy, security, health and wholeness'. Considering this definition, mission is the task of bringing forgiveness, redemption, reconciliation, acceptance, peace, joy, security, health and wholeness. It is not only the mission which is a multifaceted ministry, but also the salvation which the church brings.

8.1.2 The World

The term world is found thirty-four times in the Bible: seven times in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament. The verse which is focused on is 1 John, 2:15 'Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him' (NIV).

The world is a lovely creation of God and God himself loves it. Many authors have discussed the question as to how this verse can prohibit one from loving the world. For example, John Stott (1964:99) explains: 'Love not the world'. Some people have been puzzled as to how this command, not to love the world, can be reconciled with the statement of God's love for the world in John 3:16. There are two possible explanations. The first is that the world has a different connotation in these verses. Viewed as people, the world must be loved. Viewed as an evil system, organised under the dominion of Satan and not of God, it is not to be loved. The second explanation is that it is the verb "to love" and not its object, "the world", which has a different shade of meaning. In the one it is the holy love of redemption; in the other it is the selfish love of participation (Alford). The first aims to save the sinner's person; the second, to share his sin (Ehrard).

Thomas Johnson (1993:52) notes: 'Here the world is Satan's domain, in the control of the evil one (I John, 5:19)'. According to Dood (1937:39), the world does not mean 'the created universe nor the human race as such, but the life of human society as organised under the power of evil'.

In this verse, the word 'world' occurs three times. The worlds are linked to three collective sins, which are social sin, structural sin and cultural sin. When John says: 'Do not love the world', this is the same as saying: 'Do not love the structural sin', or 'anything in the world'. In other words, the command is not to love social sin. 'If anyone loves the world' also means 'If anyone loves the cultural sin, then the love of the Father is not in him. These appear again in verse 16, when the three elements - which are the desire of the flesh (which means cultural, sinful desire), 'our culture within us' (Kraft, 1990:106); the desire of the eyes (which is sinful, social desire); and the pretentiousness of life (which is a sinful structure, leading to pretentiousness and pride) – are considered.

In writing about this verse and the term 'world', F Bruce (1970:60-61) provides this commentary:

What John warns his readers against in the present passage is the world orientated against God the godless world as the NEB paraphrases it. The spirit that dominates the world so orientated, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, as it is put in Eph 2:2, is inimical to the love of God and to the uninhibited outflowing of His love in the lives of His people. Conformity to that spirit is worldliness. Worldliness, it must be emphasised in face of much superficial thought and language on the subject, does not lie in things we do or places we frequent; it lies in the human heart, in the set of human affections and attitudes. It may manifest itself in petty, but soul stunting ambitions like keeping up with the Joneses; it may manifest itself in unthinking acquiescence in current policies of monstrous malignity, as when too many Christians in Nazi Germany found it possible to go along with (or close their eyes to) their governments genocidal treatment of the Jews.

Considering what John said, mission can also be defined as helping the children of God not to love collective sin and to bring all the churches to take salvation to the world which is loved by God, and salvation is the destroying of the three collective sins.

8.2 TRANSFORMATION AND REFORMATION

The mission of the church towards the world should be twofold: transformation and reformation. By transforming, the change of culture and social situation is understood. The reformation is change of structure and system.

The intersections between church and world are society, culture and structure. The function of the church is to move out the sin encountered in these three intersections. It must be the preoccupation of the whole church in the collectivity where it lives.

The four divisions of collective sin necessitate four strategies for removing them, each of them demanding a different procedure. For removing group sin one needs reorientation; for social sin change is needed; whereas cultural sin needs transformation and for structural sin one needs reformation.

In the temporary grouping the situation can take any direction; the mass or crowd can manifest it in the way of culture, social problem or structure. The way it does so can be sinful or virtuous. Also the objective can be good, but the way to attain it, can be wrong. At times, when there is a crowd demonstration, the direction can change and anger is manifested in looting or killing, for example.

The first thing that is necessary is a reorientation of the crowd or the temporary grouping and to ask the right questions in the right way. Two possibilities are offered to the church to avoid collective temporary grouping sin. The first is to have Christian leaders among the crowd to warn this temporary grouping that if sinful means are used to destroy the sinful situation, that sinful action will give birth to another sin. The other way is always to prepare people to know how to act in the elementary grouping. This preparation is necessary even when there is no bad situation at hand. At the time when everything seems good and right, a sudden event can come to destroy and create the elementary grouping, so people must be prepared beforehand. In everything it is necessary to transform the understanding of people because the way the elementary grouping will act depends on the culture. Transformation is needed.

Before continuing, it is necessary to show the difference between social and cultural change.

Francis Merrill (1957:473) distinguishes social and cultural change in these words:

Social and cultural change are not the same thing. Many of the theories attempting to explain social change are actually dealing with cultural change, often without clearly distinguishing between them. Society is composed of human being in interaction, and the products of this interaction are institutions, values, statuses, roles and techniques - in short, culture. Culture is then the patterned behaviour resulting from social interaction. These patterns are incorporated into the personalities of the members of the society. Changes in culture include

new forms of learning, new dimensions of science, new technological instruments, new dogmas of religion and new expressions of artistic achievement. These cultural elements are important factors in social change, but they are not the only ones. Changes in physical environment, genetic equipment and social structure itself, also bring about changes in society.

For social sin to be removed, the given society living with this social sin needs changing. If the social sin is supported by a sinful structure, it will be a double onslaught against structural and social sin. The interaction between the collective sins has already been discussed. What is important here is to show the difference in strategy for the battle. One can start with the structural or the social, or all at the same time. It all depends at what church this moment arrives and what elements in this society there are which can also suggest the strategy. What is necessary in all social sin is transformation.

Cultural sin needs transformation. This sin has already been in the society for a long time and needs the correct way for its removal. Before transformation is discussed, however, it is necessary to be reminded of the different positions adopted by Christians about God's attitude towards culture. Charles Kraft (1990:103-113) describes these different positions, which are God-against culture position, God-in culture position, God-above culture position and God-above-but-through culture position. According to the first position, culture itself is evil, bad and from the evil one. About this position, Kraft (1990:105-106) says:

This approach, while rightly understanding that Satan makes use of human culture for his ends, makes three serious errors. First, it equates the concept "culture" with only the negative use of the Greek word *kosmos* in the New Testament. John does use this term in a negative sense, but with specific reference not to the whole of culture, but to a particular use of that culture by the force of evil.

A second fallacy in this approach is to assume that culture is only an external thing. Our culture is within us as well as around us. The third fallacy of this approach is the assumption that since Satan is able to use culture to his ends, all culture is evil.

This position does not show the way of living without culture. It is true that one cannot escape from culture. Evil in culture can be transformed. The second position, God-in culture is the opposite of the first, the extreme opposite. This position sees God within culture in general and within a specific culture. There are two groupings that hold this position: 'the first see God (or

Christ) as merely a cultural hero' (Kraft, 1990:106). The second group 'see God contained within, or at least as endorsing one particular culture' (Kraft, 1990:106).

Kraft (1990:108) criticizes this position when he says:

The weakness of this type of understanding of Gods relation to culture is that it interprets Christian-ness [*sic*] of culture primarily in terms of the forms of culture, rather than in terms of the functions to which these forms are put and the motivation of those who employ them. The functions and motives may or may not be Christian. Christian-ness as a measure of culture is more properly applied to functions and motives than to forms.

The church cannot agree with the position that God is already and completely there in any or a specific culture. This is not true, because we showed in the preceding chapter that being a collectivity brings its own sin, and every society has its culture and every culture its own sin, if not in form or function sometimes it may be in its motivation.

God-above culture positions affirm that God is not concerned with human culture. This position is deist. The fact that God has programmed everything no longer has anything to do with it. Another sub-group in this group sees that God having made everything is not able to control it. Some African tribes have this feeling that God created the world and then distanced himself from it so that we have to approach him through an ancestor. There are different bases for this position, but its advocates have one thing in common: God is unconcerned with culture.

God is, in reality, concerned with culture because he is not just a transcendent God but also imminent. Jesus was living within the culture to correct it. Thus God is not against culture, he is not in culture and he is not above culture but wants to use the culture and to purify it. Thus we talk about transformation of culture.

A transformation of culture necessitates certain knowledge of principles. Kraft (1990:360-381) approaches this question in a very pertinent way when he specifies that the principles for transforming culture through God. He distinguishes principles for the outside advocates and principles for insiders. He affirms that the outsider can never be an innovator, only an advocate for change. These principles are considered below:

a) Principles for the outsider

- i) It is of paramount importance that advocates of change seek to understand the cultural element that they suspect that ought to be changed, from the point of view of the people.
- ii) It advocates seeking effective transformational change should try to encourage a number of critical changes in the various worldviews, rather than a larger number of peripheral changes.
- iii) A third important factor in advocating change relates to those to whom the appeal is initially made. The assumption is that God is interested in seeing whole groupings of people turn to him, rather than simply minimum number of relatively easily reachable fringe people. Through study of the society then, outside advocates need to discover who their opinion leaders are in the society. These are not necessarily those who appear to the outsider to be in political or religious power in a society.
- iv) Closely related to the previous factor is the recognition that transformation change is accomplished more efficiently and effectively if advocated by a group rather than by individuals.
- v) The final factor to be dealt with here is the time factor. If transformation is to be effective, it needs to take place at the level of thought and at a level of behaviour. And developing the habitual behaviour (re-habitation) appropriate to new conceptualisations, ordinarily takes a considerable amount of time. About insiders, Kraft limits himself to the new generation and shows how to deal with children and a more than western conceptualisation.

b) Principles for the insider

- i) Visualisation of change by a group. For the African to see is more meaningful than to conceptualise.
- ii) Make this change and the cultural element the subject of talk (*Sujet de Causerie*) discussion, story telling, song, showing the consequences of this element in their culture.
- iii) Recruitment of advocates, even on an informal way, gives them arguments.
- iv) A group is necessary to result in movement.
- v) The time factor is not to be neglected.

8.2.1 Transformation

To change cultural sin is in other words to change the partners in culture. The change of culture leads us to the theories and discussions about change. The first to write about it

was Malinowski. He conceived of the 'functional theory of culture'. In the dynamic of cultural change, Malinowski (1945:52) states that 'in the organisation of a society there are integral tribal institutions which are of a complicated nature. An institution like the family or chieftainship, ancestor worship or agriculture has its roots in all aspects of the culture'. To change any of these institutions has a serious knock-on effect on every aspect of social life.

This theory shows the difficulty of transforming cultural sin into cultural virtue. However, Malinowski accepts that another can replace one kind of institution, which fulfils a similar function (1945:52). Eugene Nida asserts: 'If cultures are to be changed effectively without boomeranging dislocation, functional substitutes are essential' (1954:247). The functional substitutes are the means of replacing the cultural sin by cultural virtue elements. These elements must meet the needs of the people, be they physical, psychological, or the like. Nida (1954:247) provides some examples of the replacement of socio-cultural sin by functional substitutes:

Anthropologists in Papua succeeded in introducing a pig instead of a human body in a fertility sacrifice and a football to replace a spear in working off hostilities in embittered factions in a tribe. A missionary in Congo was faced with the problem of rival clans who consistently and persistently split on all matters of church government. The solution to this age-old problem was not to be found in simply denouncing the practice. The missionary arranged for the students in the school to be organised into dormitories in which members of each clan were represented. Each dormitory functioned and was recognised as a unit in athletics contest, academic honours and general deportment. New associations brought new loyalties, and with these came a realisation that differences of opinion about church matters should not be resolved by blind adherence to clan membership.

Nida (1962) affirms also that functional substitutes tried by missionaries have been mostly unsuccessful for the following reasons:

- ❖ The highly integrated character of the Christian rites to be modified.
- ❖ Imposition of change is from outside.
- ❖ Missionaries failed to meet the basic psychological need.

These are the reasons, which make it difficult for the functional substitutes to work. However, this study does not share the point of view of Nida when he says that the missionaries' functional substitutes have been almost wholly unsuccessful. In taking away some weakness, the functional substitutes can have some success.

Barnett (1953) helps with the theory of innovation, which is derived from Malinowski's functional adaptation. This idea is that functional substitutes have to be accepted. Seeing how functional substitutes can be made acceptable is an important thesis exigent to missionary initiatives and strategies.

Alan Tippet classifies and describes the functional substitutes in the following manner:

- i) The normative system, including the social structure itself, its controls, authority, roles, legal apparatus and other features which preserve the organisational cohesion;
- ii) The enculturative system, including the machinery for education, initiation, rights of passage and so forth;
- iii) The economic system, including wealth, food supplies, agriculture, trade exchange and so on; in other words, mechanisms for production, distribution and consumption;
- iv) The theological system, which comprises mythology, belief and religious practices; ritual, prayers, sacrifices, taboos and religious duty;
- v) The technological system, with its technical skills, arts and crafts, industry, aesthetic expressions, music - both the production and use, technical paraphernalia and machinery and also the artifacts produced by a society for all purposes.

This classification can help to situate the socio-cultural sin and to prepare a strategy against it.

Birket-Smith (1965:53) has pointed out that: 'the extreme functionalist assertion that all the traits of a culture are linked has never been proved'. It is true that extreme functionalism cannot be accepted as we can find elements of culture which are working independently. Thus they can be changed without affecting other elements of culture and so functional substitutes are not needed.

Lingenfelter (1996:275) concludes that: 'an understanding of how the gospel story may transform people and their culture is greatly enhanced when we separate analytically the notions of ideas and interests, social environment and world view'.

To remove collective, cultural or socio-cultural sin, five weapons are available: spontaneous change, functional substitutes, attacking the causes, using the situation and church without collective sin:

i) Spontaneous change: In this way, it is thought that culture can change itself without the intervention of the church. Some bad elements can disappear spontaneously, possibly with the evolution of the society. It is this theory which guides some missionary and church leaders in Africa with regards to the polygamy problem. It is thought that, with evolution, change of life situations, civilisation, moving from village to cities, the African will abandon polygamy. This has not been proved. Africans in cities have brought their polygamy and modernised it. To have many women and children still remains a sign of riches, power and future security in the African mind, in spite of new structures, modernism and poor salaries; even among scholars. This way would reduce responsibility, but the church cannot forget its mission of trying to change society and thought in the hope that the bad things will change themselves.

However, it is true, that some bad elements of culture have changed themselves. The Luba people used to give their children to the ancestors when someone moved from one village to another or from one city to another, but many people living in cities will no longer do this, whether they are Christian or not. This is because it is not understandable why these ancestors are able to eat only once and not everyday and why many ancestors eat little food. Reflection about this practice caused it to disappear little by little.

ii) Functional substitute: This has already been mentioned. The missionaries (insiders or outsiders) have to direct the deep needs of the people. In many African villages, the people sit together to drink and talk under a tree. In many tribes we find that the drunkard is talking and not always sensibly. The church must not ignore the need to meet, to talk and to drink. It needs to keep meetings and discuss subjects while providing soft drinks. In many African countries, like the Congo, people become very critical of each other because, for one thing, they have not much to talk about. Fluency is developed but there is a lack of matters to discuss. The church must provide topics for discussion. There are many such topics in the history of the church, the life of missionaries and mission, the ways in which the life of a good man is different. Talking skills should also be developed, not only by the preacher, but also by other discussion leaders while food and soft drink is partaken of under the tree. The national football team can contribute to progress in Africa by breaking tribal barriers, although it can also contribute to the sin of hating other nations.

iii) Attacking the causes. Some collectivities live in collective sin because their needs are not satisfied. For instance, one collective can become guilty of thieving because it is hungry and the environment is perhaps difficult to cultivate. To attack the causes would be to help them to get the food they need. But if stealing has already become their culture, the problem will continue even after the disappearance of the original causative need. In some African tribes, like the Luba tribe, prenuptial sexual relations were completely prohibited for the girls. Today, with long years of study, it has become too difficult and that cultural taboo has started to disappear. To be married, while studying, would be a solution for this problem because there are many consequences of this sin, such as sterility, lack of love after many disappointments.

iv) Hermeneutics of the situation. Sometimes there is a situation, which the leaders can use to help the collectivity to move out of collective sin. For instance, the danger of HIV can be used in the prostitute collectivity as a way to help reduce prostitution. Because sexual transmission is by far the most common, it emphasises the fact that faithfulness in a marriage relationship is a good alternative. The rejection of an arrogant collective by others is something that can be used for helping that collective to change. The domination for oppression of a collectivity by one group or by another nation because this collectivity lives in the sin of fear, must make it obvious to this collectivity that it needs to become courageous.

v) The church without collective sin: The church has to be one collectivity without collective environmental sin to demonstrate the way of life in God's will. We shall talk about the witness of the church later and we shall start by showing how we can help the church to live without these collective sins. Lingenfelter (1995:212) states: 'The final aspect of the transformation of culture in those who are his ambassadors, witnesses to other people in other cultures and contexts'.

The church is called to live in new lifestyle.

To live in *koinonia* collectivity, in community of love, the church brings the change because it represents Christian love. When the people see life transformed, imitation may not be difficult.

Lingenfelter (1996:275) concludes: 'The ideas and interests of our societies stand in contradiction to this call to discipleship. Becoming a disciple is more than a radical transformation of ideas. It is also transformation of interests and relationships, loving God and loving our neighbors [*sic*] as ourselves'.

This classification can help to situate the socio-cultural sin and to prepare a strategy against it.

8.2.2 Reformation

When it comes to reformation, the focus is on the structure. The sinful structure has to be reformed to remove structural sin. Many ways have been used to reform structures, for example: revolution, violence, non-violence, dialogue or negotiation. All these methods have been used when the sin is directly against the people, although it is also sin and especially sin against God. These sins are those of oppression, dictatorship, colonialism, neo-colonialism, for instance. People struggle against such sins as these. However, not many people react to the structural sins of idolatry, abortion and prostitution. Silence is kept.

In refusing structural sin, a collectivity can cause another collective sin. For example, when one attempts to kill one sin in using another sin, this gives birth to another sin. In further illustration, it can be said that violence is not the best way to remove structural sin and bring reformation. Often people in power exploit non-violence in order to maintain the old sinful structure. Although the people are non-violent, working through non-violence must be continued until it becomes transformed.

A strike is a non-violent act when the peaceful collective marches. To become violent in this context, is a non-violent act. Negotiation and prayer are necessary and the structural

sin must be attacked until it is removed.

In Africa, the dictatorial system satisfies the selfishness of its leaders and empowers another style of collectivity. This dictatorial sin has its roots in the fear and ignorance experienced by Africans. The sinful exploitation of great power must be removed in Africa. The way to change is firstly to fight against the socio-cultural sin of tribalism in Africa, the identification of the people in the service of the powerful countries, the identification of all the interests of the powerful countries and the means they use to this end. This knowledge has to be available to all the collectivities concerned. Awareness is the first thing, and the strategies and means of overcoming must be prepared collectively. Everyone must be committed to the struggle. One must avoid having one leader because the action will either kill him or corrupt him.

The struggle against the domination of super powers in the world necessitates action by the whole body of Christ. It is not acceptable to live in the same world in which Christians live with an abundance of gold, diamonds, silver, coffee, cocoa and so on from Africa, while letting their brothers and sisters lead a miserable life because the system does not help them to obtain work. Everybody has to work together. Every church must react against it in its own country struggling with its own political and trade structure, which facilitates such exploitation.

‘An African pastor today defines the mission of the church; it is still to go to Pharaoh’ (Jacques Pons, 1981:11). The church must go to Pharaoh again to demand freedom for the people, to let Africa go. Those, who want to help Africa, have to help it completely. Those, who want to have a mission in Africa must carry out the whole mission. For instance, John Mbiti (1986:158) declares that: ‘For African peoples, therefore, to make full sense, biblical salvation has to embrace the total world, both physical and spiritual. This is the cardinal point in looking at salvation in Africa Christianity. No area of the African world can afford to be left out’. In saying this, it does not mean sending or giving food or clothes or dollars or a loan to African countries.

Here, it is important to emphasise the shift in this collaboration, to leave Africa completely free to choose its own leaders, to plan its own future, to take its own destiny into its own hands or to put it in the hand of God, and not in the hands of powerful countries. To reach this level, suggests the need of a day of international *toyi toying* of all the churches in the world, starting in America, and marching against structural sin, which harms Africa. This would involve all Christians and people of goodwill world wide and would have to be repeated until the day that results are obtained.

The reformers have fought against four collective sins. Luther struggled against crowd sin, when the people wanted to rebel against the princes in Germany. He struggled against the structural sin in the mediaeval Catholic Church that was linked to the government. He struggled against the socio-cultural sin of Germany when he gave Germans the Bible to change their thinking. Today Germany and other European countries live without these old collective sins. Similarly, Calvin struggled against the structural sin of the Catholics in Switzerland. He gave new structures to this country and struggled against the socio-cultural sins and gave them the Christian religious institutions, which helped them to do everything for God. That is the blessedness of Europe and America: these countries are indebted to God for the favour they received.

Most of the time reformation and transformation go hand in hand, in other words, because there is an interaction between cultural, structural and social sin; it is sometime important to do everything together. In his book called *Charity and Change. From Band-Aid to Beacon*,. Frances O’Gorman (1992) analyses five different approaches used to change the socio-economic situation of the powers. Although he gives the strengths and weakness of each approach, the interest in this study is on the weaknesses.

These approaches are:

- i) the Band-Aid approach - a widespread response of social action; this is to give to the needy poor, prolonging their survival through material aid.

The biggest weakness of this approach is the donors ignoring the causes of impoverishment; and this approach gratifies the donor's sense of generosity rather than alleviating the poverty.

ii) The ladder approach - identifies and recovers social needs through teaching strategies. The weakness of this approach is in the paternalistic assistance and leaving the root causes untouched.

iii) The patchwork approach - uses personal projects functioning as fragments of a process of change, to fill in some of the gaps left by an imbalance in modernisation. The weakness of this approach is that a self-help project addresses limited and immediate needs, touching on only some sectors of economic and socio-cultural life. It is also uncritical of underlying causes.

iv) The beehive approach - is social action for change. It demands a reorganisation of the right and knew way for participating. The weakness of this approach is it proposes change within but not of the socio-economic model, which moulds society. Popular movements can only carry reform as far as the structure of society will allow.

v) The beacon approach - is constructive action through denunciation of the outcomes and causes of poverty induced by exploitative social structures across the world.

8.3 THEOLOGICAL ORIENTATIONS AND COLLECTIVE SIN

José Comblin (1979:13) observes: 'The truth of theology is its struggle, and the aim of the struggle is the liberation of human intelligence'. That is the mission of theology. If theology does not give liberation to people, it has lost its purpose. One of the characteristics of modern theology is its sense of struggle.

For the purposes of this discussion, theology is divided into three orientations:

- ❖ the theology of liberation;
- ❖ contextual theology, and
- ❖ theology of inculturation.

Akpong (quoted by Bosch, 1991:421) follows another scheme when he classifies all modern theology as contextualisation and divides it into three sub-types: indigenisation (as in the inculturation model and the socio-economic pattern of contextualisation); and revolutionary contextualisation (liberation theology, black theology, feminist theology); and evolutionary theology (political theology and the theology of development).

The present scheme is different. It focuses on the theology of liberation within which one finds black theology; feminist theology; contextual theology (within which are found indigenisation) and the theology of inculturation, which is close to the second. The theology of liberation is political theology and the theology of development is struggle against structural sin. Contextual theology deals with the social context and so with the people. Because it wants to change the context, it struggles against social sin. Inculturation aims to see the message in the culture, so it struggles against cultural sin.

These last two, interact and work together. It is the same with society and culture. Each theology has to work in its particular direction and with the same purpose in order to remove collective sin in this area. Each of these theologies is in danger of absorbing another sin, or the same sin.

After liberation, the theologians of liberation can become powerful and do the same things their predecessors were doing. Today in South Africa, the Black theologians and liberation theologians find it difficult to be prophets, because they are in power. Some resent having foreigners in their country. New laws and structures are unable to help everyone in all things. Contextual theology may allow the sin of society; that is, what is acceptable to the theologians or practised by them.

It is the same with inculturation, which is in danger of allowing cultural sin to enter. Reading the Bible with cultural glasses on is normal, but this can allow cultural sin to become acceptable.

8.4 THREE KINDS OF SIN: ORIGINAL, INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE

The difference between original sin and collective sin has been pointed out. The intention in this section is to demonstrate that the three kinds of sin exist and that each needs a different way of treating it.

One could still say that original sin is the sin of our Adamic origin; it is bound to our nature and every human being is born with it. No one is spared. Original sin is the sin, which is the father of all other individual and collective sin. It is that which places a human being or places within a human being the tendency towards sin. It is this sin which has caused every human being, of whatever race, colour, tribe, and whatever difference there may be in culture, to be similar. Because of it, humans are equally blameworthy.

Sin can be committed in thought, in word or deed. Even if it is a permanent sin in someone's life, it characterises the sinner who commits it. It is also the expression of the sinful nature of the human being, because there is never anyone without sin, that is to say, there is no one who has never committed his or her own sin. The Bible confirms this, but experience also demonstrates it. 1 John, 1:10 affirms that: 'If we say that we have no sin, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us'. And if one spends time observing all men in their daily lives, one easily notices that they are really sinners. This could be in relation to God directly, or in relation to other people. This argument is offered initially in order to defend the fact that the reality and the presence of collective sin do not exclude the presence of individual sin.

Collective sin is, as already shown, a sin of the collectivity or a sin of the group. It is distinguished in the first place by the fact that it is not bound to human nature but to culture. It is not bound to the origin of the human being, but to his presence in a community of other living beings. It is different because of the fact that an individual does

not commit it; a group, a collectivity, commits it.

Collective sin is the result of the history of the collectivity. In some ways it does resemble the original sin, because it comes from a previous generation (when it is a cultural sin) and resembles the second because it has a precise name and is born of and is an expression of the first, that is, of original sin.

Isaiah, 6:1-10, which describes the vision of the prophet Isaiah, is again relevant. The prophet saw angels who were crying, 'Holy, holy, and holy'. Note that it was three times. Holiness, being the opposite of sin, the message was that Isaiah should understand that he is thrice a sinner. Isaiah, having understood the message as his confession testifies, says: 'Woe is I, I am lost because with my original sin I am a man with impure lips - I have personal sin. I live in the midst of a people of unclean lips - collective sin surrounds me' and is in me. Then it was that the angel flew to him with a glowing coal, which he got from the altar with a pair of tongs. Then it was, too, that he heard the voice of the Lord saying: 'Who shall I send, and who will go for us?' In other words, Isaiah accepts the mission and starts the activity which will change the collectivity. When Isaiah had accepted, he was told: 'Go and tell these people'. In other words, the instruction was to start struggling against the collective sin of his people.

There had been the angelic mission to Isaiah and Isaiah's mission to Israel, in order that Israel in turn would accomplish her mission. The church has often done its work partially; it often does not accomplish its mission. The evangelist goes to a lost person and speaks to him of individual sin. The man turns to God and the church, and in the church the pastor preaches only of individual sin, but does not speak to him of collective sin. Thus it is that pastors themselves, the church leaders also live in their collective sins even while being freed from original and personal sin and by their faith justification is in their grasp.

The church must see that every sinner confesses three sins: original, individual and collective. Every person meeting with God should be conscious that he is in the presence of the thrice holy; that is to say, as opposed to the three sins that are in humans: original,

individual and collective sin. Consciousness of the third sin, opens one's eyes to the sin and drives one to struggle against this collective sin.

God does not save a person for himself, he does not sanctify him for selfish reasons; he does not set him apart to do this, but he saves him to save his collectivity. God sanctifies man in order to sanctify his collectivity, and He sets him aside so that his community will also be set apart.

The church must have evangelists, pastors and prophets. The role of evangelists is to remove original sin from men, that of pastors is to remove personal sin and that of prophets to remove them from collective sin.

It is true that there are some, who perform these three ministries, or two of them, simultaneously. There are other ministries also, as for example medical ministries, with doctors and nurses who can situate themselves in one or other of the three categories given above. As has already been noted, the church has often shared its collective sin with the collectivity in which it lives. Thus it is that we are going to turn in order to speak of the mission of the church in the community in which it lives.

8.5 THE MISSION OF THE CHURCHES WITHIN THE COLLECTIVITIES

By definition, the church is a community called to live outside the city. God calls it to live differently from the world. By the prayer of Jesus in John, 17:15, He expresses Himself thus: 'I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but that you will preserve them from evil'. In other words, God wants His church in the world, and He wants it protected from the surrounding sin. The church should live differently from the community in which it is installed. Unfortunately, the church is not impermeable. The surrounding sin penetrates it easily and prevents it from being a light in its community and the salt of its collectivity. The church must shut the door against the entrance of sin. She must live as a witness to Jesus Christ. Every local church must be a witness, must bring light to and be the salt of its collectivity. She must also be a servant to help the community to change, to shine its light on sin and to restore its joy like salt. But the church often loses its essential 'flavour'.

If the collectivity is proud, the church must live in humility. If it is hypocritical, the church must live in transparency and truth. If it is steals, the church must be the opposite. If it is dishonest, the church must be honest. If it is tribalist, the members of the church must be united. If it is destructive, the church must be constructive. If it is lazy, Christians must be workers. If it is critical of others, the church must live in charitable thought about others. If it is prostituted, the church must be chaste. If members of the collectivity discourage one another, the church members must encourage each other. If the collectivity is cannibalistic, the church should be anti-cannibal. If it is fearful, the church must witness by its full confidence. If it is oppressed, the church must help to liberate. If they are fearful of witchcraft, the church must show the victory of Jesus over the powers of darkness. If the members of the collectivity are full of envy and jealousy, the church members will be full of esteem for one another. If they are full of anger, the church members will be full of calm. If the collectivity is separated, the church presents itself as a unifying agent. If the collectivity transmits from generation to generation, hatred against other collectivities (such as the nation, tribe, or clan) the church transmits love for other tribes. If the community is materialistic, the church shows itself to be spiritual (whether or not possessing material goods life being more important than clothing, for instance). If it is colonialist the church presents itself as a servant. If it is powerful and dominating, the church presents itself humble and dependent on God. If it is cruel, the church presents itself gentle and kind. If it has hatred, the church demonstrates love. If it is agitated, the church presents calm. If it is worried, the church witnesses by its peace. If it is anxious, the church is a confident collectivity. If it is in darkness, the church must light its lamp. If the structures are destructive, the church must combat the destruction. If it is unsure of the future, the church presents hope. If it is without direction, the church shows what it is. If it does not know the way, the church indicates it. If it does not know the truth, the church must declare it. If it has no life, the church must give it.

In short, the collectivity of God, which is called the church, has as its mission the removal of collective sin (national, tribal, clan sin, and so on) from the collectivity in which it lives. The church is a prophetic collective. Because of this the church must live above collective sin. This brings one to speak about the battle of collective sin, within the church in the first

instance.

8.6 MINISTRIES IN CHURCH AND COLLECTIVE SIN

Here, the aim is to demonstrate how to fight against and increase the struggle against collective sin in the church, with the aim of preparing it to overcome collective sin in its surroundings.

8.6.1 Training of church ministers

In Africa, as everywhere else today, the servants of the church such as pastors doctors and others are prepared for service in theological faculties, bible schools, and specialised training centres. These training centres could be a good place, if not the primary site, of the battle against collective sin initially in the church. Often in this place of a theological or biblical training, some of the most important courses are the following: systematics, exegesis, and hermeneutics, church history, and practical theology.

These courses permit one to know the Bible and to interpret it to preach, to counsel, and to lead the church. But it is often noticed that those who leave these institutions are imbued with the collective sins of their collectivity; they do not perceive it and if someone from the outside brings it to their attention, they justify their collective sin. Thus the church drowns in this collective sin; because the men who have been prepared for the ministry have not passed beyond their collective sin, how could they help the church to overcome it? Thus they will live in and with the church in the collective sin. It can be seen that, in this way, the pastor, the doctor, the evangelists are hypocrites because their collectivities are hypocritical; they are cowardly because their collectivities are cowardly; proud because their collectivity is proud; domineering because their collectivity is domineering; and materialistic because their collectivity is materialistic.

Thus it is seen that the preparation for ministry is inadequate. The preparation must, therefore, bring the training into contact with the third holiness of God until the respective ministers cry: 'I live in the midst of a people who have such and such particular collective

sin and my eyes have seen the King' (Isaiah, 6:5), that is to say that I repent and I pass to the side of God and his holiness'.

The argument is that collective sin must be addressed. Otherwise people, who are just like other sinners, perhaps having had the first two sins removed (original, after conversion, and individual sin), might be sent into the population. The next question will be to find out how collective sin can be eradicated in practice.

One suggestion, which will not be the last word in this debate, is offered. That is, it is necessary to teach all students about collective sin. This part of the training could be inserted into systematic theology, into ethics, into exegesis, into hermeneutics, into missiology or practical theology or even into the history of the church.

After having discovered the existence of collective sin in general, as homework every student must have the time to discover the collective in his or her milieu, at three levels - social, structural and cultural. After having discovered it for him or herself, or with a group of students from the same collectivity, it will be necessary to listen to students from other collectivities, to discover what they think of the collectivity in question, after having made an inventory of all the collective sins and after removing that which is prejudiced, thus leaving the real collective sin. One would then pass to a second stage, that of discovering that this collective sin has not affected the said students. This involves psycho-moral-intellectual-spiritual training.

Psychological training is crucial, because the student is likely to have a psychological battle and will then have to do some introspection. Moral preparation is necessary, because the theological student will be deeply shocked by others. His or her tribe or nation, with which he or she identifies, will be attacked by the others. An intellectual training is just as important because the student will look at the biblical text objectively and will look at his history and his own deeds several times. The student must be trained to think with intellectual honesty. Spiritual training is, of course, essential. The student must put himself or herself before God to make sure of his objectivity. The person concerned must be placed face to face with God so that he or she is dazzled by God's presence.

The student needs to be able to say, 'Mine eyes have seen the King and I am lost'. He or she must see him or herself in relation to God and not in relation to the collectivity. These students must compare themselves to God rather than to others. They must see themselves in the light of the Word of God. They must thus become desirous of being helped by God to go beyond the collective sin of his collectivity.

The third stage is that of proposing a strategy for the redemption of the collectivity from its collective sin. All students must propose a programme, which will be presented to the other students and the professors showing

- ❖ the causes of the collective sin in his or her collectivity,
- ❖ the category of the sin (social, cultural or structural),
- ❖ the possible means of helping in the first instance the church to escape it and then the total collectivity.

They can also listen to the contributions of other students and the professors. They must spend the rest of their time of training thinking about the means and feasibility of their projects. All institutions have to give to all students the tools to recognise the collective sin of their own environment.

8.6.2 The meeting of church government and scholarship

At the level of church government all the councils or committees called national synods, or continental, regional synods, etc., general assemblies of churches and consistories must speak of collective sin which bathes their collectivity. If this church includes two or more collectivities (tribal, national, and so on), it must beware of concentrating on collective sin of one of the collectives, rather than of all of them. The church must find strategies to destroy not the collectivity but its collective sin.

The meetings of scholars must also be inclined towards studying the specific collective sin of their collectivities. Theologians must increase the meetings and considerations of their specific collective sins. They must be able to offer the church materials in this domain and suggest strategies. The aims and the results of their thinking must be put at the disposal of

the church. Missiologists, in particular, must work hard against collective sin. One cannot do missiology without a community in which it has insert itself, otherwise one produces theory without practical application and one writes a dead letter. Addressing missiologists we can say that your task is to go back into your collectivity and to discover its collective sin. The erudite people in the church should write books on their specific collectivity and its specific collective sin and suggest means of getting rid of it.

8.6.3 Some specific ministries

There are diverse ministries in the church and the aim here is not to enumerate them, nor to neglect some but simply to choose some of the most popular and the most practised in the church.

8.6.3.1 Pastoral ministry:

The pastoral ministry has two major dimensions, plural and singular. In other words, all the work of a pastor is addressed either to a group or to an individual. The former dimension, or work directed to the group, can be summarised thus: preaching, organisation in connection with structure of the church, bible studies, preaching, conflict resolutions, for example. The second, individual dimension can be summarised as pastoral care, counselling, meeting with new Christians, and so on.

In the first dimension, the pastor must lead his flock to leave the collective sin of its collectivity. His preaching, his liturgy or the organisation of the worship service must be with the aim of bringing people to overcome their collective sin. The topics of his Bible studies must be chosen in relation to collective sin of the milieu. Christians must see for themselves in the biblical text, what is written and how it affects the life of their collectivity. The teachings must bring Christians not only to a doctrinal understanding, but to identify and reject their collective sins and to abandon them and also to edify the church for the battle against collective sin.

In the second dimension, the individual dimension of pastoral ministry, the pastor counsels, follows and affirms a Christian. Often a pastor has, in this case, to deal with personal sin of the individual. It is important that the pastor satisfies himself that the Christian he is dealing with is not affected by the collective sin, otherwise, with Bible in hand, he must help him to get out of this collective sin. It should be remembered that this collective sin could simply be hatred of a neighbouring tribe or nation, which is shared by his group. This will require him always to pose a question to the Christian he meets individually in his ministry. Questions of this nature: What do you think of the sin, which surrounds us? How do you feel when you meet a member of such and such a tribe or nation? What is your attitude towards a particular event which is being discussed very much in our society; as a Christian, what do you think of it? Other questions and helps will follow.

Thomas Klink observes: 'Pastoral work does not occur in a vacuum. It is an existential process which occurs at specific places, in specific moments of time and specific individuals' (1965:33). It can be added that it also works within a specific collective sin. This must help him to work purposely towards and to take every opportunity, both in the group and in individual dimension, to get rid of collective sin in the church.

In considering pastors who are working in the city, it is necessary to talk about different cultures, different understandings, conditioned by different social situations, different backgrounds and therefore different cultural sins, social sin and structural sin. In a word, different collective sins. The population of a city does not have the same origin. In a city there are foreigners, citizens of different cities, towns and villages, who bring with them different cultures and collective sins. The pastors, in this case, have a huge task of discovering the culture of people, of asking questions, of reading books about it, and so on, but also of discovering the collective sin of this group. It is difficult to discover their collective sin if people do not recognise it; but it is more difficult to get rid of it, because these people meet others with different kinds of lifestyles and different collective sin. The knowledge of this prepares the individual to accept the sin of his or her collective. To accept this is the beginning of healing.

The city pastor has to prepare people for their return to their country or city so that they will be able to struggle against the sin of their collectivities. The task of the pastor, who is working among students, is similar because here again he is dealing with people from many tribes and different cities, or countries. The pastor must therefore make of the students not only disciples but missionaries.

8.6.3.2 **Evangelistic ministry**

The evangelist has the role of bringing the good news to people, to bring them into the church once they accept Jesus Christ. Before calling people to respond to the love of Jesus, they usually show them that they are sinners: from Adam they are sinners, that is, they are born with original sin and the pastor must continue to show them how they sin, by enumerating some individual sins. When people come to Jesus, they do not have the awareness of collective sin. The evangelist may mention it. New Christians have to know that they have to leave original, personal and collective sin. As the pastor cares for the new Christian, he can help him to turn away from their original and collective sins.

8.6.3.3 **Prophetic ministry**

The problem concerning the role of the prophet or the prophetic ministry in society and in the church is being much discussed in our day. What is of interest to us in this work, is the role of the prophet against collective sin. The oracles against the nations, which occur in the prophetic books of the Old Testament, confront national collective sin. Each prophet seems to struggle against a specific sin. This sin can be that of Israel or of other nations. Sometimes the specific sin is idolatry or exploitation of the people, especially the poor. The case of Amos is an example. The prophet stands in the name of God before the people or before the political leaders who are leading into collective sins. Today the need of prophetic ministry is clear. The church has to ask God to restore the prophetic ministry in the church for the sake of the nation. Every nation needs this. Western and rich countries need them to fight against exploiting third world countries and to struggle against their own collective sin. African countries seek them, their need being to fight against oppressive systems and so on. Every village and province needs them to stand before the people and leaders in the name of the Lord to pronounce oracles against collective sin.

8.6.3.4 Music ministries

The music of the church can play an important role in the transformation of the collectivity. If this music is contextualised, that is, sung in the rhythm which is adapted to the culture, with understandable words, this makes it acceptable and the Christian message can spread. As Paul Schilling reminds us (1983:127):

A church that is apostolic as well as one, holy and catholic, is a church in mission, sent to manifest the life of God to humanity and to lift the life of humanity to God. It is commissioned to witness to the reconciling, life-transforming love of God revealed in Jesus Christ; to arouse in human beings, faith and commitment; and to lead them into righteous, loving relationships with God and other persons of all races and nations. Though the hymns on apostolicity [*sic*] in third meaning deal broadly with the churches mission, they need to be supplemented by others that reflect more fully what hymn writers conceive that mission to be.

In fact, the mission of the church of bringing the good news, can be facilitated by song. What is suggested is that, in every collectivity, Christian composers should write songs that relate to specific collective sins and how God can remove them. The church can even teach these songs to non-Christians when there is the opportunity.

Africans love to sing songs and to dance, from childhood to old age. Birthdays, funerals, dramas, celebrations, music and drama encounters are opportunities to learn new songs, which can promote the new idea against the collective sin of the group.

8.6.3.5 Cross-cultural workers

In the preceding sections, the concern was with workers, who are insiders. These are ministers living in their own culture, with their own people. Social life is easy for them and they are protected by the laws of their own countries. These things give them three advantages:

- ❖ A good understanding of culture - culture.
- ❖ An easy relationship with their own people - social.
- ❖ That of living in their own locality, protected by law - structure.

Cross-cultural workers have several disadvantages.

- ❖ They can misunderstand the culture, calling it sin, when it is merely cultural prejudice.
- ❖ The social relationship can be broken when they start attacking the collective sin as they may be considered foreigners who have come to disturb.
- ❖ As they are foreigners in the country, they can be asked to leave, especially when they are struggling against structural sin.

Thus cross-cultural workers can also work and fight against collective sin and levels of collective sin: cultural, social and structural. They can use any method, which is useful to inside workers by considering these five basic guidelines:

- ❖ To ensure that what they are dealing with is real collective sin and not their own cultural prejudice.
- ❖ To gain the trust of people living in their collectivity before they struggle with the collective sin.
- ❖ To show them their own collective qualities before showing up their collective sin.
- ❖ To demonstrate to them that their collectivity includes its own collective sin.
- ❖ To do it with love and courage.

8.6.3.6 Ethical matters

When one speaks of sin, one refers to moral conduct or ethics. Every society has some kind of ethics. Ethics may become relative and without reference to anything other than its community. Thus the doctors in a society which in its culture and structures (legal and other) permits euthanasia and abortion, is not unethical in performing them. In other societies, killing someone who is not a member of that society is appreciated. The term ethics is etymologically derived from the Greek word *ethos* (custom, conduct). This conduct depends on the collectivity in which one lives. The distinction between Christian ethics and human ethics should be understood. Bruno Schuller (1986:16) states:

Christian ethics has a foundation which is peculiarly its own. The sequence of gospel and law, divine indicative and divine imperative, seems to show this. The sequence is clearly expressed in Ephesians 5:1-2. Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children. And walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us. The moral imperative “walk in love” is said to have for its standard or measure the love which God and Christ have for us human beings.

The Christian is linked to Christian theology. James Gustafson (1971:85) declares: 'In the study of Christian ethics, these two sides are always present: the clarification of the fundamental principles of the Christian life, and their interpretation of how the Christian community needs to make moral judgements and to act in the light of its faith and its religious convictions'. This does mean that to bring the Christian ethic into a collectivity is also to bring Christian theology at the same time.

To demonstrate to people that man cannot satisfy the justice of God, Jacques Ellul (1964:41) asserts:

The requirement of God is holiness, yet all the accumulation of virtue, of good works, of high ideals, of good intentions, all that is not holiness. Even the Roman church which has such a propensity to confound holiness with exceptional moral purity, does not, nevertheless, confuse this totally. Holiness belongs to another order, it is never a succession of just and pure acts, as these do not necessarily demonstrate it. All the good that man can do remains the good of man and never becomes the holiness of God. Yet that is what God expects of man: nothing less.

He (Ellul, 1971:41) adds: 'Nevertheless man possesses a morality? Natural morality does exist'.

8.7 THE CHURCH AND TERRITORIAL STRONGHOLDS

It is not possible for political leaders, the élite in the country or other scholars to struggle against strongholds in a given territory. Other phenomena relating to psychology, sociology and anthropology can be analysed scientifically and the politicians can make laws about them. However, the spiritual phenomena cannot be changed, because they are beyond what is scientifically understood.

In colonial times, colonialist countries did not accept the presence of witchcraft. It was for them just primitive imagination. Now, there are many theses and books written to show the evidence of witchcraft and sorcery. Two French African countries have even made a law to judge these practices, as already stated in the previous chapter of this thesis. They are Mali and The Central African Republic. Thus there are some realities which are not subject to scientific analyses or even theological study. Territorial strongholds are one of these cases.

The only collectivity that can eradicate these evils is the church. All cultural and social structures cannot remove them.

The church has two dimensions - social (human) and spiritual. Because territorial strongholds are spiritual, the church must use its power and authority to remove it. Before commanding them to go and make disciples, Jesus said to them: 'All authority in heaven and in earth has been given to me, therefore go and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew, 28: 18,19). To make disciples is possible because of all authority, which Jesus has, which enables the church to do so. 'All nations' means that his authority is above all other authority. His authority is over heaven, in other words the invisible place, and on earth, which is visible. The church must use this authority to move territorial strongholds away and submit the nations to God.

8.8 THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

The mission of the church in Africa will be fulfilled when the African will change the whole of life. This is still a long way away. Salvation of Africa is incomplete. Africa is looking for total salvation. Mbiti (1986:158) expresses this when he says: 'For African peoples, therefore, to make full sense, biblical salvation has to embrace their total world, both physical and spiritual. This is a cardinal point in looking at salvation in African Christianity. No area of the African world can afford to be left out'.

Africa suffers the consequences of the sin of the great Western powers, and it suffers also the consequences of its own sins. She has to be delivered from them all. In addition to the already proffered suggestions, what is generally needed is a solution appropriate to Africa. First, the universal church must struggle against the sin of exploitation, of dictatorship, of oppression, of impoverishment, of the plunder of Africa by colonial powers. 'An African pastor defines today the mission of the church; it is still "Go to Pharaoh"' (quoted by Jacques Pons, 1981:11). The church has to go to the western pharaohs for the liberation of Africa. No church can spell itself from this battle.

In Africa, one must not separate the sacred and the profane. One must sanctify all the domains of life. This is already in the African orientation and their worldview. This has been noted by African intellectuals. Tshibangu Tshishiku's report (1987:14-15) is pertinent:

Last year, in April 1985, a great international symposium on Africa and its future was held in Kinshasa. One hundred years after the conference of Berlin which inaugurated the period of systematic colonisation of the African continent, which was divided the European powers, and 25 years after the African political independences [*sic*]. The question was posed to discover what the situation was with regard to general development in Africa, and what urgent tasks were necessary for Africa to experience maximum progress with the least delay. The participants of this symposium reviewed, on this occasion, different models for development proposed and tried here and there in African countries, particularly through ideologies which held themselves out to be specifically African: the Black consciousness concept, negritude, the African personality, authenticity, African socialism. Through these ideologies, ideas and formulas from outside Africa (scientific socialism, capitalism and liberalism) were adapted with more or less strictness in Africa. The general assessment of the application of these different ideological solutions was that not much impact was made on the general process of global development of Africa. In their conclusions, the African experts wished fervently that a greater effort be made to define the cultural and historical African particular peculiarities, in order to identify them better and keep them in mind in the effort to develop the continent. They observed that if the Europeans had developed speculative rationalism, and the Americans, pragmatism, Africans should probably be called to cultivate spiritualist realism, because they no incompatibility or even separation between spiritual values and technical activities (own translation).

All these ideologies having failed in Africa, the intellectuals propose spiritual realism. But, the question arises as to which spiritualism? This is the question. Africa needs today a single orientation, a single vision of life for its salvation. This salvation of Africa can only be found in the one person who opposes himself to sin: Jesus Christ. All the African ideologies must have theology as their basis, and the theology must have Christ as its foundation. Thus the mission of the church is to continue to present Christ in his totality.

Tshibangu (1987:31) adds: 'In African theology the salvation of the human person is the salvation of the universe, and in the mystery of the incarnation, Christ assumes the totality of the human and the totality of the cosmos'. The spiritualisation of the all the systems: economic, juridical, political, social placed under the Lord Jesus Christ is a solution for the battle against collective sin.

Africans have to give priority to Kingdom of Jesus. The lack thereof has brought trouble to Africa. Kwame Nkrumah (quoted by Kintoye, 1976:92) states: 'Seek ye the political kingdom and all things will be added with it'. This idea was being put forward by biggest leader of Africa, so he was followed by many other leaders and African people. This prioritization produced negative results, because nothing positive can be added to the political kingdom. Economic crises, wars, and the like, are characteristic products and are the result of this point of view. It is time to change, and avoid saying things like 'Seek ye the economic kingdom and all things will be added'. This too is another false prioritization. The priority must be the Kingdom of Jesus.

With regard to other African collective sins, like jealousy, fear, witchcraft, obsession with power, and tribalism, one must make the continent conscious of these, but initially, at the church level. The two large organisations, which work on this continent and bring together nearly all the churches, AACC (African all churches council) and AEA (African Evangelical Alliance) must instruct their churches to proclaim Sundays or weeks of battle against jealousy, fear, witchcraft, obsessions with power, and so on. During these weeks one must preach, sing, perform dramas, speak, study the Bible, teach and pray against collective sin. This should be done annually. Religious broadcasts on TV and Radio must also go in the same direction. Small brochures and other writings must be produced decrying these sins which gnaw at the whole continent.

Another means of fighting against collective African sin, in general, and against specific tribal or national sin is to use what Jean-Marc Ela (1998:179) calls 'theology under the tree'. This is how he explains this idea adapted to Africa:

I dream of a theology under the tree which would be worked out as brothers and sisters sit side by side wherever Christians share the lot of peasant people who seek to take responsibility for their own future and for transforming their living conditions. In order for that to happen, people must leave the libraries and give up the comfort of air-conditioned offices; they must accept the conditions of life, the insecurity of study in poor areas where the people have their feet in water or mud and can neither read nor write.

Perhaps this theology will not use the vocabulary of philosophers and scholars. But did not God also speak the language of peasants and shepherds in order to be revealed to

humanity? We must rediscover the oral dimension of theology, which is no less important than the *summae* and the great treatises.

Christian theology must be liberated from a cultural system that sometimes conveys the false impression that the Word has been made text. Why cannot the language of faith also be poetry, song, game, art, dance and above all the gesture of humanity standing up and marching wherever the gospel elicits and nourishes a liberating effort? To create a poetics of faith, we must rediscover the African soul, or *anima*, where symbol appeals through metaphor and helps pastors speak of that God who raises up the meek and feeds the hungry. Ela (1998:180-181) cautions:

Such a step cannot come about in isolation. Theology in context must also be a theology in dialogue, open to exchange and confrontation. African theology requires a deepening of the methods involved in working out any theology; it also needs to let itself be questioned by all the theologies based on the solidarity of peoples continents or groups struggling for the coming of a new world. Certainly it will not happen without free and responsible theological work.

Here, the idea of dialogue with people in their own condition is developed, and together with them the solution to collective sin can be found. Together with them, a theology that is adapted for them can be developed. It is very important to have theology in Africa before anything else. And this theology must be popular. The history of Africa has demonstrated that everything fails without theology.

In the preceding chapter, the way in which the African struggle fails while appearing to be successful was discussed. Political and economic struggles have given rise to neo-colonialism. Pan-Africanism has failed; political independence has not been successful; the Organisation of African Unity today is merely a meeting of presidents or the trade union of African presidents. The unity of Africa is not a reality. The cause of that can be seen in the already quoted sentence of the so-called father of African independence, Kwame Nkrumah (quoted by A Kintoye, 1976:92): 'Seek ye first the political kingdom and all things will be added with it'. African people putting this sentence into practice are struggling for political independence. Today they are disappointed. It is necessary to restore this verse through its correct meaning: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added with it'. With the kingdom of God one knows who will do the adding, but in the political

kingdom one cannot know who will add. Politicians, without the kingdom of God, become dangerous for their collectivity.

With theology in the minds of people, these minds will take the lead in politics, law, the economy, social and cultural life. In the kingdom of God the first law is love and so the structure will be full of love and so will the social life and culture be filled with love. People in the city will love people in the villages and so on.

Today in South Africa, Vice President Mbeki speaks of a renaissance of Africa. The irony is that renaissance without reformation fails; and reformation without transformation amounts to nothing. African unity will come from the unity of mind, the unity of vision and orientation for Africa. Only God is capable of giving that. After that there is collective corrective action.

8.9 THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

The most expressive text regarding the consequence of sin is in Romans 6:23: 'The wages of sin is death'. Death can be understood as a spiritual separation from God, the disintegration of the living being, or perdition. To live separately from God means to suffer, without the intervention of God in the precise area in which we live without him, the results of all sin, whether original, individual or collective. This places the sinner in a state of death. Original sin causes man to live without God and all the consequences with life without God are possible. Individual sin places the sinner in a condition of suffering specific consequences in the area in which he has sinned, and collective sins in the same way, places the sinful collectivity in a position to suffer the consequences of that specific sin. That is why sinful collectivities do not always have the same suffering.

8.10 THE REDEEMER

No-one can speak of sin without speaking of the Redeemer. It is impossible to speak of sin without speaking of the opposite, that is the Redeemer, otherwise the picture will be only of sorrow and the people will appear pessimistic. The argument of this study has plunged the

discussion into dealing with the realities of collective sin.

Redemption has, of course, begun in the person of Jesus Christ and the work, which he accomplished on the cross. His work is a work of redemption to save human beings from sin. He died for the sins of mankind, says the Scriptures, and not only for individual sin. This means that Christ died to save man from collective sin. He can redeem the whole collectivity because salvation has been conceived and made possible by the collective God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God sent his Son to die for us; the Holy Spirit convinces man of his sin **and** of full salvation.

Collective redemption exists because there is a collective spirit, a collective conscience and it is possible to have collective confession and collective salvation.

8.11 GENERAL CONCLUSION

Collective sin is an undeniable and obvious fact with real biblical, theological, sociological and anthropological foundations. Its presence throughout the whole Bible was also the object of our research. Our theological reflection brings us to classify it in three categories: social, cultural and structural.

When a group becomes permanent it becomes a society and this results in the sin of a society called social sin. After this society has lasted through different generations it forms a culture in which is found a sin, which we call cultural sin. If this society structures itself, it often slips a sin into the structure, which we call structural sin. Africa which was our land of study offers us not only a collective interpretation of sin but also it presents continental sin forged during the course of many years in its long history. The church has never been spared from the collective sin in its milieu. It is often contaminated either by cultural sin or social or structural sin. Throughout its long history, the permeability of the church has been demonstrated. She has always forgotten her prophetic role and has not always been the salt of the earth. Here then are all the reasons for the missiological approach, that is to say, it is was not limited to demonstrating the existence of collective sin but to presenting to the church its mission and the ways and means which make it possible to accomplish this.

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