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UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

FACULTY OF DIVINITY

Department of Biblical Studies

A CRITICAL SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE OF
BLACK THEOLOGY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Thesis presented by
PULE ISAAC DRAKE TSHENKENG

For the degree of
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ABBREVIATIONS

AICA	African Independent Churches Association
AME	African Methodist Episcopal Church
ANC	African National Congress
BPC	Black Peoples Convention
CIIR	Catholic Institute of International Relations
IDAMASA	Inter-denominational African Ministers Association of South Africa
NGK	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk
NHK	Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk
NUSAS	National Union of South African Students
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SAAC	South African Council of Churches
SASO	South African Student Organisation
UCM	University Christian Movement
JTSA	Journal of Theology for Southern Africa
WARC	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCC	World Council of Churches
YWCA	Young Womens Christian Association
ZNW	Zeitschrift für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft

INTRODUCTION

Apartheid in South Africa has become a way of life. It is an ideology practiced and sanctioned by the white Dutch Reformed Churches to maintain economic and political supremacy in the hands of white people in both South Africa and Namibia. The new constitution which allows the co-optation of the Coloured and Indian groups into the country's new dispensation state, "In humble submission to almighty God, who controls the destinies of peoples and nations." The destinies of peoples is understood in the sense of the divine right of nations to self-determination. In South Africa this justifies the establishment of separate 'homelands' for the African people with the hope of a future South African commonwealth of nations.

The government has therefore from time to time employed intimidatory means to suppress those who dare to raise critical voices. There is severe censorship of books, magazines, recordings and films and a number of black theology publications have fallen foul to these laws of banning.

The exercise of Black theology was started by the University Christian Movement (UCM) in 1971. In 1972 the first seminar was held at Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre, and the papers read at this conference and other meetings were later published in a book form entitled 'Essays on Black Theology' (UCM Johannesburg 1972). This book was, however, banned in South Africa within a month of its publication but appeared later published in America entitled 'The Challenge of Black Theology in SA'.

This survey on black theology deals with writings on the subject covering the first ten years, that is 1970-1980. The first chapter is concerned with the historical basis of black theology, and I have in it tried to show and highlight the different factors and movements that influenced black theology. In the second chapter a justification for

the quest of black theology is brought forward. The third chapter basically deals with the definition of black theology and its relationship to African theology and the African Independent churches. And the last chapter deals with that most important subject of reconciliation between oppressed and oppressor.

This thesis would not have been possible without the interest of my supervisor the Rev. John Riches. He not only supervised me but also offered me his expert and invaluable advice on my construction of arguments, to him I am immensely grateful. My thanks also to the different librarians who helped me find my way in the libraries, some of whom even assisted me with the task of photocopying, the one who needs special mention is the librarian at the Sally Oaks Central Library Birmingham. I am grateful also to Mr David Forrester and others who read and criticised part of this work and a word of thanks to the typist. And last but not least a thank you to my family, my wife Cholofelo and my two daughters Lerato and Tumelo for their love and understanding during my research work.

In conclusion may I point out that right at the beginning we need to set forth an important principle, that is, in our approach to black theology we must set aside all preconceived ideas and allow it to speak for itself.

A HISTORICAL BASIS

Black theology is an attempt by black theologians to reflect on the black situation of oppression born out of a historical experience of white domination. This is a history of the politically powerful racial group denying their fellow countrymen a say in the running of the country and refusing to share equally the wealth of the country. It is a theology born out of the awareness by black people that their poverty and oppression is not accidental or by Divine destiny, but rather that their position has been forced upon them by the greed and the intransigence of another racial group. The emergence of black theology and consciousness should therefore be seen as a protest against this inhumanity under which black people have been suffering for many years. It is a categorical rejection of white dominance and superiority, an unequivocal 'No' to apartheid.

Therefore for a thorough analysis of the reasons for the emergence of black theology it is imperative to look back into South Africa's history. For a study of South African history will make the reader immediately aware how inseparable politics and religion has always been. Though this may not only apply to South African history for throughout history, religion had always had some influence on politics, e.g. Martin Luther was also concerned about German money going to Rome as a drain on Germany's economy, the South African situation seems to be a classic example of how religious belief has shaped the course and direction of the country's history. It is in her history that one discovers a country polarised by racial bigotry in the name of separate but equal policy. For the protagonists of apartheid would like the world to believe that the policy is not a denial of basic human rights but rather that it is a recognition that every nation or race should determine separately its

own destiny. The artificial mixing of races they argue has never been successful for in most cases, these result in friction. To justify their convictions they quote as examples such mixed societies as the United States of America and Britain. It is indeed true that there are cases of racial discrimination in these countries but the difference is that, South Africa is the only country in the world which has entrenched racism in her constitution.

Therefore it is important if one has to understand the reasons for black theology, to consider some of these racial laws, how the churches especially the Dutch Reformed Churches have contributed to the entrenchment of Apartheid in South Africa and also how black people reacted to this form of racism in both church and state. I need to make it clear that the South Africa Apartheid problem is so complex that it is impossible to deal with all the laws but my intention is to highlight those which I believe to be the most vicious. These laws to my mind are the major causes of much suffering and humiliation for the black man.

Apartheid for South Africans simply means a total separation of black and white, socially and politically. This is necessary because "The Afrikaner is passionately race-conscious. Naziwise he is proud of the purity of his race and jealous of his recently acquired 'eie kultuur'"¹. Apartheid as a policy became law in South Africa after the victory of the Afrikaner Nationalists in the 1948 general elections.

This election as all successive parliamentary elections in South Africa was exclusively a white people's affair, for no black person had a right to vote. Since the introduction of Apartheid as the official policy of the government in 1948, Afrikaner commitment to it has meant the reaffirmation of racism through acts of parliament for the past 36 years. For the Afrikaner it is incontestable that black and white are different therefore "such enormous cultural and social differences

between black and white exist and there can never be coexistence in a common society."²

The laws passed by the South African regime to enforce separation of the races include those like influx control regulations. These enable government or municipality officials to control and check on the movements of black people from one place to another because "no African can be in an urban area without certain special qualifications or a job; no African can enter an urban area without previously obtaining an employment contract through a government labour bureau, no African can continue to reside in an urban area without periodically reapplying for permission to stay."³ Job security for white people is assured by the Industrial Conciliation Act which empowers the Minister for Labour to "prohibit the replacement of workers of one race by workers of another race and reserve a class of work or jobs for members of a specified race."⁴

I believe that the most classic example of Apartheid and what it means is to be found in the balkanization of South Africa into separate so called homelands. These Bantustans (homelands) ten of them in number are scattered all over South Africa in bits and pieces almost like a jigsaw. According to the government all black people in South Africa have their roots in these ethnically divided areas, by lineage or language. But it is interesting that while these areas are assigned to the majority of the South African population i.e. black, they only comprise 13% of the land while 87% is retained by the minority white population. Again the land given to these Bantustans is the most arid and agriculturally unproductive. It is in these places where black suffering and misery is concentrated, because of lack of employment,

lack of healthy sanitation and lack of water. At present this misery is accelerated by the government practice of uprooting whole communities from land which some had occupied for many years in the so-called white South Africa. These communities are sometimes moved by force and dumped in one of the areas in the Bantustans called resettlement areas.

For the South African white regime these Bantustans are important reservoirs of cheap black labour for the country's white market. Thus one may conclude that "The Bantustans are an integral part of the South African economic system - they represent South Africa's reserve army of unemployed and are a key component of the South African system."⁵ Thus black opposition to Apartheid has less to do with separate entrances of blacks and whites in places like post offices, railway stations etc. but it is rather a fight against the systematic disinheritance of black land by the white regime. In short, the black people's struggle is not so much a question of civil rights but is fundamentally that of land. Because government policy on land has been and still is,

1. That natives should not be allowed to own land among white people, but that so far as the ownership of land is concerned they should be confined to the various native reserves.
2. That natives and coloured people in our towns and villages should not live in European residential areas, but that there should be separate residential areas for them, that is to say separate native and coloured villages.⁶

Other Apartheid laws which clearly offend the rule of law are those like the Populations Registration, Separate Universities, Group Areas, General Law Amendment, Mixed Marriages, Immorality, etc. To deal with all kinds of dissent, government has designed a dense network

of repressive legislation, under the guise of National Security. Some of these give the Minister of Justice or Police power to restrict movements of persons suspected of subversive activities under house arrest or banning order, and empower the police to arrest and detain any person anywhere in South African and Namibia for any length of time without recourse to a court of law. Thus for the black man Apartheid is the most vicious and institutionalised violent system the world has seen since Nazism, but irrespective of its violence it has been sanctioned by both politicians and theologians. As Hastings rightly observes "Nowhere perhaps in Africa has there been a more consistent fusion of politics and religion than in the theory and practice of the Nationalist Party and the Dutch Reformed Church. The power kernel within both has been the secret organisation known as the Broederbond, founded in 1918."⁷

The Broederbond has thus far remained the most powerful and influential organisation on formation of government policy. Thus "the Broederbond with its carefully formed calls of influential Afrikaners, many of them Predikants (Ministers of Religion) was behind that mobilisation of the Afrikaner people and the Dutch Reformed Churches which produced the 1948 election victory and the subsequent ruthless implementation of the policy of Apartheid."⁸

The implementation of South African racial policies even meant the separation of blood donated by blacks from that donated by whites. Because in South Africa the Blood Transfusion Service has the procedure of labelling blood according to the race of the donor.

Strictly they do not supply black blood to white patients but "a certain amount of white blood goes to blacks but for medical reasons

no black blood goes to white, we owe it to our patients to supply them with the safest blood available - blood free of the hepatitis germ which is more prevalent in black blood"⁹ say the spokesman. This indeed is unscientific and ridiculous but it only goes to show to what extent white South Africans can go to protect their supposed racial purity.

Black theology therefore addresses itself to the situation which I had attempted to depict, a situation responsible for black suffering and depredation. This struggle is two-fold that is, it is a fight against the overt segregation practiced by the Dutch Reformed Churches and against erroneous teachings of some early missionaries from Europe; these not only made people discard their primitive clothes but also drop their traditional habits and customs which were found offensive in the new religion. Such people did not realise that "a black man cannot change his face. They have tried to and failed. Black men wear European suits, speak with English accents and defrizz their hair and it makes little or no difference. The blacks cannot fade into the white crowd,"¹⁰ And as Biko observed they not only confused black people but "scared our people with stories of hell."¹¹

Even the so called English speaking churches are not blameless in the present South African status quo. For as Kotze, Naude and Meyer have said "If blood runs in the streets of South Africa it will not be because the World Council of Churches has done something but because the churches in South Africa have done nothing."¹² This is so because the majority of the members of the churches "are quite happy practicing a comfortable Sunday religion that is not allowed to intrude into their daily lives or to criticise their accepted attitudes."¹³

The English speaking churches are historically recognised for their opposition to the policy of Apartheid, represented by distinguished men like Ambrose Reeves, Trevor Huddleston, Joost de Blank, Archbishop Hurley and many others. Before his death Archbishop Clayton vehemently protested against an intended governmental bill prohibiting Africans from worship in white areas. The act to be called the Native Laws Amendment Act of 1957 was to enable the government minister responsible to ban attendance of the natives at any church service outside their residential areas if their presence constituted a nuisance to white residents in the vicinity. After writing the letter to Strydom before his death Clayton took Reeves by the arm and said "Reeves I don't want to go to prison but I'll go if I have to."¹⁴ Clayton's condemnation of this Act was followed by those of most mainline churches e.g. Methodist, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians and others. Synods, assemblies or conferences never concluded their business without one resolution rejecting Apartheid as inconsistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But their condemnation of Apartheid was only verbal. Although black people were in the majority in these churches, all positions of power and decision making remained in the hands of white people. Thus Hastings rightly observes "Their protests against racial injustice were of marginal significance, their promotion of black men to positions of church authority little more than rural window dressing. With eleven diocesan bishops in the country the Anglican communion still had only one black one in Zululand. Of some twenty-five Catholic diocesan bishops only two were black and they were newly appointed in Bantustan areas."¹⁵ Even as late as 1974 whites were still not prepared to elect a black bishop for there "was the subsequent refusal of the white electors of the diocese of Grahamstown to listen to their black colleagues

and choose Desmond Tutu, the one and only younger black priest of the Province with an international standing."¹⁶

The Dutch Reformed Churches justification of Apartheid led Huddleston to write "that it gives to apartheid exactly the religious sanction which the Christian church everywhere else in the world gives to the idea that all men are of equal value in the sight of God."¹⁷ These churches are therefore rightly seen by many as the Afrikaner Nationalist party at prayer, but as I have already said the English Churches did not escape criticism e.g. for paying different stipends to their clergy based on skin colour "The European having the highest, the African the lowest and generally the coloured is somewhere in between,"¹⁸ among other things.

These practices of segregation in the established or historical churches inevitably led to schism. As secessions from white dominated churches by blacks actually became the order of the day. The separated churches took three forms (1) Zionist (2) Ethiopian and (3) Messianic. Edward Roux undoubtedly refers to the Ethiopian type when he says "the first Bantu movement on truly national lines was a religious one"¹⁹ Outwardly the Ethiopians had a religious appearance while inwardly they harboured hopes of unity of all African tribes and nations. In reality their protest was against the treatment given to African Christians by the missionary churches because "Bantu Christians almost always found that there were colour bars in the white churches where even some of the most enthusiastic missionaries insisted upon treating all members of their native flocks as children, refusing to ordain black men as priests or if they did so ordain them always putting them in positions where they had to take orders from white superiors."²⁰

But it is necessary to note that not all of these secessions had a national outlook, because others had very strong tribalistic leanings and confined themselves to specific areas. The difference between Ethiopianism and Zionism according to Sundkler is "whereas the Ethiopian mythology projects the longings of the Africans to a Christian African nation under the Lion of Judah, King of Kings, the Zionist mythical charter leads their thoughts to the Holy Land itself."²¹ In calling his church Zion the prophet links his baptism "with that apostolic succession which flows from Jordan, the River of life" and furthermore he "defines it as a New Testament Church which in minute detail carries out the religious programme supposed to have been laid down by the central figure of the Zionist Bible, John the Baptist."²²

In 1884 the first tribal church was that formed among the Tembus, a Xhosa tribe living in the Transkei. This secession was led by Nehemiah Tibe who was a Wesleyan minister. He left his church because of European Missionary criticism against his Tembu nationalistic sympathies. His venture received total tribal support and the Tembu chief was made the visible head of the church. Basically "the cause of this important secession was not only opposition to European control but also a positive desire to adapt the message of the Church to the heritage of the Tembu tribe."²³

A similar breaking away affected the London Missionary Society at Taung in the Northern Cape in 1885. But in that case it was the tribal chief who founded his own church and appointed the ministers. And in 1889 an Anglican evangelist near Pretoria started his own church, the 'Africa Church'. It is therefore worth noting that the ideas of these various separate church founders spread widely and their thoughts were

to gain momentum later. This was made possible by the discovery of gold and the railways which attracted many black people to the Witwatersrand i.e. Johannesburg, Germiston and the Vaal. Among these labourers were many evangelists and ministers, and coming from different parts of the country, they were able to share and exchange ideas and opinions.

Mangena Mokone a Methodist minister was one of these leaders. He became disillusioned with his church's discriminatory practices during a Wesleyan Missionary congress in Pretoria. The congress arranged separate meeting places for black and whites, but whites could, if they wished, attend black meetings, while blacks were completely barred from white meetings. For Mokone this was the last straw and he broke away and formed the Ethiopian church. Hinchliff rightly makes this observation, "The Ethiopian church was national in a racial sense. It was an African church and aimed at being the religious organisation for all Africans in the sub continent."²⁴

Sundkler holds the view that Mokone and his other colleagues gave Psalm 68:31 :

Let bronze be brought from Egypt

Let Ethiopia hasten to stretch out her hands to god."

the meaning of a promise for the evangelisation of the whole of Africa; because "Mokone took this to mean the self-government of the African church under African leaders."²⁵ Thus Mokone's appeal became that of a wider African nationalism.

A colleague of Mokone named James Mata Dwane, also an ex-Wesleyan minister "a man of outstanding ability and energy but who also had "an opportunistic streak"²⁶ joined the Ethiopians. Dwane had quarreled with his superiors over the disposal of funds he had collected in England around 1894-1895. His aim was to use the funds for a project

which was to benefit the mission work, but his mission officials decided to place the money in a common fund. Their bullying decision infuriated Dwane so much that he left and joined the Ethiopians. But his ambition for leadership in the Ethiopian movement led to a struggle between him and Mokone, a leadership struggle that was to split the Ethiopians.

Nevertheless before the final break both leaders expressed a wish to unite with the North American black church named the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME). Fortunately their desires materialised in 1896 when the Ethiopian conference delegated three persons to travel to America and consolidate a union with the AME. But only Dwane of these three had the means to undertake the journey, and on his arrival in America he was enthusiastically received by blacks. He succeeded in affiliating the Ethiopians to the AME and on his return back to South Africa he managed to persuade all the Ethiopian leaders to follow him into the AME fold.

Again in 1899 Dwane went back to America, almost immediately after he was made assistant bishop by H M Turner a visiting AME bishop. His trip was for two reasons, firstly he was to appeal for funds to help the work of the church in South Africa and secondly he was keen to have his consecration confirmed by the American church. At the same time Dwane's ambition made him discontent with a status as "only an assistant bishop, a position which emphasised the inferior status of the African Church as compared with the Negro Church" and "he had discovered that the Ethiopian programme 'Africa for Africans' conflicted with the linking up of his church with an American (Negro) Mission Church."²⁷ Unfortunately Dwane's mission failed and even worse the American church refused to recognise his consecration.

On his return to South Africa Dwane was disappointed and sought contact with the Anglican church through Julius Gordon, rector of Queenstown, who clarified the meaning "of the apostolic succession and maintained that the AME could not hand on episcopal orders because they had never in the first place received them."²⁸ This contact finally led Dwane to split from the AME and formed his own 'Order of Ethiopia' in year 1900. The Order of Ethiopia became a semi-autonomous body under the Anglican Church. Dwane was made deacon and for some years he was provincial of the Order. Contrary to his dreams he died in 1915 without being made a bishop as he believed he was promised by the Anglican Church.

When Dwane left the Ethiopian movement "the importance of the American connections of the African Methodist Episcopal Church was emphasised by the United States Negroes sending one of their ablest men L.J. Coppin to South Africa as their first resident bishop."²⁹ Even today and irrespective of strong moves by South Africans for a South African black bishop, "the AME remains - a purely non-European church organisation largely dominated by American Negro influence. Its bishops are appointed from America."³⁰ The Order of Ethiopia also remained under Anglican supervision and only recently acquired their own bishop in the person of S Dwane a great grandson of James Dwane.

Peter Hinchliff identifies another type of schismatic movement as the Messianic movement and according to him these "offer a new Messiah - a black Messiah - as an alternative to the White Christ."³¹ The question asked by followers of this type is "whether Jesus is the Christ also for the African." This according to Sundkler "is a theological and religious problem of great importance in Zionist Churches in Johannesburg and Zululand."³² The primary contention of these movements

is ; the white man has no love for his fellow black so how can it be possible for a white Christian God to love the black man? The only logical conclusion they argue is that the black man needs his own Christ, a black Messiah.

An example of such a prophet was Isaiah Shembe founder of the Nazareth Church in Zululand. His faithful were convinced that Shembe was directly sent by God from heaven. Through him their desires were met because "the quest of the independent church was the quest for a ritual, a belief and a realised community in and through which immediate human needs, social, psychological and physical could be appropriately met. Too many such needs had hardly been met at all in a meaningful way by the mission churches."³³

The reasons put forward for secession vary and for some they might be ritual or spiritual hunger. But it is as I tried to show so far, political motives seem to be outstanding. It is therefore my conclusion that the men and women who broke away from the mission churches, did so to seek an outlet to preach a contextual gospel to a people hungry of both spiritual and political liberation. The disappointments experienced by these early leaders are almost the same as those expressed by black theologians in the seventies with churches they belong to; perhaps one may call it 'old wine in new wine skins'.

THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCHES THEOLOGIZED RACISM

The Dutch Reformed Churches support of Apartheid even made it necessary for them to seek biblical evidence to confirm Divine intentions for the separation of the races. This fact is easily traced back to the 1836 Afrikaner great trek from the Cape Colony which was under the

British, into the hinterland. One of the objections put forward by those who were leaving was their dismay at being made equal to slaves which was contrary to the will of God. Since that time the Afrikaners have maintained in both church and state a clear distinction between the white master and the black servant. Such a strong bond between church and state was made plain when after the nationalist victory in the 1948 South African general election Die Kerkbode declared, "We as Church give thanks with humility that the members of our Government are all bearers of Protestant belief, members of the Christian Church."³⁴

The Afrikaner nationalist party "had for its part explicitly based its policy of apartheid on the christian principle of right and justice - Dr Malan himself had been a minister of the church and his approach to political issues was heavily religious. Christian nationalism was in fact the favourite name for the party's policy."³⁵ According to Hastings, a conference of the Dutch Reformed church meeting in Bloemfontain in 1950 even called "for the complete segregation of the races without racial hatred so that justice could be done to all. Only with separate development could Europeans and Africans both live happily in Southern Africa."³⁶

Douglas Bax a Presbyterian minister has aptly identified and analysed major scriptural texts to which the NGK for years has traditionally appealed in support of apartheid i.e. Gen 1 : 28, Gen 11:14-9, Deut 32: 8, Ac 2: 5-13 and Ac 17: 26³⁷ His examination is based on the Nederdruits Gansformeerde Kerk report of 1975 which claims that Gen 1:28 means "God's command, given to man at the time of his creation and repeated to Noah and his sons (Gen 9:1,7 in this command of God to multiply and fill the earth i.e. mankind was to fill the earth by

diverging into different volke (races). Thus the conclusion "ethnic diversity is in its very origin in accordance with the will of God."³⁸

Genesis 11: 1-9, the story of the Tower of Babel, is the most important justification for apartheid. This text does not only appear in the 1975 Report but throughout the whole tradition of the NGK theology of race relations this has been in effect the cardinal text."³⁹ The 1975 report therefore points out that the unity of the people on the plain of Shinar was already itself contrary to God's will, "artificial and a humanistic attempt at unity based on the arrogance of men, against God's original command (Gen 1 : 28). Therefore God now extended it by dividing mankind into different races as well". On this basis concludes the report, "the policy of separate development retains - validity for relations between different cultural and racial groups."⁴⁰

Deuteronomy 32: 8-9 is another favourite text and linked with Amos 9:7 "Are you not like the Ethiopians to me, O people of Israel" (RSV) The report goes on to argue how God "on occasion - even assigned each (Volk) its own homeland."⁴¹ The report therefore claims that Acts 17 : 26 "and he made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation" (RSV) supports "its interpretation of Gn 1 : 28 and confirms their exegesis of Gn 11: 1-9, Deut 32:8 and Am 9:7 i.e. God appointed specific times for various nations as well as their homelands"⁴² The Pentecost story Acts 2: 5-11 is also seen to be a confirmation of God's will "that each man should learn of the great deeds of God in his own language; thus the report emphasises the "cultural identities, linguistic barriers and the psychological distinctiveness of each people."⁴³

One must agree with Bax that people need to hear the scriptures in their own languages as recommended by the report. That indeed was partly what the Protestant Reformation was about, the need for the common tongue. It is however utterly repugnant and incomprehensible to base one's argument on Acts 2 :5-11 and the other texts as part of the justification of such an obnoxious system as apartheid. Bax is right to call the reports' conclusions to be an "eisegesis reading into the text what is just not there."⁴⁴ While it is important for the gospel to address itself to a given situation, that does not set us at liberty to pervert it, as Paul says "But even if we or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you let him be accursed" (Gal 1: 8 RSV). Thus Bax makes this important observation that the gospel needs to be "preached to people in their own indigenous cultural forms, so far as these can be christianised or are not irreconcilable with the Gospel."⁴⁵

Dr Hendrick Verwoerd once prime minister of South Africa and the chief architect of separate development made this comment "Perhaps it was intended that we should have been planted here at the southern point within this crisis area so that from this resistance might emanate the victory whereby all that has been built up since the days of Christ may be maintained for the good of all mankind."⁴⁶ That is the reason why the Afrikaner sees a similarity between the Great trek from the Cape and the Israelite exodus from Egypt. This is taken as proof that God protects the race he has chosen. The Afrikaners are now determined to protect the purity of their race and preserve the faith that inspired them.

In dealing with Afrikaner attitudes to world war two in 1939, when some Afrikaners refused to go to war because of their sympathy with

Hitler's cause, Mullar observes "the most important aspect of South African history during the years of the Second World war was not, however the country's contribution to the war against Germany and Italy but the violent internal political struggle which was sparked off by the war. The nation was sharply divided into two large groups, those who supported South Africa's war effort and those who opposed it."⁴⁷ The main opposition came from the Ossewa-Brandwag an Afrikaner organisation which also had as members an extremist group called the Storm-Jaers. The latter "could not be controlled and committed sabotage and treason, or as they viewed it, heroic acts of resistance against the governments was effort."⁴⁸ It is therefore worth noting that in 1941 the Ossewa-Brandwag new leader "advocated a political philosophy which differed little from that of Adolf Hitler."⁴⁹

Thus it was with the third Reich that Afrikanerdom identified itself and their God given destiny realised. Apartheid was their answer in that it preserved white civilisation and racial purity. So parliamentary laws such as the Mixed Marriage and Immorality acts were necessary to prohibit intimacy between black and white. But at the same time protagonists of Apartheid argue that the differentiation of peoples does not necessarily deny the fundamental equality of people. Rather as de Klerk maintained "when we advocate a policy of segregation and differentiation we don't want to oppress the black races. No we, want to respect the barriers which have been set up by God himself. We want to give to the Native his right in his own territory. He must be developed on the lines of his own race peculiarities. This cannot be done by the intermixing of the races. To give the Native his right does not mean that he must be social equal of the white. He doesn't want it."⁵⁰

The Afrikaners' dream and objective is to see a divided South Africa as I have already stated when I was dealing with the Bantustans.

They no doubt envisage a white state existing alongside black states, the homelands, but unfortunately for South Africa there is no international recognition forthcoming for these so called independent states. The idea of separate states is strongly supported by NGK general Synods of 1966 and 1970 to be "God's will that every people should maintain and preserve itself."⁵¹

This obsession with Apartheid even made the Dutch Reformed Churches adopt the separation of churches according to race as their mission policy. Because in 1881 they established the racially separate NG Sending-Kerk, for "Instead of the Church committing itself to overcome the sin of racial pride, black people were asked to be the least and to leave the church."⁵² But to the NGK embarrassment their mission or daughter churches decided to go their own way by even applying for membership of the South African Council of Churches, an organisation the NGK does not belong to since their disaffiliation from it. And in 1982 the daughter churches with other reformed christians met under an umbrella organisation 'The Alliance of Black Reformed Christians' and declared "Apartheid is a sin, that the moral and theological justification of it is a travesty of the Gospel, and in its persistent disobedience to the word of God, a theological heresy".⁵³

The following year at the Hammaskraal conference they further said "We are not against dialogue with the White Dutch Reformed Churches however, we cannot engage in dialogue with the White Dutch Reformed Churches as long as (a) they continue not only to talk from within the framework of their acceptance of apartheid but also to give it a moral and theological justification; (b) they continue to use the instruments of power at their disposal to manipulate such discussions to suit their own ends; (c) they continue to refuse to declare apartheid sinful and to confess their complicity in the suffering and oppression of our people."⁵⁴

The suspension of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) and the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk (NHK) by the WARC was in fact a heeding to what the black churches has asked for. The WARC after suspending them laid down conditions that they can only be restored to full membership when :

- (a) Black christians are no longer excluded from church services especially from Holy Communion
- (b) Concrete support in word and deed is given to those who suffer under the system of apartheid (separate development)
- (c) Unequivocal synod resolutions are made which reject apartheid and commit the church to dismantling this system in both church and politics.⁵⁵

Though Calvinist, the Dutch Reformed Churches did not pay proper attention to John Calvin's teaching on the Lord's Supper. Their exclusion of people of other racial groups from the Lord's Table is clearly contrary to Calvin's idea of the eucharist, "we shall benefit very much from the Sacrament if this thought is impressed and engraved upon our minds, that none of the brethren can be injured, despised, rejected, abused or in any way offended by us, without at the same time, injuring despising and abusing Christ by the wrongs we do."⁵⁶

The protest of black people is therefore clearly addressed to the uncompromising stand of the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk who still uphold "We are further convinced that a political policy of separate development and equal opportunities is not in conflict with Holy Scripture."⁵⁷ And the protest is also directed against the English speaking churches who are reluctant to eliminate the evil practice of racism from their own door steps because "it is in their general practice that the English-speaking churches are found wanting."⁵⁸ It is the attitudes and

practices of these churches that made the black man look at himself and say 'black man you are on your own'. This was the self-effort of the oppressed black masses to liberate themselves from the bondage of apartheid, because 'freedom has never been given to the oppressed on a plate.'

THE EMERGENCE OF BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS AND THEOLOGY

Even long before the appearance of the black theology and black consciousness movements on the South African scene, black churchmen made a tremendous contribution to the struggle for justice. The African National congress secretary from 1936-1949 was an Anglican minister J Calata. And their first national executive included four ministers of religion. One is also reminded of ministers like Canaan Banana Ndebaningi Sithole, Abel Mazorewa and others who played important parts in the politics of Zimbabwe. It is also of interest that in South Africa it was the Inter-denomination African Ministers Federation that managed to organise a national conference on Apartheid. The conference known at the time as All-in African Conference of 1956 accordingly resolved to reject apartheid because it denies the African

- (a) A share in the government of the country
- (b) Inviolability of the home
- (c) Economic rights, the rights to collective bargaining and to sell labour on the best market
- (d) The right to free assembly and freedom of travel, movement and association.
- (e) Inviolability of person
- (f) Civil rights.

The black consciousness movement therefore filled the vacuum created when after the massacre by police of civilians at Sharpeville in 1960 the government saw it fit to proscribe both the ANC and PAC (Pan African Congress). This protest at Sharpeville had to do with the pass laws when "3,000 to 20,000 people (witnesses differ) presented themselves at the local police station without their passes, thus inviting arrest. The police panicked shooting and killing 68 and wounding 186."⁶⁰

The main objective of the South African Student Organisation founded in 1968 was to propagate the message of black self-reliance after realising that "the dream of an integrated society was fading."⁶¹ Before the dream faded black student belonged to the multi-racial National Union of South African Students and the more radical University Christian Movement (UCM). Undoubtedly it was in UCM that black students found the opportunity of coming together and sharing ideas. Thus the plan of forming an exclusive black student organisation was hatched at the Stutterheim UCM conference in 1968.

The formation of SASO took place the same year in December at Maryhill in Natal. To start with, SASO was essentially a student movement but later 'it addressed itself to both student problems and to the broader issues of black emancipation."⁶² That the movement first appealed to black students was evident in Biko's first presidential address, "To crystallise the needs and aspirations of non-white students and to seek to make known their grievances."⁶³ Its later concern with broader issues necessitated SASO to seek allies outside the college or university campus, and religious, sporting and educational type bodies needed to be contacted. In the long run this contact paid dividends for with the help of such bodies a national political organisation was launched.

This happened in 1972 when the Black Peoples' Convention (BPC) was founded. It is also interesting that out of the four founding member organisations of the BPC, three were religious and these were the Inter-denominational African Ministers Association (IDAMASA) Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the African Independent Church's Association (AICA)⁶⁴ This may explain the interest of black students in promoting black theology and again we need to remember that these student leaders were earlier members of the UCM which was involved in propagating James Cone's ideas of Black Theology.⁶⁵ Such interest is made plain by Biko's comment "it seeks to relate God and Christ once more to the black man and his daily problems. It wants to describe Christ as a fighting God, not a passive God who allows a lie to rest unchallenged. This is an important aspect of Black Consciousness, for quite a large proportion of black people in South Africa are Christians."⁶⁶

Blackness in the black consciousness philosophy was never associated with skin pigmentation, but rather it was a way of life, an attitude of the mind. With such an understanding of blackness, it was therefore possible for other racial groups like Coloureds and Asians to find a home in the black consciousness movement. Because "over and above the assertion that Blacks had to organise alone, the leaders of SASO held that Coloureds and Indians were also black, and from the inception the Executive of the student body included members drawn from the Coloured and Indian campuses. Being black was associated with a way of viewing the world and not with skin colour."⁶⁷ The only criterion for such reasoning was that black is understood to mean all those people who are economically, socially and politically discriminated against.

Nevertheless it does not mean that exponents of the black consciousness philosophy were unaware "that the policies of successive South African Governments were inspired rather by economic than by racial ideology."⁶⁸ or that "Verwoerd's definition of apartheid laid special emphasis on the economic sphere and the colour bar."⁶⁹ But, though not overlooking the importance of the economical factor, black consciousness need emphasise the race issue even more for in South Africa it is not so much your position on the social ladder, rich or poor, bourgeoisie or proletariat which makes you a target of the policy of Apartheid. White South Africans whether poor or rich, radical or conservative, still enjoy all privileges reserved for the 'whites only'. The man who bears the brunt of separate development is no doubt the one who happens to be black.

Thus Bishop Zwane aptly explains that black consciousness is "the result of a long suffering and oppression. Perhaps not so much physical oppression but a denial of history, culture and in these two areas there has been an insistence that black people had no history, black people had no culture and all that they read, all that they learnt was European history, white man's culture, and so they were expected to behave like the white man."⁷⁰ Therefore the philosophy of black consciousness aims at making the black man realise his true nature, he must recognise that his culture and history is distinct from that of the white man. He "realises that one of the most potent weapons used to oppress him was a deliberate suppression of his blackness in favour of white superiority. Hence his black history was distorted, his culture denied him - therefore to recreate a black personality means to establish the validity of black history and black culture because the correlation between history and culture determines the nature of society and the individual."⁷¹

When black people have reached a level of respect for themselves and their history, then they will no longer be ashamed of their blackness. They will refuse to be judged according to other people's value systems and standards, they are now 'somebody' black and proud. "This awakening of black-self to the presence of oneself as black, is also a rejection of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring ones soul by the tape of a world that looks on in bemused contempt and pity."⁷²

All that this philosophy is about for the black man is to see himself as self-defined and not as defined by others. Biko observes "it seeks to demonstrate the lie that black is an aberration from the normal which is white. It is a manifestation of a new realisation that by seeking to run away from themselves and to emulate the white man, blacks are insulting the intelligence of whoever created them black. It seeks to infuse the black community with a new found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value systems, their culture, their religion and their outlook to life."⁷³

The black consciousness movement is therefore seen as being parallel to black theology, because both of them arose from the same black experience. This explains the interest of SASO in black theology because for them black theology is an extension of black consciousness for by 1970 SASO was "espousing the cause of Black Theology."⁷⁴ Both these movements were endeavouring to articulate a way of engaging in a struggle for liberation which took seriously the existential experience of being oppressed in South Africa. The protagonists of blackness therefore fail to see a dichotomy between theology and consciousness; they therefore held the view that theology can never be done in a vacuum. The close relationship between them should be seen as an expression of a

vision of liberation whose objective is to conscientise and involve black people in the struggle for a just social order. Theology therefore needs to interpret the experiences of a given community. This is a recognition that Christians living in different situations will have a different understanding of life and a different grasp of the gospel and its demands for their lives.

Black theology is therefore an attempt by black Christians to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ in the light of experience. By asking themselves what does it mean to believe in Jesus Christ under the evils of Apartheid? In black theology they find the answer that "God always encounters man in a situation of historical liberation, and hence the invitation to participate actively here and now in the struggle for freedom. This liberation makes no distinction between 'body and soul' It is one and total. It is the liberation of the blacks from white oppression in spite of the social and military supremacy of the oppressor."⁷⁵ With such knowledge the individual Christian discovers that his christian praxis is that of an active involvement in the history of liberation.

Black theology therefore maintains that though theology is the study about God and our relationship with Him, it is also a study about the relationship between man and man, both vertical and horizontal. Because "any theology of salvation whose point of departure is divorced from the here and now from this worldly reality is bound to failure."⁷⁶ For the gospel becomes meaningful in the Southern African situation when it is able to address itself as liberatory in a situation where blackness has come to mean rejection, exploitation and disinheritance therefore making suffering co-existent with blackness.

A BLACK UNDERSTANDING OF SUFFERING

The notion of suffering for blacks has always either meant an obsessive wish that the situation were otherwise or an acceptance of it as the will of God. Traditionally they understood suffering as of a physical nature and as Mbiti says "Death brings physical suffering to an end."⁷⁷ Misfortunes were always attributed to spiritual or human powers. One example would be a family which has failed to perform the required customary ritual after the death of a member and misfortune befalls them, and this is seen to emphasise the belief that "a person does not die, but lives; the family can therefore appeal to the living-dead if there is something they wish to do. But then again if they go wrong he will give them a good slap."⁷⁸ Suffering of course in this sense was regarded as "punishments aimed at correcting."⁷⁹

Unemployment or failure of promotion at work was definitely not attributed to lack of luck or economic recession but rather it was "seen as mysteries which often defy explanation."⁸⁰ For example some people among the Ndebeles in the Northern Transvaal speak of a person being struck "with lightning and not "by" lightning, meaning that the lightning was sent by someone to that person. Because "for the African people nothing sorrowful happens by accident or chance, it must all be caused by some agent (either human or spiritual)⁸¹ Both Christians and non Christian people understood suffering where a person suffers because he has contravened some regulation, and God or the spirits, therefore, punish the offender. But also "in most cases, different forms of suffering are believed to be caused by human agents who are almost exclusively witches, sorcerers and workers of evil magic."⁸²

Thus people came to view and accept suffering as the will of God, who otherwise would not have allowed it to happen. They shrugged their shoulders submissively saying to themselves, "What can we do, we were made to be hewers of wood." Here suffering should be seen as capable of encroaching upon one's being and driving one to a point of cursing one's creator. Because black people started questioning the wisdom of their creator, or looked to heaven after death to be compensated for the suffering and pain in this world. Black ministers and preachers electrified the mood by their highly moralistic "pie in the sky" sermons. Christians were "encouraged to escape, howbeit psychologically from this world of suffering to heaven which now they visualise as a place where tears and pain are to be blotted out."⁸³ The following hymn clearly brings out such sentiments;

My Lord the earth is like a wilderness
With much trouble and hunger
I am waiting for you in great thirst
Your servants are ever tired

I beseech the Father, remember me
Lest I give up my journey
Help me to be victorious in your work
When the Lord's day comes
I will receive a crown
Together with the saints⁸⁴

Mbiti therefore rightly observes that it is such expectations that "makes Heaven per se, self-contained in the sense that, for Christians, simply by getting there all the good things automatically become available and all the bad things automatically disappear."⁸⁵

Even when suffering under an inhuman policy such as Apartheid, it became customary for black people to resign themselves and endure such suffering. For them the present worldly condition is but temporary and in heaven the roles will be reversed and the oppressor will become the sufferer. Sundkler therefore observes "In a country where some irresponsible whites tell the African that Jesus is only for the white man, the African takes his revenge by projecting the colour bar right into heavenly places. According to them their prophet and Messiah Shembe who stands at the heavenly gate, turns away the whites because they, as the rich man, have already in their lifetime received their good things."⁸⁶

The earlier days of black consciousness also revealed this acceptance of suffering hangover in songs such as "Senseni Na"

What have we done

What have we done

Our sin is blackness

Black theology therefore had to wage war against the mentality of accepting suffering to be the will of God. For this can only mean "blacks have given up hope for change in this world. By reaching for heaven they are saying that the odds are against them now; God must have something better in store for black people later."⁸⁷ Even today Cone continues "This other worldly ethos is still very much a part of the black churches"⁸⁸ and one can observe that especially among the Pentecostal congregations. But according to Cone the blame is mostly on the white missionary's doorstep who "persuaded most black religious people that life on earth was insignificant because obedient servants of God could expect a reward in heaven after death. As one might expect, obedience meant adherence to the laws of the white masters. Most black people accepted the white interpretation of Christianity which divested

them of the concern they might have had about their freedom in the present."⁸⁹

This ethos has become a part of the black church as Cone had indeed said it is very common to come across black people who "affirm that if one has Jesus it does not matter whether there is injustice, brutality and suffering. Jesus thus becomes a magical name which gives the people a distorted hope in another life. Through identification with a name, unbearable suffering becomes bearable."⁹⁰ The high expectation of a better life in the hereafter is outrightly rejected in black theology for it borders on a false eschatology. Black people are summoned for the now, to rid themselves of suffering caused by racism. Because "if eschatology means that one believes that God is totally uninvolved in suffering of men because he is preparing them for another world, then Black Theology is not eschatological. Black theology is an earthly theology. It is not concerned with the last things but the white thing - there is only one question about reality for blacks, what must we do about white racism."⁹¹ Thus Cone concludes "Black Theology refuses to embrace an interpretation of eschatology which would turn our eyes from injustice now."⁹²

Mosothoane rightly points out that "if life and strength (force vitale) is the Africans most important possession, and if therefore the most dreaded thing is the harm that can be caused to one's force vitale, then it follows that the most hated man will be the man who is a threat to one's matla (power) and bophelo (life)"⁹³ It is the black people's respect and protectionist attitude of life that black theology seeks to harness. For in Southern Africa black people's suffering is unquestionably caused by the socio-economic and the political status quo. This form of

suffering is rejected as unnecessary and sinful. Thus Bossak emphasises "Redemptive suffering on the other hand is suffering after the model of Christ to save others. This suffering is not an end in itself but is endured in the course of a struggle to realise the well being of others."⁹⁴ For black people are aware and accept that in every struggle for liberation casualties should be expected. That is somehow Tutu's message for black christians "Jesus Christ could not get to Easter without passing through Good Friday. God is asking us are we willing to be Simons of Cyrene, to help his Son carry his cross for the redemption of God's world"⁹⁵

The power to endure constructive suffering "comes out of love and seeks to realise the objective that lies beyond suffering namely liberation. This is the suffering the followers of Christ must bear, but bear manifestly thereby ultimately serving the liberation of self and the other."⁹⁶ The idea of suffering for a meaningful purpose, that is for liberation, changed the peoples' mood from that of self-pity to that of joyful suffering and a call for black solidarity aptly captured in this song; "Umzima Lumthwalo"

This burden is heavy

It want unity

We do not care

Even if we are imprisoned

We are dedicated for the liberation

But on the other hand blacks need to be reminded that they are not the only sufferers in South Africa. there are many white men and women who are ostracised because they "cannot accept the present situation in South Africa, and who have suffered exoruciatingly because of their commitment to what most people believe is true Gospel."⁹⁷ The list of such people is very long but perhaps the most respected and admired

person for his convictions against Apartheid is the former Dutch Reformed Church minister Beyers Naude.

The words of Jesus "I have come so that they may have life" reveal to us that God is concerned and identifies himself with our suffering. Moltmann is right when he says "God takes man so seriously that he suffers under the actions of man and can be injured by them. At the heart of the prophetic proclamation there stands the certainty that God is interested in the world to the point of suffering."⁹⁸

SOME EARLY CRITICISMS OF BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS

The emergence of black consciousness aroused mixed feelings for both black and white. There were those who accused it of black racism, while others suspected it to be falling into the government's trap of separate development. Indeed the Afrikaner Nationalist party initially welcomed the move for it proved the policy of Apartheid to be logical and right for the races of South Africa.

Some of the statements made by SASO leaders helped to alienate many who did not agree with the black consciousness ideology. This 'labelling' of other blacks as non-whites frustrated the very aims of the movement i.e. black solidarity because "many men of black skin were not considered black, particularly if they co-operated with the government."⁹⁹ Such rationalisations undoubtedly puzzled many because even "whites irrespective of their political sympathies were always judged by skin colour, and could never despite their way of thinking, be 'black'."¹⁰⁰ Biko tried to answer this accusation of black grouping excluding whites by saying that "even those whites who see much wrong with the system make it their business to control the response of the blacks to the provocation - To us it seems that their role spells out

the totality of the white power structure, the fact that though whites are our problem, it is still other whites who want to tell us how to deal with that problem."¹⁰¹

But irrespective of the criticisms and misgivings of some people against the black consciousness ideology, the movement was able to mobilise black student support in all black universities, college and seminary campuses. The movement filled the political vacuum created by the government's banning of the ANC and PAC. Therefore the black theology and black consciousness movement took up the struggle for liberation and articulated the people's desire to gain back their land because "land is life - it is an integral part of our individual family and community life. Our people have cared for land for thousands of generations and made it cultivable; to us therefore, it is the very substance of life. The history and identity of people is intimately bound up with land and, therefore our history and self-understanding become meaningful only when they are related to our land. Land is the primary means of our continuity as a people and it connects our past with the present and it is the hope of our future."¹⁰²

The movements challenged both the established churches and the South African regime a state which claims to be Christian with the words of this poem 'Christians' ;

Christians

With pious right they sit and plot
dividing God's beaches and his land
ensuring that the fairest go to them
the little that is left
Shared out among the many
Who have no say and forced to

accept the desperation of their plight

Christians

unconcerned about those who sit and starve

Whose crops, like themselves, die in arid soil

and others removed from the land they love

Christians

What welcome would they give God's son

confronted with the classification board

and identification card stating race

then consigned to his proper place

would he be banned for his message

that love has no colour connotation

that the brotherhood of man is all-embracing?¹⁰³

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A CASE FOR BLACK THEOLOGY

1. SELF AWARENESS

The saying that a lie told often enough may seem to be the truth cannot be far away from defining the black man's acceptance of himself as a non-being, to such an extent that he began to hate himself. In South Africa of our period there was a systematic brainwashing of the black person to feel and act as inferior to the white man. The colour of a person's skin was the criterion for belonging to the human race. Whiteness or quasi-whiteness was the aspiration of many blacks.

Both men and women began to use hot combs to stretch their kinky hair, a practice which in some cases led to severe burns. The use of blemishing beauty creams by young women became widespread, for in their minds 'beauty' was represented by a lighter skin colour. Respect and sometimes acceptance in educated black society depended on how conversant one was with European mannerisms. For an observer this may appear outrageous, but for blacks it was a must for gaining respect in white society.

This conditioning of the mind of the blacks can be seen as the most devastating of victories achieved by the policy of Apartheid and white supremacy, aptly described by Allan Boesak :

"The greatest ally of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed"¹
Another black writer commenting on the inferior mentality of blacks observes "It has sapped their will and made them sluggish and indeed unwilling to draw themselves away from whiteness for that to them would mean to draw themselves away from valuableness."²

It is such an equation of value with whiteness which prompted some black leaders and writers to entreat fellow blacks to reject outright this kind of white man's euphoria. The message that the black man no longer need aspire to white values and standards is pronounced in most black writings such as those of Manas Buthelezi, Steve Biko, Adam Small and many others. For Biko States " — we see a constant tendency by whites to depict blacks as of an inferior status. Our culture, our history and indeed all aspects of the black man's life have been battered nearly out of shape in the great collision between the indigenous values and the Anglo-Boer culture."³

The feelings of these black contributors are best summed up by Buthelezi - "Historical factors have caused the African to develop a 'masochistic complex' that is, the realisation of personal fulfilment in unconscious self-hatred and the despising and loathing of everything with which the ego is identified in social and cultural life."⁴

Now is the time for the black man to be himself and to stop cowering before anyone: "I will be what I am despite you - a person utterly intent on affirming my humanity."⁵ For the black man can boldly say "No to white racism in all its forms, oppressive and paternalistic. The time has passed when the white man epitomised all that is right and valuable, for no more is the white man the black man's yardstick to humanity."⁶

The new black man also rejects both segregation and integration. For the segregationist is the man who claims to know what is good for the black man, and on the other hand the integrationist is the man who interprets the concept in the light of the white man's exploitative values. Integration in this sense is a one-way movement, the black man is expected to see the white integrationist as his point of reference.

Biko therefore writes "It is an integration in which the black man will have to prove himself in terms of these values before meriting acceptance and ultimate assimilation."⁷

While the message of self-assertion was messianic for the black man, yet at the same time he is reminded that he is not absolved of guilt. It is Boesak who offers a remark upon this: "The moment that people realise that their position in life is not simply their 'lot' for which they have to thank (or to blame) God, they begin to see their own responsibility in history."⁸

Boesak's observation is revealing for black people had reached a point of total acceptance of their down-and-out position. Many began to explain their oppression as being the will of God, for why does God allow it to continue? They therefore envisage a reward in heaven after the worldly suffering, a pie in the sky' when you die' hope. Messages delivered from pulpits on Matthew 5 : 12. 'Your reward is in heaven' were thus most comforting to the ears of the faithful. This reflects a people who lived without hope of liberation or of ever liberating themselves.

Black people needed an injection of new life, if their lives had to be worth anything "If one is free at heart, no man-made chains can bind one to servitude but if one's mind is so manipulated and controlled by the oppressor as to make the oppressed believe that he is a liability to the white man, then there will be nothing the oppressed can do to scare his powerful masters."⁹

A clear call is to the black man to assert himself and to throw off the shackles of oppression to confirm his humanity with no fear or reverence to others. This new black man will now be able to see himself as a complete human being, and will be able to embrace the message of

black consciousness : "Black man, you are on your own." He will also stop apologising for his blackness for he will realise that blackness is "an attitude of the mind, a way of life."

2. MISSIONARIES : CONQUERORS OR MESSENGERS

Missionaries are usually targets of severe criticism from some of the writers of the black theology school. These see missionaries as nothing else but tools of white imperialism in Africa. For they argue that their function was to promote the capitalist system through their establishment among blacks of a demand for clothes, furniture and other goods. The missionaries are also accused of encouraging employment for wages and fostering the growth of an acquisitive society. Expressions like these are common, missionaries "were in the vanguard of the colonisation movement to 'civilise and educate' the savages and introduce the Christian message to them".¹⁰ Other black writers believe that "the acceptance of the Christian church, the triumph of the missionary endeavour, meant the rejection of African customs - the black convert followed the same line, often with more zeal, for he had to prove how Christian he was through the rejection of his past and roots."¹¹ Motlhabi thus writes : "Christianity was from the beginning brought to the black wrapped in Western culture and Western values, and no distinction was drawn between the two (Christianity and Western culture) Thus any black man wishing to become Christian had to embrace the whole of the Western values without due analysis and understanding and had to renounce his entire background as paganism and superstition."¹² Ntwasa also comments thus, on the question of Missionaries "not only to introduce Christianity, but also to supplant the existing societal order.

Whenever they set foot the black people have consistently turned away from themselves and their blackness, seeking to emulate whites thereby going against the deliberate plan of whomever created them black."¹³

The contention of these black contributors is clear enough, for missionaries had ulterior motives when they brought Christianity to Africa. There is a common saying among the black people that Missionaries gave us the bible and took away our land. Anti-missionary sentiments may be easily dismissed as irresponsible with no perception but it should be remembered that these kinds of feeling represent suspicions of a large majority of Africans who had experience or are still experiencing some form of oppression.

Need it be said that not all black writers say harsh words about missionaries all the time. Some expressed their gratitude for the work, "Most Africans are literate today precisely because of their efforts in education - many are alive because of their work in missionary hospitals. No, with many other Africans I take off my hat for their splendid work and wish to record our gratitude for what they have done and continue to do."¹⁴ Simon Gqubule has this to say "I make bold to say also that before coming to this country the agents of the various missionary societies did not have conferences with imperialists in order to plan a systematic subjugation of the black man."¹⁵

My own contention on this issue is that sometimes people need some objectivity. Whilst it is necessary to give vent to one's feelings at the same time one should be brave enough to give credit where it is due. It is neither fair nor true that all Missionaries were irresponsible, for our history teaches us about those such as Dr J Phillip who tried to improve the lot of the black man even to the annoyance of the colonists.

If one missionary misbehaved we have no right to reason that therefore all were bad, or to say that all were agents of imperialism. Do we

not strongly protest that "we want to be ourselves and to be treated as uniquely ourselves. We want people to relate to ourselves not simply to the 'whole' of which we are a 'part'." ¹⁶

There is no intention to water down the outrage of many black authors. For these contributors wrote from a situation that claims to be the bastion of Western Christian civilisation in that southern corner of Africa. Yet at the same time there is much racial hatred and segregation, combined with barbaric acts. With this in mind, we need to recognise the truth of the message missionaries carried, and their passionate attempts to establish certain institutions which they believed would develop the black man.

We learn from history about the work of the London Missionary Society and their mission at Bethelsdorf, a place suspected by colonists as a den of idleness in which the Hottentots sought refuge to avoid, labouring on farms belonging to the white colonists. Peter Hinchliff relates how the missionary who worked with the Hottentots tried to be one of them; "Vaderkemp wanted to provide landless Hottentots with a place of refuge He tried to identify himself with his flock, dressing, eating, and living like them and marrying a Malagasy slave." ¹⁷

Dr John Philip is well known for his endeavours in championing the struggle of the oppressed Hottentots and Africans. His name is always linked with 'Ordinance 50' an act which laid down that "The Hottentots could give or withhold their labour. All free persons of colour were to have the same legal rights as white colonists" ¹⁸. Hinchliff is right about Dr Philip when he observes "He has been lauded as the first and most vigorous champion of the underprivileged people of South Africa." ¹⁹

Yet another missionary who deserves respect is Bishop Colenso, who championed the retention of African culture even by converts to christianity. His attitude to African culture was altogether different

from his colleagues in the Anglican church in South Africa. Hinchliff therefore adds, he desired to use what already existed in the religious ideas of the Zulu as a foundation for the preaching of the Gospel. He had no desire to break pagan society and beliefs as a preliminary to building a new Christian Zulu nation."²⁰

We are also reminded that the missionaries " had to learn the language of the people and had to determine a system of writing for the language, provide schooling for children and for adults who could be persuaded to be taught, provide suitable reading matter by the translation of catechisms, tracts, portions of the scriptures and other literature."²¹ Indeed recognition and gratitude must go to some of those who used their printing machines to produce translations of the bible and books of grammar in African languages. One is immediately reminded of Robert Moffat's Setswana bible and that of William Shaw in Xhosa.

Missionaries hold a great record in the field of African education. Black people still look back with pride to institutions of learning which were started by Missionaries, such as Lovedale College, St Peters, Adams Mission, Inanda, Tigerkloof and others. The resulting progress in education is tabulated below for the province of Natal only :

<u>Year</u>	<u>Schools</u>	<u>Pupils</u>	<u>Grants</u>	22
1877	42	2390	£ 1935	
1910	175	13452	£10230	
1925	492	38441	£64020	

There were also skills imparted by missionaries such as carpentry, smithing, masonry printing, wagon making and sewing. How much of what the missionary taught and did was really part of the gospel, and how much was merely a form of western culture, remains an open question. For

we learn from history that revolutionaries of one generation become conservatives of another.

3. THE CHURCH THROUGH BLACK EYES

The church (this refers to those commonly called English speaking denominations in Southern Africa) had also her share of criticism, sometimes similar to that recorded against missionaries. She has been accused of practising racial discrimination and of misrepresenting the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Critics see her as just another instrument to perpetuate the South African status quo.

Common allegations are "..... most of the Churches have 70,80 or 90% of their membership within the black world. It is also a known fact that most of the Churches have 70,80 or 90% of controlling power in white hands. It is still a known fact that white people simply don't know black people and in most cases do not have the interests of black people at heart."²³ The following criticisms were also directed against the English speaking Church.

- "1. It makes Christianity too much of a turn the other cheek religion whilst addressing itself to a destitute people.
2. It is stunted with bureaucracy and institutionalism.
3. It manifests in its structures a tacit acceptance of the system i.e. "white equals value".
4. It is limited by too much specialisation."²⁴

Another writer, Motlhabi says this about the alleged double standard of the church and her hierarchy. "Today the hierarchy proclaims by word of mouth what it seldom, if ever, practises. Most often its practices, even within the church structures, are contrary to the true

gospel and to what the Church says in Biblical exposition if it says anything at all. It is clear that, once confidence in it has been lost, the Church can no longer speak convincingly about what it stands for."²⁵

Even on the question of theological education she comes under severe criticism, because it is claimed that what is taught at seminaries is unrelated to the black man's real socio-economic situation. "These institutions produce men, after a period of rigorous lectures on Doctrine, Ethics, Church History and the New Testament, who find it very difficult because of their educational background, to weld all these theological subjects into a meaningful Christian theology that can help them to grow in their understanding of the Christian gospel in a given situation, i.e. in their own black churches."²⁶ And the white teaching staff in these colleges are said to be "Few, if any, of them have any first-hand experience of either black communities or black parishes into their living or work situation. Those who have not come to the seminaries from overseas have experienced South Africa from the situation of the white suburbs. Hence it is to be expected that the pastoral training in the seminaries is inadequate."²⁷

One cannot doubt, as some writers put forward, that rivalries of different denominations went as far as disrupting a religiously homogeneous African society's social life. For the planting of Christianity in Africa" has not failed to make strangers out of relatives and even of husbands and wives. There are cases of husbands and wives who worship in different churches and children being divided between the two depending on which parent has a greater influence".²⁸ Furthermore "Divorces and delinquent children have been bred in family situations where there was no mutual acceptance simply because parents belonged to different denominations. Ordinary christian exercises like family

worship and the sending of children to Sunday School all of a sudden become a complex religious feat which only spiritual acrobats can perform with any degree of success."²⁹

A contrary viewpoint on the church is offered by Ernest Baartman who comments "Listening to a lot of young blacks one may get the impression that it is the church that is against Black Consciousness. The church through its preaching and work has helped the black man realise that he is a man. Not all streams of the church have done that in this country. Yet it is no lie to say that the church has made her contribution."³⁰ The writer further argues "when she preaches and teaches about God, as our Father, then it implies a sharing in the common sonship for all men in this country. When she preaches about Jesus nailed to a cross for the sin of the world, then it suggests a common brotherhood in sin for all people, black and white. When she teaches about the God who provides then surely He provides for all."³¹

Nevertheless Baartman is neither naive nor blind to the church's shortfalls: "She may not always have practised what she preached but she has, at times, courageously said these things."³² The criticism levelled against the church by many black people is understandable, submits the contributor for "she has preached in word and refuted in action."³³

Confusion still reigns in many black peoples' minds as to what constitutes the church. For them the church is the hierarchy i.e. the bishop and those in high positions. It never dawns on their minds that the church is the ecclesia, a society called out, the people of God. This view of the church remains a serious challenge to black theologians if their method of doing theology is to be understood and gain grass root support. If this does not happen I fear that black theology runs the risk of becoming another intellectual exercise.

The church in Southern Africa is still in fact an institutional embodiment of the Western Christian ethos. Her western style program of pastoral work, evangelistic witness and service have too little reference to the black patterns of the black society." But on Thursdays and other weekdays we have our 'Izimvualalo' (Revival service), and 'Imijikelezo' (street preaching) which ring so true to the African soul that if we stopped them completely we would be in trouble with our mothers.³⁴

Racial division in the structure of the church in South Africa has no doubt weakened her evangelistic and pastoral work. There are still many towns in South Africa where whites gather in churches from which blacks are excluded. The white and black congregations in many of these places have never met, and there is deep resentment among blacks against the 'white' church and against the whole church apparatus which appears passive on this question.

No one in his right mind expects the churches to blot out overnight racial and cultural differences but has the church ever tried to transpose such differences into something positive e.g. Gal 3: 28, Eph 2 : 15 ff. Or As Stauffer notes "But all the self-glorification of peoples of the world is overcome when their tongues unite in the many voiced choir which sings the glory of the mighty acts of God which he perfected in the cross."³⁵

The church has a duty to continue the fight that Christ began, a battle for the glory of God. She should not give cause for accusations that she has abandoned her people. Moltmann is right to observe "Historically the church has always had a political dimension. Whether it likes it or not, it represents a political factor from the history of the Reformation, the Confessing Church and the 'churches under the cross' the acknowledgement of the sole lordship of Christ plunges the church into political conflict."³⁶

4. BLACK THEOLOGY METHODOLOGY

In the sphere of theological reflection there has always been different points of departure among theologians. Tillich for instance and perhaps Schleiermacher before him, make anthropology the starting point. Tillich argues that "the theologian does not rest on the theological answer which he announces. He can give it in a convincing way only if he participates with his whole being in the situation of the question namely the human predicament."³⁷ Even black theology has no consensus of opinion on the point of departure. Some like Dectis Roberts see both faith in the existence of God and the exodus as good starting points for black theology, while others like Cone and Jones go for an anthropocentric point of departure. For Cone insists "How do we dare speak of God in a suffering world in which blacks are humiliated because they are black? This question occupies the central place in our theological perspective," William Jones, following Cone also says "If black liberation is the goal of black theology, black suffering in the final analysis is its starting point."³⁹

On methodology, Roberts contends that when the phenomenon of black theology emerged, black theologians never had time to look into the issue of method. For he writes "Methodology per se has to be considered in a calm, reflective climate. It is not the product of troubled waters."⁴⁰ Black theology as Roberts admits emerged from, or rather was a reaction to a society that was abnormal. One can pin point this feeling as one goes through black theological literature. A pointer to this fact of 'troubled' waters can be deduced from John Mbitis pan, "Black theology, however, is full of sorrow, bitterness, anger and hatred."⁴¹ Not only black theologians are preoccupied with the question of liberation,

for even the Latin American theologian Gutierrez says "It is a theology which is open in the protest against trampled human dignity, in the struggle against the plunder of the vast majority of people, in liberating love and in building of new, just and fraternal society - to the gift of the kingdom of God."⁴²

In Southern Africa, Robert's argument rings true, for "their message was different. They needed new ways of thinking and entering into theological discourse."⁴³ Southern African theologians' starting point is clearly that of suffering, as Bossek distinctly points out: "Any theology which does not take God's liberation of the poor and the oppressed as its central point of departure thereby excludes itself effectively from being a witness to divine presence in the world"⁴⁴ Motlhabi drives the point further "..... Christ not only has something to do with and something to offer to my soul, but to me in my entirety and my condition here and now"⁴⁵

Not one Southern African black theologian denies the fact that their type of theology is situational. It is situational because it concerns itself with the position of the black man in South Africa. For Black theology clearly "..... the Christian message must be brought to the Black man in terms of his own life and experience and, if necessary, in the idiom and dress and words of black poets, prophets and wise men."⁴⁶

Because black theology seeks to articulate black people's aspirations and to give them assurance about the liberating power of God, "It is for this reason that the context of black theological reflection has to emerge out of the experience of the oppression of black people in South Africa. It struggles to unravel the oppressive structures that are embodied in the policy of Apartheid."⁴⁷ And Buthelezi

comments that "The Black Theology methodology takes seriously the situation of the black man and seeks to understand the Gospel in relation to experience in this situation. Seeing that the black man experiences life from the position of being rejected because of his blackness, the methodology seeks to interpret the Gospel as a liberating event from the chains of rejection The method is anthropological in as far as it takes seriously the existential situation of the black anthropos as a point of orientation."⁴⁸

It is clear from Buthelezi and others in whose writings we can merely presume, that like Cone, the Southern African departure is that of suffering. Moore gives this summary, "It tries to understand as clearly as possible who these people are, what their life experiences are, and the nature and cause of their suffering. This is an indispensable datum of Black Theology."⁴⁹

The anthropocentrism of black theologians can be comprehended as long as there is a balance between it and theocentrism. Both may be justified in such a stance if it is understood with Rahner, that Anthropocentricity is not the opposite of the strictest theocentricity, it is opposed to the idea that in theology man is one particular theme among others, e.g. angels, the material world, or that it is possible to say something about God theologically without thereby automatically saying something about man and vice versa."⁵⁰

Whilst it is true that black theology has to be concerned with the question of suffering, it is also true that over-preoccupation with suffering can become counter-productive. For it was through suffering that Jesus on the cross gave us the joy of salvation. Black theologians may perhaps learn from African theology as Mbiti advocates "it grows

out of our joy in the experience of the Christian faith."⁵¹

Black people do not go about in rags with sad faces to show their suffering, oh no, but in the fashion of the poem cited by Small from the black poet Langston Hughes :

"Because my mouth
is wide with laughter
and my throat
is deep with song,
you do not think
I suffer after
I have held my pain
So long.
Because my mouth
is wide with laughter
you do not hear
my inner cry
Because my feet
are gay with dancing"⁵²

5. BIBLICAL JUSTIFICATION FOR BLACK THEOLOGY

It is almost acceptable to state without question that black people are notoriously religious, for religion permeates all the depths of their lives. For when they feel disillusioned they always turn to God or the bible to find solace. The bible, writes Roberts "is a book well loved in the black community and the black church. Black saints and sinners alike quote from its pages. It is a religious textbook for blacks."⁵³

Faith healers and African independent churches are our proof of this fact, since they rely heavily on and use the bible constantly. I hesitate to compare them to the bible thumbing evangelists, because for them the bible is where they find strength and guidance to solve problems.

The Old Testament plays a central role in their lives, for they see themselves paralleled to the life history of Israel; as Roberts aptly puts it, "For example, the bondage of Israel becomes their bondage and the deliverance of Israel their deliverance."⁵⁴ The whole exercise in this case is clearly not to interpret the bible in the light of the Exodus but rather to weave it into the texture of black experience. For Yahweh is the God who takes their side in the struggle for liberation from white oppression.

James Cone emphasises the point vehemently. "According to the Bible, the God of Israel is known by what he is doing in history for the salvation of man. It is this critical dimension of divine activity that makes history and revelation inseparable in biblical religion. To see the revelation of God is to see the action of God in the historical affairs of men. God is not uninvolved in human history, as in the Greek philosophical tradition. The opposite is true; he is participating in human history, moving in the direction of man's salvation which is the goal of divine activity."⁵⁵

The black American example of seeking and basing their liberation hopes on the Exodus, is closely followed by Southern African black theologians. It would not be unfair to say that the Southern African black theology discovers its soul brother in the American black theology movement. James Cone, Cleage and other Americans, speak almost the same language as the Southern Africans in the contribution to theology and liberation.

The importance of the Exodus as a historical event of Israel, is justified in that from there the Hebrews developed their understanding of the nature of God. The lesson was simply that, Yahweh is a God who acts in history, who unlike the other gods of that time, was not associated with some natural phenomena. In the Exodus God does not act in earthquake, wind or fire, but he acts decisively in the actual event of deliverance. "This experience with Yahweh made the people of Israel realise that Yahweh is not just one among many gods. No, he is the only true God. He is the completely other. And the all-surpassing characteristic of Yahweh is his acts in history as the God of justice and liberation for the sake of those who are weak and oppressed."⁵⁶ In agreement with Boesak, Desmond Tutu also argues " - for Israel comes into being through this event and she experiences God for the first time in and through this event, and she understands all her own history and all history, and even pre-history and subsequent history in terms of this event as history's paradigm".⁵⁷

There was surely an expressed desire for the Israelites who experienced the exciting drama of the exodus, to worship God away from Egypt, a house of bondage. Moses demanded of the Pharaoh, 'Let my people go in order to worship the Lord.' To serve and worship the Lord demands being free both physically and spiritually and indeed this is what is in the minds of black theologians as they press towards liberation.

Added to this debate is the voice of the President of Zimbabwe, himself a theologian of enormous insight and experience, who believes; "Moses was viewed by his people as a saviour sent to rescue them from their misery and degradation under Egyptian pharaohs. God was directly intervening in human affairs to put a stop to man's inhumanity to man.

What is significant in this event is that God entered the conflict on the side of the oppressed. It is also significant that God used man to fulfil his purposes."⁵⁸

For in the case of Banana, God's intervention on behalf of Israel against Pharaoh means that God justifies and condones even the armed struggle in the liberation of the dispossessed. He argues "When Pharaoh failed to respond positively to the language of argument and persuasion, God had no alternative but to use the language that Pharaoh himself spoke, the language of force and violence."⁵⁹ He therefore concludes that "in the same way all struggling people everywhere have the same call from God to rise up and fight to secure their deliverance and salvation. This is indeed a holy assignment a sanctified mission led by the hand of God. So all those who die in the defence of human rights are carrying out a divine mission, for a just and legitimate cause. If god supports people in their liberation struggles, who are we to oppose them?"⁶⁰

It is now history as far as the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe is concerned, but what cannot be forgotten is, that it was a bitter and sad war with much loss of life. Perhaps that is why Banana made this appeal - "Nothing could be more humanising than to learn to accept fellow human beings as equals entitled to share the same fruits of nature. Life is sacred and this sacredness must be jealously guarded and protected. It would be folly to allow the ambitions and corruptions of the few to destroy that which is honourable in life."⁶¹

Banana's statements are forceful and candid, and not at all or rather not many Christian people would go along with him. But one must note the argument that violence which is no doubt a negative use of power, is in this case not glorified but acknowledged as a means of achieving

liberation after other means have failed. There is therefore no use in just condemning violence. It is the duty of all Christians to inquire why blacks are driven to the armed struggle; perhaps with full comprehension of the fact, the church will be able to eliminate the conditions which generate violence. In fact, violence is a desperate expression of those who feel that no ordinary means will bring back to them their human integrity.

Our God says black theologians says 'No' to all forms of oppression and 'Yes' to freedom. "He comes into the human situation never neutrally but graciously to save or to judge and to punish."⁶² God has come to the aid of black people who are the oppressed under Apartheid, therefore "Black Theology taking its clue from this biblical message, refuses to let go of the truth that one cannot speak about God's love without also speaking of his righteousness, his justice which become concrete in his relation to human beings and the relations of people among themselves. God's love for his people is a divine activity, an activity bent on doing justice to his people. His love is never a kind of sentimentality that Israel could just as well do without. It is always surprisingly concrete Yahweh takes the side of his people against the oppressor."⁶³

Even through the prophets God's demand for social justice and equal distribution of wealth is revealed, argues Banana, a.g. in Amos 8:46, "Amos could not fail to note that under the more complex economic conditions of the Northern Kingdom, the independence of the farmers had been destroyed in the rise of the great landlords who bought up farm after farm and who manipulated the grain markets to their own personal advantage, enrichment and self-glory. The whole social structure had become corrupt; bribery was rife."⁶⁴ To this Tutu also adds, "The

prophets had a stubborn inability to separate the market place or the judicial village gate from the temple and the sanctuary."⁶⁵

In concluding the contention that "God is on the side of liberation because he loves justice, Bossak gives the examples of Micah 6:6-8 and Exodus 20:2, "God's righteousness and love become manifest in his deeds of liberation. It must be clear that Yahweh's liberation is not an isolated happening, a kind of flash-in-the-pan that is here one day and gone the next. It is a movement through history wherein Yahweh has proven himself to be the liberator."⁶⁶

But we also learn that God does not only demand justice from the oppressor, he also seeks justice from the oppressed, in whose nation there still exists exploitation of the poorest classes. Thus Bossak writes, "He demands justice not only from the pharaoh who oppresses Israel, but also from the rich and powerful within Israel who will not give justice to the poor."⁶⁷ What kind of God he is can be seen in Hosea 11:1, for "This liberating activity cannot be separated from God's love."⁶⁸

6. THE NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 4:18-19 is the driving force behind black theology, perhaps in the same sense that Rom 1:17 "He who through faith is righteous shall live (RSV) set Martin Luther on the way to the Reformation. The starting point of black theology is clearly as set forth by Basil Moore. "This is not pious talk suitable for aseptic little prayer meetings. In Christ God has identified himself with the wretched poor for their liberation. His whole life was a deliberate offensive against those

powers which hold men captive. In Biblical language this is spoken of as his conflict with Satan."⁶⁹

Commenting on Luke 4, Boesak writes "Jesus purposely places himself in the prophetic tradition of preaching the liberation message, offering himself as the fulfilment of the messianic prophecies This text lies at the heart of the theology of liberation."⁷⁰ In disapproval of the line of exegesis of this text by some western theologians, seeing it as purely spiritual, Boesak complains that "The situation of blackness, of being oppressed, was never taken seriously by western Christian theology. The tendency to spiritualise the biblical message is still dominant."⁷¹ The identity of the 'poor' still occupies the mind of many scholars, but for black theologians this does not seem to present a problem for them, there is unanimity that the word 'poor' can only refer to the oppressed. In any case I shall attempt to deal with this question later.

The message of the gospel is clearly understood by Motlhabi "that Christ not only has something to do with and something to offer to my soul, but to me in my entirety and my condition here and now."⁷² In identifying Christ's role in the world, Boesak replies "He is the promised one, the Messiah, who came to continue God's work of liberation in the world. He is the one on whom the Spirit of the Lord had descended, who is empowered to bring liberty to the captives, sight to the blind, healing to the broken hearted, and freedom to the oppressed."⁷³ It should be noticed that black theologians at the moment are not yet in the position to do or rather have not yet got in to the habit of doing verse by verse exposition of scripture to support their claim. They on the other hand refer to the general life, ministry, teaching and preaching

of Jesus as sufficient proof for Christ's identification with the unfortunates. "We need to remind ourselves constantly that Jesus was heir to the prophetic tradition. You cannot read any of the major prophets without being struck by at least one thing. They all condemned as worthless religiosity, a concern with offering God worship when we were unmindful of socio-political implications of our religion For Jesus, as for them, all of life belongs as a whole to God, both in its secular and sacred aspects. They could not have understood our peculiar habit of compartmentalising life, and nor could Jesus."⁷⁴

Against the notion of spiritualisation one contributor notes "The death of Jesus does not need to be spiritualised in order to make it redemptive. It only needs to be given additional, external meanings by those who have not experienced personally the agonies of the oppressed 'The poor, only the poor, can understand the full meaning of the death of Christ. He saves them by giving them certainty of future fulfilment when they are engaged in their struggle against the oppressor. The forces of oppression were completely defeated as they collide against the cross of Christ. Liberation became possible when somebody much stronger than the powers of this world overcame death through the power of the resurrection."⁷⁵

The Namibian theologian Kameeta unequivocally states "This word, born in poverty, confronts the status quo, liberates the oppressed and works revolutionary changes. It is not philosophical and abstract, as claimed by those who maintain the status quo. It is the word of Jesus the liberator, who speaks so urgently in 'Christian' Southern Africa."⁷⁶

Manas Buthelezi dealing with Romans 1 : 16-17 brings out the relevance of the account, as he observes, "And now God wants us to understand anew through this Epistle the relevance of the gospel for our

time. It calls for the proclamation of the gospel that saves, a gospel that makes a difference, not a redundant Gospel that equivocates and confuses the vital issues instead of defining them, that leaves wrongs unchallenged and wounds unhealed."⁷⁷

The relevance of Jesus' message and ministry for black Southern Africans is summarised by Basil Moore, "They hear Christ addressing them in their humiliating poverty 'See Me not only in the wretchedness all around you, but also in your own wretchedness and break free. If you look after yourself and your neighbour at the same time you will either be all poor together, or all rich together and so be free to be human."⁷⁸

As we have seen, both the Old and the New Testaments are at the heart of the struggle for justice and human dignity among the oppressed people in Southern Africa. For it was through Moses that God delivered the people of Israel and one of the black South African political vanguard, Albert Luthuli, even entitled his book "Let my People Go". The

prophets of the eighth century BC repeatedly reminded Israel of the exodus event, their deliverance from Egypt "Hear this word that the Lord has spoken against you, O people of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up out of the Land of Egypt (Amos 3:1, see also 2:10-11 RSV). From the mouth of Hosea we hear the words "When Israel was a child, I loved him and out of Egypt I called my son" (Hos 11:1, RSV); Hosea clearly sees the exodus as the true beginning of the people of Israel. God was revealed to Israel by what he did.

It is this God, He who acts, who has captured a central place in the life and history of the black struggle for liberation. The God who said "I have seen the afflictions of my people" fights on their side. He who took the precise step against Israel's enemies, has identified himself with the fight against oppression, poverty and

racism. The black theologians message is exact and straight forward: Our God can never be neutral, for "History is the theatre of his revelation and activity."⁷⁹ The way is now open for the black man to liberate himself and to build a new society where justice, love and peace will rule, under the hand of God. For "Those who are liberated are not liberated for themselves alone: They are to be an instrument of liberation in this world."⁸⁰

THE IDENTITY OF THE POOR

Luke has a special place for the poor and for those shunned by society in his gospel, e.g. blind, prisoners. Even in the beatitudes there is a striking difference of emphasis between Luke and Matthew. Matthew 5:3 has a longer form *Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι* while Luke has a shorter one *Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοί* (Luke 6:20). The question asked is, whether these two evangelists refer to the same people?

Unfortunately black theologians do not go deep enough in enquiring on this question 'Who are the poor?', perhaps with one or two exceptions. Most of them are convinced that the designation 'Poor' can only mean the oppressed e.g. black people. There is no wish on my part to enter into any polemic with such assumptions, nevertheless my fear is that there exists a great possibility of it being misunderstood. The impression it may leave on the people's mind might be, you only need to be poor in order to qualify for salvation. Poverty in this sense may come to be regarded as a virtue desired and blessed by God, and I am sure that such is not the intention nor is it the message of black theology.

After rejecting the spiritualisation of the word poor (*ptochos*)

and declaring it to mean "those who are materially poor"⁸¹, Boesak goes on to say that such spiritualisation, "leads to a distortion of the gospel message which then serves to sanction unjust and oppressive structures and relations."⁸² For him this form of exegesis turns Christ's gospel into "an instrument of injustice instead of the expectation of the poor."⁸³ Boesak holds the view that there is no difference between the 'poor' in Matthew and those in Luke, "When Jesus speaks of the poor, he speaks of them in the Old Testament sense, and when he mentions the poor as in Luke, or "the poor in spirit" as in Matthew, he is speaking of the same people."⁸⁴

An investigation into the meaning of the designation *ptochos*, is also undertaken by Mosothoane who concludes that the title in Luke "no doubt includes and perhaps is intended to refer more specifically to those who were economically deprived."⁸⁵ Unlike Boesak who sees the same meaning in the designation of the poor in both Matthew and Luke, Mosothoane puts forward an argument that "Those who are proclaimed blessed by Jesus in this Gospel are not Matthew's the "poor in spirit" but quite simply "you poor" and "you that hunger now" (Lk 6:20,21) and these are contrasted with those "that are rich" and those "that are full now" (Lk 6:24, 25)."⁸⁶

Following Joachim Jeremias rather closely, Mosothoane expresses the view that '*ptochos*' "includes much more than those who were economically deprived."⁸⁷ The wider definition of the title covers all those outcasts of society, the wretched of the earth, harlots, tax-collectors, publicans and others, collectively designated *ἁμαρτωλοὶ* sinners, for even "the *am-ha-arez* - the people of the land"⁸⁸ are included.

The uniqueness and importance of Mosothoane's contribution is in the fact that he manages to highlight the plight of the outcasts even among the oppressed. This is important because it saves black theology from self-righteousness, by reminding black people that they are also involved, "not only as oppressed but as oppressors."⁸⁹ For him if this has to be interpreted via-a-vis Africa, we are directed to "the problem of evil."⁹⁰

Mosothoane's approach here attempted to identify the poor in African society in the light of the gospel. Until then, in black theology literature, blackness was a sufficient requirement for *ptochos*. Like those, who threatened the purity of Jewish society, the 'sinners' in African society, are those who threaten or cause harm to other persons, e.g. witches or wizards, for "the most hated man will be the man who is a threat to one's *matla* (power) and *bophelo* (life)"⁹¹ After identifying the people who are despised "some for no fault of their own"⁹² e.g. families of people said to have bewitched others, the uneducated and so on, he sums up "These 'the poor' who need good news, the sick who need a physician"⁹³ The writer concludes that the good news to the poor, "gives new vision, new hope and a new future; it inspires man to accept, embrace and live out the new future he is being offered; it instils mutual respect."⁹⁴

Keck in his paper "the poor among the Saints in the New Testament, refutes Karl Holl's contention that the 'poor' refers to the Jerusalem church, that is to say, that it is one of the names of the church. Holl sought his support for this argument in Paul's writings to Galatia (Gal 2:10) and Rome (Rom 15:26), and alleged that "the saints 'and the poor' are virtually equivalent self-designations of the early church."⁹⁵

Keck points out that in Luke's second volume Acts, the word *ptochos* does not appear at all, "If the Jerusalem church had called itself 'the Poor' we might reasonably assume that a writer who knows many names for the group would know this one as well."⁹⁶ Therefore for Keck the title 'poor' in Luke means that the evangelist "..... does not regard 'the poor' or poverty as a technical designation but as an actual description."⁹⁷ Joachim Jeremias is also convinced that "The lucan tradition has in mind those who are really poor, just as in the continuation of the beatitudes it is thinking of those who are really hungry, who really weep and are really persecuted (Luke 6:21-23)"⁹⁸ After identifying the people for whom the good news is meant, namely publicans, sinners and those in despised trades, generally called "sinners" Jeremias says "That is not, of course, to say that by *οἱ πτωχοί* it means simply those who have no material possession, the proletariat, rather Luke 6:22^f shows that the Lucan tradition is thinking of the disciples, who have to suffer poverty, hunger and persecution because of their discipleship."⁹⁹ With particular reference to Luke 4:18, he points out "This makes it certain that the 'poor' are those who are oppressed in quite a general sense, the oppressed who cannot defend themselves, the desperate, the hopeless."¹⁰⁰

Jesus' attitude to and dealings with such like people mean ".... the good news consists in the fact that Jesus invites sinners to God's festive meals."¹⁰¹ This was an active form of forgiveness which left a mark on the people's minds for "the form of proclamation of forgiveness in action that most impressed the men of his time was his

table fellowship with sinners."¹⁰² According to John Riches, Jesus identifies with the downtrodden "His call to me to leave all and follow him stresses his poverty, marks out his identification with the poor and uprooted among the Galilean peasantry."¹⁰³

A further contribution to this important debate is from Santa Ana, who believes "This does not mean that anyone who is poor in material terms will receive the blessing. We must rather emphasise that according to the Scriptures, material and spiritual poverty are interconnected, the latter being the result of the former."¹⁰⁴ The writer therefore gives an important conclusion which needs to be taken seriously by all black theologians "material poverty in itself is no use unless it serves to lead the human being towards God."¹⁰⁵

Mosotheoane's attempt at identifying the poor is important and goes a long way to show how black theology can gain by learning and interacting with other theologies, even if they are white or Western. But at the same time the feelings and anger of black theologians are understood as far as the poor are concerned. For their frustration with the status quo in both Church and state is recognised in this statement; "The poor are not yet filled with good things, and the mighty still seem to be on their multinational thrones, though not all too comfortable. The poor are heeding the trumpet and awakening to the call to struggle. The Lord's words in the Synagogue at Nazareth, that He has been anointed to bring good news to the poor and to proclaim liberty to the captives, ring true with new meaning today. The righteousness of God in the Old Testament has shown itself in the deliverance of the poor from their oppressors, in the vindication of the defenceless in the definite taking of sides with the victims of injustice."¹⁰⁶

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BLACK THEOLOGY DEFINED

Black Theology in Southern Africa emerged at a critical period of the church. This period was marked by the failure of the white dominated christian churches to respond to the socio-political issues of the day in the country. Also at this time, black-white relations existed at a level of distrust. The two groups failed to negotiate their differences adequately because one was speaking from a position of strength, while the other spoke from a position of powerlessness. It was this inequality that led to an attitude of 'take it or leave it' when faced with a serious dispute, e.g. our boys this side or the other side of the border attitude.

The treatment meted to blacks by white people as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' in a way forced blacks to a closer self-examination. At the same time the emergence of black consciousness brought a new ray of hope to a people whose aspirations were constantly frustrated by government action. The impact of the black consciousness movement was felt all over the country especially in the various black university campuses and theological seminaries. Within the black consciousness philosophy was the compelling call of black solidarity. This solidarity was of a unified black nation, irrespective of tribe or language, and required that black people should begin to love their neighbours. For black theologians the message was a re-emphasis of Christ injunction in Matthew 25:35-36.

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." Black theology at that time made black christian people take a serious and closer look at their role in the black struggle for liberation.

It brought about a need within the black christian community to interpret the nature of the christian faith within the context of the struggle for freedom and justice in Southern Africa. The two movements of black theology and black consciousness arose as expressions of a vision of liberation whose goal is to awaken and involve members of the black community in the struggle for a just society.

Black theology has been described by Manas Buthelezi as a most misunderstood and misinterpreted discipline. Some see it as a vehicle for polarising black-white relationships, while others especially among the ranks of white liberals believed it to be a manifestation of black racism. For liberals black theology was an engagement in a dangerous exercise and a playing into the hands of the prophets of Apartheid, which was total separation between black and white people. Some black people rejected it for its hobnobbing with the exclusive black consciousness movement.

The misconstruction of black theology is best illustrated by the findings of a commission of inquiry into black theology which was set up by the South African government named the La Grange-Schlebusch Commission in 1971. In his evaluation of the commission's findings Manas Buthelezi points out some of the confusion involved. The first area of confusion is that expressed by the Dutch Reformed Church magazine. "Die Kerkbode" which saw black theology thus "It sums up our traditional missionary policy most effectively; "¹ this policy meant "giving Africans their own Churches, alongside the "white" parent body in which they would have complete responsibility."²

The commission expressed an opinion which was that "according to all the theologians who gave evidence before the Commission, it goes without saying that the scriptural validity of "black" or "white" or "brown" theology must be seriously questioned, since the Gospel and the

Bible is first and foremost concerned with the redemption of sinners through Jesus Christ and not with racist ideology."³ Buthelezi further showed what the commission thought of black theology, as influenced by Bultmann whose theology they said "is not founded on Christianity but shows the influence of Jean Paul Satre who is said to be pro-communist." So the commission asserted that "Black Theology has started in South Africa as a result of foreign influential factors which are hostile to South Africa. Among such influences are such accredited enemies of South Africa as Communism and the World Council of Churches."⁴

How people understood black theology is also revealed in a letter to the editor of Pro Veritate in 1972; the writer seems unhappy about the tags people attach to theology. He pointed out "with so much talk of 'white' religion or 'black' religion it should be remembered that the New Testament is fundamentally Hebrew." but the writer also concedes that "in its scope it is meant to be universal however much African, European or Indian thought may be pressed in to make it intelligible to this or that people."⁵ People do speak in terms of Barthian or Schillebeeckx theology and also of Dutch, German, English or American theology meaning of course theology as interpreted by these agents.

David Bosch a South African Dutch Reformed Church theologian agrees with a Lutheran theologian Theo Sundermeier in not seeing black theology as belonging to such disciplines as systematic theology or exegesis. According to their view it belongs to the field of hermeneutics; they therefore believe that "black theology has an apologetic pastoral and socio-ethical purpose. It aims at influencing and changing people's consciousness. It intends to be proclaimed and experienced,"⁶ Whilst it is true that the object of black theology is to conscientise the black masses, thus it is hermeneutical yet at the same time some theologians make the following assertion: "The nature of theology as a

whole is hermeneutical."⁷ It is also from the same book that we learn that "Systematic theology finds its position, as it were in the middle of the arch extending from the text to contemporary preaching. It stands between exegesis which is primarily concerned with the text as such and practical reflection, which is primarily concerned with the church's preaching."⁸

This clearly brings out the argument that what is called systematic theology cannot really do without hermeneutics, but that they are interdependent. Paul Tillich also shows how pointless it would be for a systematic theologian to attempt to do theology in a vacuum, for he says that the theologian "needs the help of creative representatives of existentialism in all realms of culture. He needs the support of the practical explorers of man's predicament, such as ministers, educators, psycho-analysts and counsellors. The theologian must re-interpret the traditional religious symbols and theological concepts in the light of the material he receives from these people."⁹ In a way there is much of interdependency between systematic theology, exegesis and hermeneutics.

Theology no doubt has to reflect, interpret and make Christ meaningful. Thus Dussel writes "Theology, then is strategic support for the liberation praxis of the christian, since it clarifies on a radical level the concrete, historical, somewhat veiled options that Christian faith daily interprets."¹⁰ So black theology confirms that God does intervene in human affairs, often in order to set the oppressed people free.

It is from the definition of black theology by black American theologians that one will be able to notice how dependent South African theology was on that of Americans. The explanation for this may be simply that of undergoing the same experience of colour prejudice. The quest for a Southern African black theology was first pioneered in South Africa by the University Christian Movement and was directly imported

from the United States of America. Even at their Seminars or Conferences on black theology, James Cone's ideas dominated and it was such ideas which formed the basis of black theology in South Africa.

Cone makes the following assertion "Black Theology must take seriously the reality of black people - their life of suffering and humiliation. This must be the point of departure of all God-talk which seeks to be black talk"¹¹ Deotis Roberts agrees with this when he says "Theology must be horizontal as well as vertical."¹² The intention of black theology is also explained in a statement made by Black Churchmen in 1969, which reads "Black theology is a theology of black liberation. It seeks to plumb the black condition in the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, so that the black community can see that the gospel is commensurate with the achievement of black humanity. It is the affirmation of black humanity that emancipates black people from white racism, thus providing authentic freedom for both white and black people. It affirms the humanity of white people in that it says No to the encroachment of white oppression. "The committee further says "it means that Black Theology must confront the issues which are a part of the reality of black oppression."¹³

A conference held in Bangkok in 1973 on black theology came out with this report "we should find out whose God is our God. Is he God of the power centres of princes of the elite? Or is he God of those whose work is hard and whose load is heavy? God cannot be on the side of both oppressed and oppressors."¹⁴ A report like this was given a stronger emphasis by another theological commission of the National Conference of Black Churchmen observing that "Black Theology is a political theology. The encounter of Black people with God takes place in the arena of

history and involves ethical judgements and decisions having to do with liberation from racism, poverty, cultural and political domination and economic exploitation. Black people see the hand of God not only in personal salvation but in social and political deliverance."¹⁵

An expectation of an active God goes back in African religious belief. At no time would a tribe undertake an expedition without asking their God for guidance or victory. The ritual was performed not only by those involved in such an expedition but by the whole tribe. The chief as the symbol of tribal unity was regarded as the high priest, and it was he who led the chants or praises. The idea of an active God is what has led black theologians to start looking closer into African religious beliefs and practices. The radicalism of Black American theologians may have influenced the statements of black South Africans. Some people are of the opinion that Southern African black theology has one leg in the United States of America and another in Africa. Basil Moore, however, does not fully agree with the statement that South African black theology is dependent on America.

His main argument is that Southern African black theology should not be seen as a carbon copy of the American model, thus he makes the following observation "While the catch title 'Black Theology' has been imported from the United States into South Africa, the content of American Black Theology has not been imported with the title."¹⁶ There is no doubt of validity in Moore's contention, though it is also true that the two societies are bound to express themselves through the same language, for they share so much in common. Perhaps the difference in the Southern African situation can be said to be that of degrees. Southern Africans while propagating black theology also at the same time share the deep roots of African religion. To this Biko refers "We also believed

in one God, we had our own community of saints through whom we related to our God, and we did not find it compatible with our way of life to worship God in isolation from the various aspects of our lives. Hence worship was not a specialised function that found expression once a week in a secluded building, but rather it featured in our wars, our beer-drinking, our dances and our customs in general."¹⁷

This is the kind of culture which black Americans do not share with the rest of Africa because the period of slavery robbed them of such experience. And again it may be true to say that it is this cultural background which gives Southern African black theology its unique stamp. Nevertheless the definition of black theology by Southern Africans still remains in line with the American model. Allan Boesak defines black theology "It is the black people's attempt to come to terms theologically with their black situation. It seeks to interpret the gospel in such a way that the situation of blacks will begin to make sense."¹⁸ To show further the similarity of expression James Cone in the book by Moore says "Black Theology puts black identity in a theological context, showing that Black Power is not only consistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ, but that it is the gospel of Jesus Christ."¹⁹

As a point of emphasis Pityana writes "with James Cone we define Black Theology as 'a theology of liberation' that emancipates black people from white racism."²⁰ Opposed to the rather common dichotomy made between the secular and spiritual, Motlhabi argues that God relates to the whole man and not only part of him. He therefore states that black theology as a theology of liberation is unlike "the traditional salvation of the soul' theology in that it does away with all dualistic overtones which divide man from himself and concentrate on one part only. In Black theology man is regarded as a complete whole, a mind-body-soul composite in and confronted by, a complete situation."²¹ Having

made the point he goes on to say "Black Theology, therefore, seeks to relate God as both man's creator and his liberator to all these people in their entire situation, not only religious but also social, political and economic."²²

Even with such definition and clarification doubts still remain and questions asked as to whether black theology can be said to be christian. Some see it as an attempt to justify a political ideology while others see it as a Marxist doctrine under the cloak of theology. Even quotations from scripture, e.g. Luke 4:18 have not convinced some doubters. The argument that black theology is specifically Christian theology did not come from radicals but from a moderate in the person of Alphaeus Zulu a bishop in the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (Anglican). Zulu asserts "The first mark of Black Theology is that it is Christian theology because it attempts to understand and to speak of God the Father of Jesus Christ. Its second mark is that it represents the black man's effort to understand and describe the significance to, and relevance for, black people of the God "whose glory shines in the face of Jesus Christ."²³

As to the other allegation that black theology propagates a political ideology, Mgojo refutes this accusation in the following way "Black Theology is an attempt by black Christians to grasp and think through the central claims of the Christian faith in the light of black experience." Such a definition avoids the temptation of making Black Theology a mere instrument of propaganda for certain political ends."²⁴ Boesak seems to agree with Mgojo.

"Black Theology must ask whether the actions of blacks for gaining their liberation are in accord with the divine will of God, a thing that can be done only if the Word of God retains its critical and fulfilling

function vis-a-vis all human activity."²⁵ Boesak again makes this observation "Christian faith transcends all ideologies and all nationalistic ideals. It transcends specific groups and nations within specific ideals and interests."²⁶

Boesak's and Mgojo's arguments are well understood but this does not drive away the question of ideology. My observation is that the point of departure of a relevant theology is actual involvement and such involvement embodies the liberatory interests or goals of those who are in it. Black theologians contend that black theology occurs within the context of the black struggle. And if that is the case such a way of 'doing' theology will inescapably reflect the ideological interests of the black community.

The question of colour of the skin also remains a bone of contention and as Buthelezi states "in South Africa colour has been elevated into a critical decisive principle of social, economic and political order. Tall and short people, fat and thin people can have a common social and political destiny, but black and white are being separated because of their colour."²⁷ At the same time other black theologians deny that colour (blackness) in black theology denotes a suggestion of pigmentation, but that it means an attitude of the mind, a way of life. Motlhabi attempts to clarify this by saying "In Black Theology the term 'black' only secondarily connects colour which popular white parlance in South Africa prefers to call "non-white"²⁸. He concludes that "black as a term used in Black Theology and Black Consciousness - embraces all the African people, the Indians and the so-called coloureds."²⁹ It has been the contention of some of these theologians that theology can never be neutral. Repeatedly they had claimed that God is on the side of the

oppressed blacks for "loving his people means that Yahweh takes the side of his people against the oppressor."³⁰

Black Theology speaks of the here and now as shown by Makhathini. "It ought to answer their questions and cast light on any 'signs of the times' here and now, so that their hope for the future may be sustained. Black Theology ought to demonstrate that the kingdom of God is in our midst, now."³¹ Tutu makes his own contribution to Makhathini's emphasis in the following manner "for theology changes according to the experience of any community."³²

Another side of black theology is that it has brought hope to the struggling black masses, as Tutu observes, "It seeks to know if it is possible to be black and continue to be Christian, to ask on whose side is God, to be concerned about the humanisation of man."³³ Mgojo therefore offers a chorus to Tutu's ascertainment, "Black Theology as a conceptual interpretation of the Christian faith has as its goal the transformation of the black condition from one of oppression to one of authentic humanity in Christ."³⁴

It is through the message embodied in this theology that the blackman recognises Christ. And as Boesak puts it he can now acknowledge the love of God and say "You're a Soul Brother, Jesus."³⁵ In other words the black man can see Christ as concerned and involved in his situation of suffering. Another helpful definition comes from the pen of Deotis Roberts the black American theologian, "A black political theology provides a theological foundation for an action-oriented people who are determined to be 'black and free'. The theology emerges out of the crucible of black suffering and out of the dark night of the black soul's distress. We seek the deliverance of a people as well as personal liberation. We will have the dignity of sons of God here and now.

Therefore, black political theology has more to say about the salvation of blacks in the community in this life."³⁶

With the exception of Victor Mayatula³⁷ who seemed to have been influenced by Albert B Cleage, no South African black theology has so far identified Christ positively with colour. They may speak about a Black Messiah, but for them, this Messiah is the Christ who takes the side of the oppressed. Albert Cleage Jr. a pastor of the Shrine of the Black Madonna in Detroit, on the other hand is said by Soesak to take a "peculiar place among black theologians."³⁸

The peculiarity of Cleage is the boldness of his positive identification of Christ with colour pigmentation, he claims "Jesus was born of Mary, a Jew of the tribe of Judah, a non-white people; black people in the same sense that the Arabs were black people. Jesus was a Black Messiah born to a black woman."³⁹ His radicalism and indeed resentment of all that is white brought him to the point of rejecting racial harmony as he proclaims "We are followers of a Black Messiah who two thousand years ago tried to bring black men together so that they may fight for their freedom. So we do not join in prayer for racial peace. We pray that struggle and conflict may go on until black men and women are free."⁴⁰ His logical conclusion is the need for an exclusive black church. "The present crisis, involving as it does the black man's struggle for survival in America, demands the resurrection of a Black church with its own Black Messiah."⁴¹

Cleage's approach has been criticised by both Black Americans and Southern African theologians. Robert's refutation of Cleage is that in black theology, "We do not seek to make Jesus a captive of black culture as we reject the cultural captivity of Jesus depicted by Euro-Americans."⁴² The author's view is that in the quest for a black theology. "We seek a Christ above culture who is at the same time at work in culture and history for redemptive ends - setting free the whole

person, mind, soul and body."⁴³ Jesus according to Roberts cannot be denied his earthly race, "Jesus was a Jew, but he was and is "the desire of all nations." The quest for humanity leads us through personal wholeness and peoplehood to a community in which all are brothers and even heirs."⁴⁴

Allan Boesak's interpretation of Cleage's thoughts is that, according to Cleage "white people (good white people do not exist) are not only the enemy; they are also outside the Nation. That means that the commandments of Jesus do not apply to them. To love the oppressor, Cleage asserts and to persuade him to love you is certainly the acceptance of inferiority."⁴⁵ Like Roberts, Boesak concludes that "Cleage's total identification of the gospel with his particular brand of Christian Nationalism is totally unacceptable." For indeed he continues, "This conception of God is denied by both the Old and New Testaments. God will neither allow himself to be claimed by any one people, nor will he be reduced to a mere symbol of their nationalistic aspirations."⁴⁶ As a reminder to Southern African black theologians of the bitter pill they had tasted under the Afrikaners civic religion, Boesak makes the following observation and remarks about Cleage's views, "His concept of an ethic for the nation only is disturbingly reminiscent of the "for the Volk only" a theology, black south Africans must reject. In Cleage's theology there is no critical distance between the gospel and the ideology of the Black Nation, between the will of God and the desires of the Nation. Not the Torah and the Prophets, but Black Christian Nationalism has the final word and Yahweh may merely function as an instrument."⁴⁷

The contention of both Roberts and Boesak against Cleage's view, is the expression of the axiom that theology is above culture yet at the same time involved in it, theology is universal and should be accommodative, as Mascal writes "since between the different theologies and antecedent to them all there is, if they are legitimate at all, the common revealed truth which it is the purpose of all of them to express."⁴⁸

Perhaps the best definition of Black theology is that brought out by the American Black Theology project of 1977. The statement is as follows, "Black Theology is formulated from our reading the Bible as we experience our suffering as a people. Black theology moves between our church and our community, the church proclaims the message and the message reverberates back upon the church, enhanced by the religious consciousness of black people, including those who stand outside of the institutional church but are not beyond God's grace and his revelation."⁴⁹

BLACK THEOLOGY : AFRICAN THEOLOGY

The relationship between the two theologies were for a long time never taken seriously by both black and African theologians. Each was content to do his own thing in his own backyard. Black theologians on the whole saw African theology, as expressing the importance of culture and therefore had nothing to do with issues of black liberation. On the other hand African theologians saw black theology in terms of a political theology preoccupied with the question of colour and freedom. It was this different worldview between black and African theologians which led some anthropologists to suspect a war between African and black theology.

Nevertheless the two sides did meet despite all their hangups as early as 1969.⁵⁰ Serious discussions began between the two groups in

the '70s but this did not put an end to differences of opinion among the black theologians. There are still some who view African theology as a romanticisation of the African past while others see African theology as a significant asset in the process of conscientisation and liberation. But despite these differences, discussions between the two parties took place and the aim was to discover how African theology could make sense of the gospel of Jesus Christ for the African people with their diverse traditional religious practices, and how best the two theologians can learn from each other.

A definition of African theology can be said to be, like all theologies, to make the biblical message intelligible to its hearers. The meeting of African theologians in Abidjan defined African theology in the following manner, "By African Theology we mean a theology which is based on the Biblical Faith and speaks to the African "soul" (or is relevant to Africa). It is expressed in categories of thought which arise out of the philosophy of the African people. This does not mean that it is narrow in outlook. To speak of African theology involves formulating clearly a Christian attitude to other religions. It must be pointed out that the emphasis is basically on Christian theology, which could be expressed through African thinking and culture."⁵¹

Africans: John Mbiti observes: "are notoriously religious, and each people has its own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices. Religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it."⁵² Mbiti in this remark shows that the African traditional life was an extremely intricate social fabric in which agriculture, religion, family life, and all formed a seamless web of inter-related activity. We are told by African theologians that in traditional religion man is generally at the centre

because he is able to regulate his relationship with the gods and the ancestors.

But at the same time Booth observes that this African social order "is communal rather than individualistic, the individual is significant in so far as he participates in the community; this does not mean that there is no such thing as an individual in Africa. People have qualities, interests and talents that differ from each other."⁵³ This attitude

has been described by Mbiti as "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am."⁵⁴ African cosmogony is described by Mbaya as follows -

- God, the primordial spirit, is not Providence, although the creator.

- Worship of God is not a material worship but is internal and concerns man's attitude towards himself and his neighbour.

- A man who has sinned against himself or his neighbour indicts himself before the members of his society to ask forgiveness for sins.

- Some forces of nature are in contact with man, they act upon him just as he can act upon them."⁵⁵ In the same book containing the papers

and proceedings of the African Colloquium, Philippe Lasemba observes that "Every African child believes in God. It believes in the power of the Deity, it believes in the immortality of its ancestors' spirits.

That is why an African affirms :

The dead have never left us, they are among us

The dead are everywhere

They are in the shadow as it clears

The dead are not below the ground

They are in the rustling tree

They are in the moaning forest

They are in the running water

They are in the still water

They are in the huts, they are in the crowds

The dead are not dead
They are in the wailing child
And in the log as it bursts into flames
The dead are not below the ground
They are in the dying fire
They are in the dripping shrubs
They are in the whining rocks
They are in the forest, they are in the home
The dead are everywhere."⁵⁶

Even the names of African Deities are descriptive and enhance their relationship to the believer, thus Idowu asserts, "The names by which Deity is called in Africa are descriptive of his character and emphatic of the fact that he is a reality and that he is not an abstract concept."⁵⁷ For Idowu God, "to Africans - is there to be approached."⁵⁸

African theologians point out that for christianity to have an impact and relevance in Africa, "it will have to become incarnate, live the life of our flesh and our blood, feed on our concepts, conform to our ways of thought, In this sense theology, like faith, must Africanise itself, take up residence among us, share our preoccupations, our questionings, our destiny."⁵⁹ Tshibangu Tshishiku relates that the charter of the Ecumenical Association of African Theologians meeting in Accra in 1977 stated "African theology must be a theology suited to its context. No African theology can claim to be a theology of African life and culture unless it conforms with the context in which the people live".....We feel that the African theology must be placed within the context of African life and culture and of the creative efforts of the African peoples to establish a new future different from the colonial past and the pre-colonial present."⁶⁰

James Cone informs us that it was through the dialogues with African theologians that both groups came to realise that liberation and Africanisation were both vital, "with Theology emphasising politics and African theology focusing on culture."⁶¹ In Southern Africa the foremost person who gave attention to and made a distinction between black and African theology was Maseko Buthelezi. His view was that "it is possible to distinguish two approaches to indigenous theology in South Africa; the ethnographic and the anthropological"⁶² In his own calculations the former is too preoccupied with the past and not sensitive to present day realities. This apprehension is shown by questioning what he calls "the validity of an ethnographic reconstruction as a point of departure in the theological methodology."⁶³ He further points out that "it is too presumptuous to claim to know how much of his past the African will allow to shape his future, as soon as he is given the chance to participate in all that constitutes the wholeness of life at present."⁶⁴

Buthelezi therefore rejects the African theological approach as he writes "for these reasons the 'ethnographic' approach to indigenous theology falls short. For theology to be indigenous, it is not enough that it should deal merely with 'African things' like the African world-view, it must also reflect the life dynamics of the present-day African."⁶⁵ In his conclusion Buthelezi clearly opts for black theology which in his view is also concerned with indigenisation but in this case it is in the contextual anthropological sense which took present day Southern African realities seriously and sought to address them.

In his second paper on the subject Buthelezi was more accommodating, but laid the blame on the Missionaries who in his view destroyed the African heritage. "Our traditional instrument of recording history was

in the form of poetical praises of our heroes which were handed from father to son. These poetical praises were always related to historical events in the lives of these heroes and were recited on certain ceremonial occasions like weddings, burials and other festivals."⁶⁶ These were banned by missionaries, he argues, and this made "the African forget his past heroes and consequently forget his entire past."⁶⁷

The past is significant in a person's life, observes Buthelezi, for "the past very often gives content to the kind of faith a person has about his destiny. It is this fact which has increasingly drawn the attention of many to the need to retrieve the African past from the distortion of the past anthropologists and historians."⁶⁸ The missionary contends Buthelezi, felt out of place when he returned back to Europe which was undergoing rapid and radical changes in both theology and ecclesiology. The only way open for the missionary was to adopt Africa for his second marriage and he began to popularise African indigenous theology. Thus "The missionary passionately wanted to "marry" Africa after Europe had proved "unfaithful in her love." African indigenous theology would be the theme of the new "love poetry" which would hopefully prove itself more superior and satisfying than the new "adulterous love poetry" of the new Europe."⁶⁹

According to Buthelezi most Africans were somewhat suspicious of the missionaries' endeavours and eagerness to promote an indigenous theology for Africa. The main reason he states was that "In South Africa and African theology tied to a past traditional heritage smacked of something similar to the Government's attempt to link the political future of the Black man to past traditional institutions like the chieftainship."⁷⁰ The rejection of the past by Africans is because of the desire "to participate in the machinery of the existing institutions

that made a difference to his every day life."⁷¹ Unlike the argument of his first paper, Butheazi now recognises that "The African theology methodology has in itself merit in drawing attention to positive elements in what is traditionally African."⁷²

In his comparison of African and black theology Setiloane writes "African Theology, like Black Theology of the US is born on the arena of human and cultural encounter, out of the frustration of trying to make Christian truths comprehensible;"⁷³ The author believes that "The attempt of both American and African Theologies is to rip the foreign swaddling clothes and thus expose the authentic naked Kyrugma (SIC)"⁷⁴ The task of African theology stresses Setiloane is "to break the seal of Western thought-forms and culture so that we can come face to face with Christ, and in Him see ourselves, and others."⁷⁵ Even so, the author believes that there is a difference between the two theologies, he thus notes "The difference between American Black Theology enthusiasts and the Africans is that the Americans do their theologising in the dust and heat of political warfare, hence their militancy and impatience; whereas we can claim to work in an atmosphere of physical political freedom and comparable calm."⁷⁶

The writer goes on to criticise black theology which in his view "builds too much on the sufferings of the past through which the black man has gone."⁷⁷ In Setiloane's view "The sufferings of the black are not 'all' and 'only' his experience, there is also "The (Xaira) joy and celebration of faith that comes through in their songs from "Satchmo" * to 'We shall overcome'⁷⁸. African theology on the other hand says Setiloane "come at it more relaxed and with less phlagm".⁷⁹

*The late Black American Jazz Trumpeter Louis Armstrong

The writer's criticism seem to be levelled against black theology in America and excludes Southern Africa. But again he may be dealing with both situations if we consider his claim of "freedom and comparable calm" for African theology which does not obtain in South Africa, but only in some neighbouring states of South Africa.

Tutu like Setiloane holds that there are similarities between African and black theology as both "have arisen as reactions against an unacceptable state of affairs" this rejection was due to the fact that "Christianity came swathed in Western garb."⁸⁰ The important contributions that the two theologies made observes Tutu, are that African theology and Black theology are an assertion that we should take the Incarnation seriously, for "Christianity to be truly African must be incarnated in Africa. It must speak in tones that strike a responsive chord in the African breast and must convict the African of his peculiar African sinfulness. It must not provide him with answers to questions he has never asked. It must speak out of and to his own context."⁸¹

Another aspect of African theology's contribution writes Tutu is that it "has given the lie to the belief that worthwhile religion in Africa had to await the advent of the white man. Similar to African history, African theology has done a wonderful service in rehabilitating the African religious consciousness. Both African and Black theology have been firm repudiations of the tacit claim that white is right, white is best. In their own ways these theologies are giving the black man a proper pride in things black and African."⁸² He therefore concludes that there are "remarkable similarities between African theology and Black theology."⁸³

Whilst there are similarities nevertheless there are also differences says Tutu, "because the two theologies arise in a sense from different contexts."⁸⁴ The distinction is that black theology "has an existential urgency which African theology has so far appeared to lack", for Tutu maintains "African theology has tended to be more placid, to be interested still too much with what I call anthropological concerns", and according to the author "This has been its most important achievement in the quest for indigenisation."⁸⁵

It is because of its failure to address itself to present day realities writes Tutu that "African theology has failed to produce a sufficiently sharp cutting edge. It has indeed performed a good job by addressing the split in the African soul and yet it has by and large failed to speak meaningfully in the face of a plethora of contemporary problems which assail the modern African."⁸⁶ This failure involves says Tutu "disengagement from the hectic business of life because very little has been offered that is pertinent, say, about the theology of power in the face of the epidemic of coups and military rule, about development about poverty and disease and other equally urgent present day issues."⁸⁷

The urgent call Tutu makes to African theology is "to recover its prophetic calling."⁸⁸ But irrespective of the limitations of African theology, Tutu considers himself an exponent not only of black theology but also of African theology. He is an African theologian because he shares the same background and roots with the rest of Africa, whilst again he is a black theologian because his being black in South Africa

results in an experience of oppression. Thus he concludes "I and others from South Africa do Black theology which is for us, at this point African theology."⁸⁹

Douglas Makhathini a Lutheran lecturer does not seem to draw a dichotomy between black and African theology. The only important thing for him is that the gospel should "be purifier of customs instead of changing culture. It is primarily for civilisation to change culture."⁹⁰ In his other paper Setiloane again delivers a scathing attack on black theology arguing that "it does not seek to move away from conceptualisation and methodology of Western theology. Instead, it exploits. Therefore Black Theology is still doing theology within the field of Western European, Graeco-Roman-rooted thought forms and Weltanschauung."⁹¹ He is also convinced that the days of doing a black theology are numbered for "as soon as the Black is white scenario is over, there will be no need for Black Theology any more."⁹² Much more strongly Setiloane asserts "that Black Theology is going out of fashion, if it has not done so already."⁹³

Instead Setiloane views Black Consciousness as the only concept which "helps the Black man to go back to his roots as man, African Man."⁹⁴ This serves "as a happy vehicle or bridge from Black Theology with all its limitations to the Theology of Africa which seeks to build a christian tradition which while being universal, integrates the irreplaceable contributions of Negro-African religious thought and experience."⁹⁵ There is a slow theological development in Southern Africa not to be found in the rest of Africa argues Setiloane, basically because "we are consistently distracted by the vociferous and dominating white minority in our Christian Community the author believes."⁹⁶

Setiloane envisages "African Theology becoming the theology of all Africa, even South Africa, and Black Theology waning."⁹⁷ As an apology for African theology's lack of concern for present day issues, the author draws a line between "witnessing against a political system Christians experience as their own, and to the formations of which they have been party, and witnessing against one which they feel as having been imposed upon them and is foreign; like the South African Black man in the South African political system."⁹⁸

Desmond Tutu draws our attention to "a form of religious schizophrenia"⁹⁹ a double life of Africans by which they practiced both christianity and their own African religion. He suggests that African theology focus on "this religious schizophrenia which attempts to remedy it, mainly by rehabilitating Africa's rich cultural heritage and religious consciousness."¹⁰⁰ But at the same time Tutu is aware of the opinions of others who suspect African theology as being ethnic, for they contend "theology can never be ethnic."¹⁰¹ He indeed believes such allegations must be seen in a serious light for there is the danger of an ethnic theology being used "by unscrupulous politicians who desire a supernatural sanction for their secular and often Machiavellian machinations."¹⁰² Therefore says Tutu "There must then be a plurality of theologies, because we do not all apprehend or respond to the transcendent in exactly the same way."¹⁰³ It is the plurality of theologies, argues the author which "reinforces the motif of interdependence which is the inalienable characteristic of the body of Christ. It is after all the Gospel of Jesus Christ which is eternal; man's response is always time-bound and his theology is even more so. The former is what ultimately

gives Christianity its universality."¹⁰⁴

Tutu's second criticism of African theology is that it "tends towards what the Latin Americans call domestication" whilst Christ fulfills the best aspirations of African culture, the opposite is also true for He also "stands in judgement over all that is dehumanising and demeaning; and several elements in the African Weltanschauung can be so labelled."¹⁰⁵ The final element is that of indigenisation which "has given the impression that culture was a static thing", but argues the writer, theology like culture has to be dynamic "theology has to take its context seriously while holding faithfully to its text, if it is to speak relevantly to that context."¹⁰⁶ And according to Tutu, this is the area in which "African theology has performed least satisfactorily."¹⁰⁷

The two American theologians Cone and Wilmore also tabulate what they see to be similarities between African theology and black theology. The similarities are: (1) Both of these theologies are rooted in the experience of Black people who received a highly attenuated form of Christianity from the white churches of Europe and America (2) Both are in part, religious reactions to white ecclesiastical domination and political and economic oppression (3) Both are in quest for a base in the authentic milieu of an indigenous people: in one case, in the environment of the postcolonial African state; in the other, in the environment of the contemporary Afro-American ghetto (4) In both instances we are dealing with self conscious African or Afro-American churches - which are emerging from a period of emulating white standards and are seeking a distinctive style of life and relevance to the culture of the people to whom they minister.¹⁰⁸

The two authors concede that there are differences between the two theologies "differences which are inevitable in light of the different situations in which these churches exist but which may be used to enrich the life of each other."¹⁰⁹ There is nevertheless a suspicion among younger Afro-Americans that "Africanisation of theology in Africa seems more academic, more bound to orthodoxy and more conservative than Black Theology in the United States and the Caribbean."¹¹⁰ A significant fact noted also is that it is Africa which borrows from American black theology but the opposite has not occurred. "Black Theology is reaching out to African Theology but the reverse is not necessarily true."¹¹¹

John Mbiti a representative of African theology however contends that "Black Theology cannot and will not become African Theology. Black Theology and African theology emerge from different historical and contemporary situations."¹¹² He says unequivocally "Black Theology hardly knows the situation of Christian living in Africa, and therefore its direct relevance for Africa is either non-existent or only accidental. Of course there is no reason why Black Theology should have meaning for Africa, it is not aimed at speaking for or about Africa."¹¹³ Therefore he categorically states "It would seem healthier if Black Theology and African Theology were each left to its own internal and external forces to grow in a natural way without artificial pressure and engineering."¹¹⁴

But of a conciliatory tone is a declaration of the Pan African Conference of Third World Theologians in 1977 which stated the following approaches of African theology.

1. One which, while admitting the inherent values in the traditional religions, sees in them a preparation for the Gospel;

2. A critical theology which comes from contact with the Bible, openness to African realities and dialogue with non-African theologies;
3. Black theology in South Africa, which takes into consideration the experiences of oppression and the struggle for liberation and gets its inspiration from the biblical faith as expressed in African language and categories as well as from the experience and reflections of black North Americans.¹¹⁵

According to another African Aylward Shorter, "It is natural that in South Africa where African culture has been used as the tool of white superiority for keeping races apart and for frustrating African aspirations " that "Theology in South Africa becomes - perhaps more than elsewhere in the continent - a situational theology which strives to confront crucial socio-political realities."¹¹⁶ The writer also answers critics who view African theology as too preoccupied with the past "while an African Theology inherits concepts and values - consciously or unconsciously from an authentic tradition of its own, it is far from being an antiquarian exercise, or an advocacy of a return to the past."¹¹⁷

We have noticed that there is no consensus among Southern African black theologians on the question of African theology. For example there are those like Manas Buthelezi who view African theology in terms of ethnography and others like Douglas Makhathini who make no dichotomy between black and African theology. Those such as Desmond Tutu see themselves as exponents of both black and African theology, whilst others like Gabriel Setiloane envisage that African theology is the future theology for the future in Africa and not black theology which is waning.

For Southern African David Bosch made an interesting observation that "in South Africa the two theological trends of Black Theology and African Theology can indeed merge into a meaningful symbiosis. From a sociological and psychological viewpoint the position of the black man in Southern Africa is in many respects comparable with that of the Negro in the USA; this offers him fertile soil for a Black Theology very similar to that of the USA. Culturally and philosophically, however, the South African black man is an African; this offers him the substratum for an African Theology."¹¹⁸ With this in mind the black Southern African together with the rest of Africa can confess:

My fathers and theirs, many generations before,

Knew Him,

They bowed the knee to Him

By many names they knew Him

And yet tis He the One and only God -

They called Him

UVELINGQAKI : The First One

Who came ere ever anythng appeared

UNKULUNKULU The Big Big One

So big indeed that no space could ever contain Him

MODIMO Because His abode is far up in the sky

They also knew Him as MODIRI

For He has made all

and LESA The spirit without which the breath of man cannot be¹¹⁹

3. AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

Research still needs to be done into the theological roots of the African Independent Movements as a protest from the mainline or established churches and how these roots can be seen as inspirational to black theology. Much has been said however about the political causes of breakaways such as leadership disputes, lack of participation in decision making processes, the unwillingness of missionaries to prepare local leadership for eventual take-over by blacks, money disputes and so forth. However, theological reasons if there are any are merely glossed over or stated in vague terms.

For example Adrian Hastings views the secession of the Ethiopian type of Independent churches as "a protest against white domination in the mission churches."¹²⁰ Ndiokwere agrees with this "The need to satisfy their religious and political aspirations saw the emergence of a multiplicity of Church movements, represented by the Zionist, Ethiopian, and so-called 'messianic' churches."¹²¹ Another factor is that of deliverance from oppression writes Ndiokwere "In Southern Africa, yearning for a return to 'Zion' finds expression in the expectation of leaders (call them 'Messiahs') who would lead the struggle for independence and restoration. There was a hope that just as God delivered the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage and led them into the Promised Land, so also would he free the oppressed black Africans, restoring their cities to them, their 'Jerusalem'."¹²²

Sundkler does not on the whole give much credit to politics as the main cause for secession, though he does recognise the presence of politics as one of the reasons, therefore he writes "The two main reasons

for secession from Mission churches are the colour-bar of white South Africa and Protestant denominatism". Yet claims that 'political' reasons are behind the Separatist church movement miss the mark. The few instances of radical party affiliations of certain Ethiopian or Zionist groups do not offer a sufficient proof of any definite political trend, and even admitting the existence of much outspoken anti-white propaganda in most Independent Churches, one should not forget that the attitude of the leaders and masses of these Ethiopians and Zionists has on the whole been loyal, not least during the trying experiences of war."¹²³

Sandkler seems to suggest that religious reasons are sometimes foremost in secessions. Thus he relates an episode of a young prophet saying to his congregants; "You, my people were once told of a God who has neither arms nor legs, who cannot see, who has neither love nor pity. But Isaiah Shembe showed you a God who walks on feet and who heals with his hands, and who can be known by men, a God who loves and who has compassion."¹²⁴

Wilmore and Cone make their own contribution by trying to trace the origin of black theology to the founders of the separatist churches. Thus they write "Black preachers in African and in the United States were proclaiming the prophecy of Psalm 68:31 "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God."¹²⁵ This biblical verse and the importance attached to it by separatist church leaders leads the two authors to draw the following deduction "Our fathers fervently believed that God had a grand and glorious plan for Black people and that the redemption of the African race—both in Africa and in the diaspora — would begin with an outpouring upon the world of

gifts of inestimable worth from a despised and rejected race. Whatever our poets, writers, and statesmen have said about the sources of African nationalism and Pan-Africanism, it was from religious men in Africa and the United States - from Paul Cuffee, Daniel Coker, Bishop Turner, Mangena Mokone, James M Dwane, John Chilembe, Edward Blyden and a host of others that the religious vision of Africa's great destiny first arose."¹²⁶

Cone and Wilmore are strongly convinced that "these were the first Black or African Christian theologians south of the Sahara and in the New World and all that we have today that can be termed Black Theology or African Theology, all that we can justly interpret as Black Consciousness or Pan-Africanism, had its origin in their thoughts and actions."¹²⁷

As a contribution to the debate on black theology and African Independent churches, David Bosch relates the story of a Congolese girl called Kimpa Vita who was a prophetess. She, like many other prophets, became convinced of her prophetic role after experiencing visions and after undergoing a process of death and resurrection. She therefore led a protest movement against the Roman Catholic Church around the year 1700, and taught her followers "that Christ appeared as a black man in Sao Salvador and that all his apostles were black". This Christ took the side of the oppressed black against the white oppressor. It was her conviction that Christ would "restore the old Congolese kingdom and establish a paradise on earth." According to Bosch it may be possible to deduce from Vita's teachings "the first manifestation of Black Theology in Africa. This is especially true if we compare her intentions with the

most pronounced characteristic of modern Black Theology, namely that it is pre-eminently a protest movement. It is a protest against an interpretation of the gospel which has been channelled according to white intentions."¹²⁸

Victor Mayetula a minister of the Bantu Bethlehem Christian Apostolic Church of South Africa divides the Independent Churches into two (1) the prophets of physical liberation, Ethiopianism and Messianism (2) the prophets of psychological liberation, that is Zionism".¹²⁹ It is the former asserts Mayetula who "having examined, analysed, assessed and defined the Christian unique needs, aspirations, ideals and goals and having adopted draft constitutions for their different church organisations resolved to articulate and aggregate the needs of Black Christians."¹³⁰ The latter are important because "their way of worship satisfied the aspirations and ideals of Blacks who were never impressed by the Western theology brought in by the early missionaries."¹³¹ A bright future awaits these churches because as Mayetula believes "young Black philosophers and advocates of Black consciousness have their eyes fixed" on them.¹³²

Sprunger is alarmed by the degree to which Separatist churches are mushrooming for according to him this is "a terrible indictment of our South African Theology."¹³³ To strengthen his suspicion he argues that "In Church History schisms and divisions could only come about because of the irrelevancy of the contemporary theology which could not find the right answer to the problems of the people and of the times."¹³⁴ His concern is more with the churches which he classifies as Prophetic or Charismatic and he further admonishes the mainline Churches to

"start looking at, listening to and learning from our separatist brothers." The contribution of the Separatist to world christianity he writes, "is their total reliance on the "direct intervention of the Spirit than on theological arguments in solving the problems of the people and community. The Spirit of Christ becomes a living reality."¹³⁵

The men and women the prophets, continues Sprunger, are filled with zeal to proclaim the good news, and they can be easily compared with Peter and Paul after receiving the Holy Spirit. Around them they built a closely linked community where communalism is operative. It is in such communities that people have "a real sense of belonging, a new home, a new loyalty. The community cares for the whole man, for physical, social and spiritual needs. There is no such dichotomy between soul and body, between Sundays and other days, between a religious sphere and a secular life."¹³⁶

He further observes that "when the Church is apostolic in outlook and in practice all social and racial prejudice breaks down. There is a complete transformation of outlook, people are judged not by the colour of their skins, tribe or language, but by the 'content of their character'. This prompts his assertion "The vertical theology is so powerful that it creates the necessary horizontal fellowship."¹³⁷

The non-racial non-tribal character of Independent Churches is supported by H W Turner. "More recent movements are often remarkable for their ethnic and linguistic variety and their geographical spread beyond the limits of both tribe and nation, without losing their local basis. South African churches have spread up into Central Africa and it has been remarked that in the Congo area, indeed even race has occasionally been transcended; an Indian woman has been reported in Shembe's church in Natal."¹³⁸

Sprunger concludes with a call to the mainline churches to learn and be open to the examples provided by the separatist churches e.g. tolerance, love for one another moving forms of worship, prayers and their generosity. He believes that "the Holy Spirit himself has lit up in our midst a genuine apostolic fire which burns brightly and clearly and is warm - kindled by the wind of African spirituality; The African prophetic churches. Let us listen eagerly to what our Lord wants to tell us through the birth and through the example of His new Churches. It may lead us to repentance and to a relevant theology."¹³⁹

The hymns of Independent Churches were observed by Sundkler as frequently nationalistic, e.g. the following hymn of Shembe

Africa, rise

And seek thy Saviour

Today our sons and daughters are slaves¹⁴⁰

The Saviour in this case is the Christian Messiah, for again these people do not see salvation only in the other-worldly; "there was hunger for revelation, that God should be revealed in such a fashion that the African could touch him and exclaim; "My Lord and my God." This hunger for revelation causes them to cry out to Jesus, who seems to be so mute and so remote,

Jesu come with Thy Father

People are dying here on earth¹⁴¹

The prophet according to Sundkler "In his search for a God with hands and feet and love and compassion" leads "The Zionist prophet in his reaction against the spiritual conquest by the White, returns to the past. In his creed there is no longer a place for the pale white Christ."¹⁴² The expression Africans give of Christianity says Ndokwere

is that 'in religion the African feels God, experiences him, before reflecting meaningfully about him. He does not begin with contemplation or mediation. He rather responds to a religious impulse whose reality he has already experienced. That is why in his religion he likes to feel God, he likes to feel religion."¹⁴³ The writer therefore feels that "This African expression of Christianity does not represent a mere 'revolt'. It should also be seen as a response of the Holy Spirit to the questioning spirit of man, in a situation where the existing Churches were not helping the people to meet their needs. It was to inspire this man or that woman with the gift of prophecy. The 'Spirit revolution' or liturgical revolution is a response to the spiritually unsatisfactory answers provided by the mission Churches to the religious longings of Africans. It was to manifest that the Holy Spirit can speak directly to Africans."¹⁴⁴

There is a need to examine the theological factors which prompted these churches departure from established churches. Their teachings, sermons and the content of their hymns must be put under a theological microscope, and their practices need be examined for theological significance. As Ndiokwere observes "The answers presented by the founders and leaders of the movements themselves demonstrate their own religious convictions, which cannot be overlooked."¹⁴⁵ In Southern Africa says the writer the struggle against oppression has given certain of the movements, "something of a politico-religious outlook. Anything that threatened the life and survival of the community was also seen as a threat to its religious heritage. In such cases there is no absolute dichotomy between religious and political aspirations."¹⁴⁶

The links between black theology and African Independent churches are summarised by Christopher Saunders "Some of the ideological roots

of the twentieth century African nationalism lie in late nineteenth century religious independency. At the end of the nineteenth century, it was in the independent churches that the assertion of equality by Africans was expressed most clearly and strongly. The message of these churches was that in the new age of white control Africans should act for themselves, form their own organisations and throw off white leadership. In statements made by Tile, Mzimba and others are to be found the ideas of African assertion, of equality with whites, of self-help of black pride and self-consciousness."¹⁴⁷

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RECONCILIATION AND LIBERATION

The present South African structures cannot in my view be relied upon to usher in a new society. That is clearly because the constitutional system was never intended to provide a common sovereignty of the entire population, but was intended to perpetuate discrimination and give the blessing of law to prejudice, privilege, injustice and oppression. The system must therefore perpetuate conflict. Thus we need to look outside the present structures to find the way out to meaningful change.

This is why some black people hold the view that blacks have a right to exclude whites from the whole process of the liberation struggle. For to them issues like integration or reconciliation are not only premature but are also irrelevant. Such a view is summed up by Khoapa "The fundamental issue is not separation or integration but liberation."¹ The reasons given for regroupment are that blacks will be enabled to understand themselves and perhaps in the process help whites to understand themselves too. Black people's rejection of apartheid is much more profound than a desire for integration, where integration is often rejected as long as it is interpreted in the light of the white man's exploitative values. For integration to be meaningful it has to be a give and take situation with both parties enjoying positions of power.

Churches and individuals had in the past called for a spirit of reconciliation between black and white in South Africa. But in my view their pleas failed to make a proper analysis of black people's demands faced with white intransigence. Their call was for a reconciliation which left the South African political and economical status quo

unchanged. In the midst of the dust cries were heard calling for a "Reconciliation with God and with your fellow man through the blood of the lamb of God."² This undoubtedly is in line with the Dutch Reformed Churchmen who give their spiritual blessing to Apartheid yet call for "social justice, human rights and self determination for people's and individuals. This is the official South African myth."³

In conversations and meetings people still nurse the hope that South Africa can be converted without confrontation, because change in South Africa "depends not only on constitutional plans or anti-apartheid declarations but on the outcome of first-hand encounters. Even more it depends on a reconciliation that has to begin among the Christians. Where there's God, there's hope, even when the human indicators point to disaster."⁴ This sympathetic approach only glosses over the meaning of real reconciliation in a situation where millions of God's children experience the trauma of rejection. Genuine reconciliation like integration must mean an open acknowledgement of differences, recognition of antagonisms and seeking out issues which divide people as well as those which unite.

The South African churches seem best qualified to play such a role since the church at least is one of those platforms remaining which can promote a better understanding between black and white. It is their call to proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ and show that South Africa as part of his creation also stands under his judgement. She needs to assure "the white people of South Africa that it loves them as brothers and sisters made in the image of God and prays that they may seek an end to apartheid and the establishment of a just and caring society."⁵

In the book *New Testament Theology* edited by Colin Brown the word reconciliation is defined as "the restoration of a good relationship between enemies,"⁶ and according to it the word 'APOKATASTASIS' is a technical term in politics and eschatology meaning "a partial or universal restoration."⁷ The noun APOKATASTASIS derives from the verb *apokathistemi* "with the basic meaning of reestablishment of a former state, restoration."⁸ In the New Testament the verb is used eight times and it is found mostly in the Synoptic gospels, the noun is used only once Acts 3:21 Peters speech. The verb in the Synoptics is used in Mark 3:5 "and his hand was restored" par., Matthew 12:13, Luke 6:10 and again in Mark 8:25.

The word reconciliation no doubt has a history of being misunderstood or misused by different people. Van den Heuvel points out that "white minority churches have employed it for exhorting blacks to resign themselves to the injustice of white power. The ecumenical movement has long used the word in order to call racists to repentance and their victims to moderation. That was a noble motivation but it served for many years to let reconciliation provide moral support for the status quo. Many indians, many black and brown people, have used the word as a blessing for which they hoped and prayed but this prevented them from taking any action."⁹

Heuvel's observation and recognition of what constitutes a phony reconciliation is further strengthened by Martin Luther King who writes "Forgiveness does not mean ignoring what has been or putting a false label on an evil act."¹⁰ In the same sense as the two above Johanson recommends that reconciliation should be rejected when it is, -

"a reconciliation which takes little or no notice of the reasons for the alienation and separation;

- a reconciliation which aims to keep things the way they are;
- a reconciliation which serves the interests of one party only;
- a reconciliation which serves the interests of one party more than the other."¹¹

Such reconciliation argues Johnson "is no reconciliation but is an attempt to smooth over awkward matters, and aims at keeping an apparent peace, ignoring the hidden turmoil and unrest below the surface."¹² Genuine reconciliation he believes "means taking seriously the possibility that people have been exploited and deprived, that they have been threatened and hardened. It means looking at human relations in the light that God's love throws on them, and asking forgiveness for all the wrongs that are exposed."¹³ Forgiveness writes King "is a catalyst creating the atmosphere necessary for a fresh start and a new beginning. It is the lifting of a burden or the cancelling of a debt."¹⁴

A true spirit of reconciliation can only be attained by a complete transformation of evil social institutions achieved "creatively by love, in order that men may live together in them more justly, more humanely, more peacefully and in mutual recognition of their human dignity and freedom" says Moltmann.¹⁵ For in a situation of suffering and oppression observes Davies "oppressors - oppressed both groups are dehumanised - love of the oppressors is shown by struggling against them to save them from themselves and from the structures they subserve."¹⁶

It is in this light that King advises black people that "In your struggle for justice, let your oppressor know that you have neither a desire to defeat him nor a desire to get even with him for injustices

that he has heaped upon you. Let him know that the festering sore of segregation debilitates the white man as well as the Negro. By having this attitude, you will keep your struggle on high Christian levels."¹⁷ For as Barbara Rogers observes "The onus is on them to overcome this fear in order to understand how participation in an injustice, however, involuntary, cramps the full development of the oppressor and oppresses them in turn with dimly perceived feelings of guilt and fear."¹⁸

Authentic reconciliation comes about, says Johnson, when "confrontation has moved through to acceptance and acceptance to further communication, then forgiveness and restoration follow. Restoration involves putting right all that possibly can be put right even at great sacrifice."¹⁹ Paul's message "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18 RSV) has a special and important place in black theology. For "Black Theology is a theology which takes seriously God's reconciling act in Jesus Christ."²⁰

But even so reconciliation like grace is not cheap and should not be used as a vehicle of moderation, because costly grace "is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out that which = causes him to stumble."²¹ Indeed it "is not a case merely of a gracious action or a gracious gift, it is something infinitely costly, a giving up by God of His only Son in the process of dealing with our sins;"²² Therefore "Black Theology believes that the biblical doctrine of reconciliation can be made a reality only when white people are prepared to address black men as black men and not as some grease-painted form of humanity. Black Theology will not respond positively to whites

who insist on making blacks as white as possible by de-emphasising their blackness and stressing the irrelevance of colour while really living as racists.²³

Like Cone, Roberts also insists that "Reconciliation is an integral part of the gospel. Reconciliation is the very essence of the good news. God in Christ is reconciling the world and Christians are called to be agents of this reconciling gospel."²⁴ But he also cautions that : "For whites to expect blacks to be reconciled to them under oppressive conditions, while they themselves continue to disregard the humanity of the black man, is inhuman and unchristian. Reconciliation can only take place when blacks as well as whites are free to affirm their authentic selfhood and people. There can be no Christian reconciliation between oppressors and the oppressed."²⁵

Cone in line with Moltmann, sees the necessity of changing social institutions for reconciliation to be genuine. Thus he says "Because God has set us free, we are now commanded to go and be reconciled with our neighbours, and particularly our white neighbours. But this does not mean letting whites define the terms of reconciliation. It means participating in God's revolutionising activity in the world, changing the political, economic and social structures so that distinctions between rich and poor, oppressed and oppressors are no longer a reality. To be reconciled with white people means destroying their oppressive power, reducing them to the human level and thereby putting them on equal footing with other humans."²⁶ The same sentiments are expressed by Roberts "It is for the oppressed to raise the issue as to the terms upon which reconciliation is possible. It is also likely that only the oppressed can appreciate fully the real meaning of reconciliation"²⁷

The chorus is taken up by Cone who states "Therefore, Black Theology believes that in order for reconciliation to be meaningful and productive, black people must have room to do their thing. The black community itself must lay down the rules of the game."²⁸ This presupposes and confirms the suspicion that whites have a tendency of assuming leading roles whenever they are among blacks, sometimes it is totally unintentional.

But as I have already shown there are those who believe in the possibility of reconciliation even while there is widespread injustice. They insist that liberation is not necessarily a precondition for reconciliation. But the answer to that can only be "Because black liberation is the point of departure of black theology's analysis of the gospel of Jesus, it cannot accept a view of reconciliation based on white values. The christian view of reconciliation has nothing to do with black people being nice to white people as if the gospel demands that we ignore their insults"²⁹ because "reconciliation on white racist terms is impossible, since it would crush the dignity of black people."³⁰

It would be sheer naivety ever to think of reconciliation in the absence of liberation "black people cannot talk about the possibilities of reconciliation until full emancipation has become a reality for all black people. We cannot talk about living together as brothers (the black and white together attitude) as long as they do everything they can to destroy us."³¹ An authentic restoration of the now tarnished black and white relationship is only possible after black people have thrown off the chains of their servitude for "reconciliation not only means that black people are reconciled to themselves and thus to God, but also to other men. When the other men are white people, this means

black people will bring their new restored image of themselves into every human encounter. They will remain black in their confrontation with others and will demand that others address them as black people."³²

Dectis Roberts however approaches the question of reconciliation slightly differently from Cone. His main concern is that a proper balance should be made between liberation and reconciliation. Thus he says "Reconciliation is always to be placed in conjunction with liberation. What we seek is a liberating experience of reconciliation."³³ Roberts therefore reaches this conclusion "There can be no liberation without reconciliation and no reconciliation without liberation."³⁴ The difference between Roberts and Cone is, that for the latter liberation precedes reconciliation while for the former the two cannot exist independently of each other.

Davies follows Cone closely when he observes "Liberation therefore has to take place before reconciliation of the two sides is possible, without liberation there is no reconciliation but conciliation."³⁵ Conciliation for Davies means an attitude which tries to soothe feelings or induce feelings of friendship because "the result of conciliation is often that things remain more or less as they were before, apart from some minor adjustments."³⁶ Like Cone he concludes that "Liberation or freedom from is indeed a precondition of reconciliation, which in its turn, is an element of freedom for. Freedom-for involves reconciliation, but the latter is only possible after liberation."³⁷

Most if not all black Southern African theologians regard liberation as a precondition of reconciliation. There is no question in their minds of blacks being reconciled to whites or becoming equal to whites under the present situation in South Africa. This point is put

forward by Boesak's comments "The question still remains; not whether blacks want to be equal to whites, but whether they want to be equals in this particular system this society adheres to. To our mind that would mean becoming equal partners in exploitation and destruction."³⁸ Black people have the responsibility of initiating restoration with white people because to be able to love white men would mean precisely to make a decision for them. For their humanity, however, obscure, against their inhumanity, however blatant. For their liberation, and against their imprisonment of themselves. For their freedom, against their fear, for their human authenticity against their terrible estrangement."³⁹ Boesak in line with Cone also concludes "Reconciliation requires a new image of humanity which is why reconciliation without liberation is impossible."⁴⁰

The future envisaged for Southern Africa is that of a harmonious relationship of black and white, a state of brotherhood for all men. Thus Motlhabi notes, "our prime concern is to speak a word of hope to people without power. And this word of hope cannot contain any promise that one day they will have power over others—even those "others" who oppress them now. It must be a hope that one day we will live together without masters or slaves."⁴¹

Liberation gives a person back his manhood and this is what conscientisation is all about as a positive step towards reconciliation, for "our ultimate ethical responsibility is not only to serve man by removing the symptoms of alienation from the wholeness of life, but to equip him with the tools whereby he will be able to stand on his own feet."⁴² The gospel of Jesus Christ summons all Christians to become agents of human understanding and harmonious living, thus Buthelezi says "God needs people who manifest the power of reconciliation, the power that turns

enemies into friends, rivals into associates, that can bring about reconciliation between the blacks and whites of this country,"⁴³ Zephania Kamata a Lutheran colleague of Buthelezi also calls upon Christians to seize Jesus Christ's example who died for the liberation of all irrespective of colour or race. "Black Theology of liberation challenges every Christian in Southern Africa to take this step - the first step towards liberation reconciliation, peace and justice."⁴⁴

The struggle for justice and human rights is not only concerned with black people but "in the process we could also help white people recover their humanity and personhood which have been grievously injured by their participation in an unjust and oppressive society, because they too need to be assured that they matter, that they are of value because God loves them and they do not need to look for spurious assurances of their worth either through bullying or amassing material things" writes Tutu.⁴⁵ For reconciliation to be effective people need to get rid of their inferiority or superiority complexes because "only real persons can engage in genuine reconciliation."⁴⁶

The sinful state of the nation should not only be blamed on white people and their oppressive methods writes Zulu but "black as well as white men share in the disobedience of man and neither can speak or act as if he has no responsibility for the evil that is in the world"⁴⁷ According to the Christian revelation of God the white man's sins against the black man are the fruit of the white man's failure to observe Jesus' one commandment, namely that his followers should love one another as he had loved them."⁴⁸ But says Zulu, black people must guard against the reverse happening because "It is perfectly conceivable that the black people of the world can, after obtaining their liberation proceed to become oppressors of white people because it is man who disobeys God

and not his colour."⁴⁹

The distance taken by black theology from white people in no way suggests a narrow understanding of exclusiveness, denying whites participation or suggesting that they have nothing to do with black theology* according to Soesak "Dit beteken egter nie dat die blankes buite staan of dat hy daarmee niks te make het nie"⁵⁰ But rather black theology liberates both black people and white people together* 'n teologie van bevryding vir swartes sowel as blankes."⁵¹ It is such futuristic hope and dream for Southern Africa which compelled us to say "The gospel offers liberation for black and white. It offers the Black people liberation from mental and physical oppression, and it offers the white people liberation from fear and self-destruction."⁵² Those in the black consciousness movement who still nurse feelings of revenge, should change their attitude says Beartman "This is the difficult demand of Black consciousness. To Love the White Man. We cannot hate fellowmen. God created us in love because he loved us, He so loved us that He chose the way of love that goes through bitterness, sweat and blood. He chose whites, It is difficult to love whites. It is costly to love whites, yet the black man must."⁵³ Even a person like Ntwasa who seems to have no place for whites in a black church submits "It will carry within itself the seed of hope for any white man whose heart can be moved."⁵⁴

The love for the white man is aptly summarised by Roberts "Love in Christian context for the black Christian is to be applied horizontally as well as vertically. In fact, it cannot be genuine Christian love if

* My own emphasis in English

it is not ethical as well as spiritual. There can be no unilateral expression of love between man and God which does not include the brother."⁵⁵ The same sentiments are expressed by Lehmann "The gospel is that people can be reconciled with one another only as they are reconciled to God, and when people are thus reconciled to God they give themselves in thought and word and deed to the empowerment of the poor, to the liberation of the oppressed, to the struggle against every dehumanising dimension of human existence."⁵⁶ So is it for Johanson, who says "The most important element in reconciliation is unconditional acceptance. This is the basis of God's great act of reconciliation."⁵⁷

According to Manas Buthelezi black people have a mission to perform for white South Africans, the aims of which are

1. To enable the white man to share the love of God as it has been uniquely revealed to the black man in circumstances in which the white man does not have experience.
2. To preach love to the white man so that he may have the courage to see with consequence that his security is not necessarily tied to his rejection of the black man
3. To give glory to God for what he has done for the black man in spite of everything
4. To work for the salvation of the white man who sorely needs it.⁵⁸

Now, in the process of reconciliation and liberation, structures that dehumanise are going to be changed has not been mentioned by any of these black theologians. Perhaps we can make an assumption that peaceful means are to be applied, or ask the question posed by Washington, "whether there are occasions when recourse must be had to violent revolution."⁵⁹ Our assumption is nevertheless strengthened by the

deafening silence on this particular issue from the writers of black theology.

All except Roberts are agreed that liberation should precede reconciliation, but also all are aware like Roberts that the way to reconciliation is not easy, "Reconciliation in our social climate includes a cross for all christians, black and white. The cross for whites is repentance based upon the full awareness of what 'whiteness' means in a society where whites are beneficiaries and blacks and victims," for blacks "our cross is forgiveness."⁶⁰ This realisation leads me to conclude with the words of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches resolution against racism "God in Jesus Christ has affirmed human dignity. Through his life, death and resurrection he has reconciled people to God and to themselves. He has broken down the wall of partition and enmity and has become our peace. He is the Lord of His church who has brought us together in the one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God who is the father of us all."⁶¹

NOTES

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ASSESSMENT

It is important to remember that the black political re-awakening in South Africa coincided with the black civil rights movement in the United States of America. It is, however, difficult for me to determine how much the civil rights movement influenced black consciousness in South Africa because of the different political situations. But when one examines their political thrust it is not hard to see the relationship between them in terms of ideas and strategy.

James Cone influenced black theology in South Africa with his theological hermeneutic. His fresh approach to scripture and christian tradition became a useful basis for developing a black theology arising out of the South African context. But South African writing on black theology has been less vigorous than black American writing. So far it has mostly concerned itself with definitions and it has not yet outgrown that stage. Black theology in South Africa might have been given content in the actual practice of theologians in preaching and pastoral duties, but this content has not yet been systematically analysed for the benefit of learning and scholarship.

The link between black theology and African theology has been shown by some theologians, but there are still others who still see African theology as being too romantic about the past at the expense of the present black experience. There is still therefore a great need for dialogue between black and African theology. The two may have a brighter future by combining their efforts in rooting out the evil that bedevils Africa; in South Africa this would mean racism, while in the rest of Africa it will mean corruption, unequal distribution of wealth and the problems of coups. Even the Communique of the Pan African Conference

recognised this fact when it listed black theology in South Africa among the approaches in African theology.

More research still needs to be done into the theological roots of the African Independent Churches and how these roots can be seen as inspirational to Black theology. This because theological reasons for dissatisfaction of the Independent Churches with the Mission Churches, if there are any, are merely glossed over by authors or stated in very vague terms. Black theology must take these churches seriously and try to understand not only their beginnings but also the content of their sermons, hymns and prayers.

Southern African theology is to be admired for its ecumenism. In the United States of America for example, proponents of black theology are mainly drawn from the protestant churches while in Latin America liberation theology is preached by Catholic theologians. But in Southern Africa black theology is done and advocated by both Catholic and Protestant, even those belonging to the African Independent Churches have embraced it.

Black theology is no doubt a reaction against Apartheid, and as long as Apartheid is practiced there shall always be a need for a black theology. And as long as most of the power and decision making in the so called English speaking Churches remain in white hands, black theologians have a duty to go on challenging the consciences of these churches.

In my view the most important issue facing black theology in Southern Africa is its political praxis. Whereas before the philosophy of black consciousness was the internal rallying factor for most black people, now the situation has changed. Apartheid has not changed irrespective of some cosmetic changes; it still remains a vicious and violent ideology. What has changed or rather shifted is the black

people's analysis of the South African problem. It is no longer a secret that there is a rift among black people in the country and indeed those outside the country. The whole problem revolves around whether the question of Apartheid is that of race or class.

The emergence of the black petty bourgeoisie tears apart any hope of total black unity. The petty bourgeoisie are traditionally known to shift between the exploited and the exploiter and whether they will side with their fellow blacks in a time of crisis or settle for the evolutionary change proposed by the white government remains to be seen. This emerging black bourgeoisie class is indeed creating confusion in the minds of black people and is somehow responsible for the ideological divisions in the struggle for liberation. There is also the question of liberal white people who want to identify with the lot of black people. As far as whites are concerned, black consciousness advocates are still adamant in excluding them from the black struggle, because they argue that whites are part of the problem therefore they can never be part of the solution. Black theologians have not as yet clarified their stand on this issue, and we need to remember that most black theologians belong to the multi racial mainline churches.

In my mind black consciousness is basic to the way we perceive the political reality of the South African situation. Black consciousness is therefore central in the black struggle in that it arises out of the socio-economic and political context in which we have been oppressed and dehumanised as black people. Thus I have always maintained that what makes the political reality of our situation unique is that black people are oppressed first and foremost because they are black. This is a fundamental truth because fat and thin whites, rich or poor still equally enjoy privileges under Apartheid, but if you are black whether

rich or poor there is no escaping from the effects of Apartheid. I must admit that as far as I am concerned the black middle class is still part and parcel of the oppressive political situation in South Africa. The emphasis of class as the problem still remains a puzzle in my reading and understanding of the black struggle in South Africa.

The road ahead for Southern African black theology is still far from smooth. A lot of work and research needs still to be done. Black theologians have to spell out the kind of society they envisage and how they are to work for it. If they are committed to a non-racial socialist state what do they mean? The whole question of a violent or non-violent struggle needs to be answered, particularly so in view of the impatience expressed by many young blacks. Perhaps it is also time that black theologians should stop writing prolegomena to black theology and get down to the business of giving content to this type of theology. There is an urgent need to redefine the theological hermeneutic as well as praxis within the context of the black struggle for liberation.

Let me conclude by saying that black theology through its theological reflection has assisted black people to see and understand the gospel in their daily experience of suffering and oppression. It has shown that both the Old and the New Testament underline the value of man, and that God really cares for the oppressed. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus procured for humanity an effective remedy for sin and all its personal and social consequences such as greed, hatred, prejudice as well as exploitative tendencies and behaviour. Black theology is therefore right to argue that salvation is really only when it includes the social relationships in which men live. It is also justified to argue that justice demands an unconditional acceptance that all are equal before God, and that liberation is for both black and white.

CONCLUSION

Black theology as we have discovered is a direct response to a situation in which for many years black people experienced alienation at political, economical and cultural levels. The word 'black' which does not refer to the colour of the skin, summons the black people to burst the chains of oppression and participate in the building of a new society. Black theology is aimed at the liberation of both black and white people. It liberates black people from a slave mentality and at the same time white people freed from their exploitative practices. Both groups are made to realise that the dehumanising effects of bondage are felt by oppressor and oppressed.

Southern African black theology has realised perhaps like its counterpart in North America and Latin America, that meaningful belief in God is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. Images of God as just, loving and merciful do not correspond with the harsh reality of racism, economic and political powerlessness of black people. Apartheid which is blessed by the White Dutch Reformed Churches has made the credibility of Christianity highly questionable because black people say to themselves, if God takes sides at all, he must be on the side of the wealthy whites and not on the side of black people. It was therefore the task of black theology to answer these questions and doubts in its attempt at validating the legitimacy of the Christian faith.

The message is of liberation and black theology recognises that black people need not only be liberated from the socio-political but also from a 'pie in the sky when you die' christianity. In this way black theology serves as a challenge to the consciences of the established mission churches. The churches are called upon to embrace black theology which is biblically based and join the struggle for liberation and genuine christian reconciliation.

The saying that black theology in Southern Africa stands with one leg in Africa and the other in black America recognises the double advantage in which it finds itself. As Africans black Southern African theologians share the background and experience of being what they are with the rest of Africa. For that reason some black theologians see black theology as a branch of African theology. Others even go to the extent of making no distinction between black and African theology.

Secondly as an oppressed people, black South Africans share the experience of disinheritance and oppression with black Americans. The words of black American theologians are echoed by their Southern African counterparts because both face similar problems in their respective societies. This fact may explain why there is such a strong link between black theology in America and black theology in South Africa. Therefore with the evidence presented in this thesis one may conclude that black theology in Southern Africa has a close relationship with both black theology in America and African theology.

The yearning for a God who truly appealed to the African imagination and aspirations, in protest against the God of white theology was expressed by different authors as a reason for secession from mission churches. Sundkler and others have shown that there are very strong nationalistic tones in some of the hymns of the African Independent churches. Black theology therefore takes these churches seriously and tries to see its origins or roots in them.

Black consciousness has no doubt provided a very important context. It has challenged black theologians to examine the role of the church in the process of radical social change. Therefore black theology began to approach scripture and tradition in a different manner and managed to make them meaningful to the black situation. Because of

Black consciousness, black people see Jesus Christ as their liberator and it also helped black theology to assert its theological insights without making any apology. Thus it is right to say that the relationship between black theology and black consciousness is that of soul mates walking together in the ongoing struggle of black liberation.

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1. BAARTMAN, ERNEST is a black Methodist minister in Durban, Natal, South Africa.

- Black Consciousness; Pro Veritate March 1973 p.4-6 (Pro Veritate was published as a journal for the now proscribed Christian Institute).

He begins by defining Black Consciousness as a rejection of the negative and derogatory term 'non white' because the term may mean someone who lives his entire life trying to imitate whites. The ideology says 'no' to anything that hinders black humanness. This awareness of the blackman has been brought about by the church which through its preaching and work helped the black man realise that he is a man; her teaching about God as our Father can only mean a sharing in the common sonship for all men in South Africa. But though the Church has taught this, its actions have refuted her preaching.

Black people reject the equation of whiteness with humanness but at the same time the demand for blacks is 'To love the White Man', because the life of both black and white must be rebuilt in love and not hatred. This love of the white man means the development of a new 'Thou' (SIC) relationship.

- The Significance of the Development of Black Consciousness for the Church; JTSA No. 2, March 1973 p.18-22

This is an evaluation of black consciousness as a philosophy which refers to all people who are not white that is to Hottentot, Indian, Bantu and Coloured. This consciousness is the refusal of black people to accept white racism in all its forms, and seeks to help the black man love himself because God loves him. The emergence of black consciousness is born out of the black man's experience of constant humiliation

sustained dehumanisation and forced self-denial.

The author differentiates black consciousness from black power because the former is non-violent, while the latter has violence built into it. Black theology is understood by the black man as a theology that seeks to interpret God's activity from black experiences, and the most important thing about black theology is that it is Christocentric.

The church needs therefore to remove all laws and practices that show signs of racialism. She must help her members change their attitudes because the white person regards himself as superior to the black man. The church must help white members become sensitive to the feelings of blacks as the church is the agent of reconciliation. She must not only speak of blacks being brought into positions of leadership but must be seen leading, white members must give leadership positions to blacks and risk them making mistakes in the hope that they will learn from their mistakes. Black consciousness seeks reconciliation but this must be between equals.

2. BANANA, CANNAN: is a Zimbabwean black Methodist Minister and a former African National Council Vice President and representative to North America and the United Nations. He is now the first state president of Zimbabwe.

- The Biblical Basis for Liberation Struggles : International Review of Mission Vol. 68, 1969, p.417-423.

This is a biblical justification of the armed struggle by blacks against the Ian Smith Rhodesian regime. He compares their struggle to that of the Hebrews suffering under the Egyptian pharaohs. Through Moses, God entered the conflict on the side of the oppressed people. God came down to deliver the Hebrews out of the hand of the Egyptians and took them to the promised land. But when Pharaoh refused to respond positively to Moses peaceful arguments and persuasion, God replied with

the language of force and violence. Thus God sanctioned the use of liberating violence, and therefore the oppressed have the right to stand up and fight for their freedom with every means at their disposal.

All those who die in the defence of human rights are carrying out a divine mission for a just cause. This struggle liberates both oppressed and oppressor into a just and equal society. The author recognises that while political freedom and independence is important yet they become meaningless unless they are accompanied by economic and social justice. This is a criticism to superpowers who through multi-national corporations still control raw materials from third world countries and thus manage to hold them under economic oppression. The New Testament condemns economic exploitation because the problem facing the world, especially starvation, is not caused by scarcity of food, but results from the inequitable distribution of available food resources.

The early Christians aspired to a just and classless society which was to be based on communal living. Therefore the main objective of revolutionary movements is to bring about a new society that will remove the boundary between brother and brother. Christians who oppose the use of armed struggle by oppressed peoples always ignore the violence of the oppressor. Young christians of Zimbabwe who lost their lives in the armed struggle did not lose them in vain, for they died that we might live.

- The Death of Christ as Liberation of the Poor: International Review of Mission; Vol. 69, 1980-81 p. 322.

The cross brings clearly to us that Christ positively identified himself with the oppressed. Like those who oppose the established order he faced intimidation; accusations and prosecution. Jesus died because he exposed those who enslaved others in the name of the law.

In Jesus Christ we see how liberation is possible, because he was stronger than the powers of this world. He shamed death through the power of the resurrection. The poor therefore are able to understand the death of Christ as a message of hope in their fight for liberation.

3. BIKO STEVE; he is regarded as the father and founder of the black Consciousness movement and was the first president of the now banned South African Student Organisation (SASO). Biko was detained in 1977 under the South African 'Terrorism Act' and died the same year in September while in police detention under mysterious circumstances.
- I write what I like; edited by Aalred Stubbs CR; Heineman; London, 1978.

The book is a collection of some of his writings on the meaning and analysis of black consciousness. He rejects integration on the white man's terms, also black people who collaborate with apartheid through government created platforms like the Bantustans (Homelands). The white missionary is blamed for disorientating the black and making him loose and abandon his culture when he became a christian. He calls upon the churches to embrace black theology which addresses itself to the present South African realities.

The white liberal must understand and realise that they themselves are oppressed if they are true liberals and therefore they must fight for their own freedom, they must educate their white brothers that the history of the country may have to be rewritten at some stage and that we may live in 'a country where colour will not serve to put a man in a box' Black people must recognise the various institutions of apartheid for what they are, gags intended to get black people fighting separately for certain "freedoms" and "gains" which were prescribed for them long ago.

Black consciousness recognises the existence of one major force in South Africa, this is white racism. It is the force against which all

of us are pitted. The time has come for black theologians to take up the cudgels of the fight by restoring a meaning and direction in the black man's understanding of God. No nation can win a battle without faith, and if our faith in our God is spoilt by our having to see Him through the eyes of the same people we are fighting against then there obviously begins to be something wrong in that relationship.

Politically, the bantustans are the greatest single fraud ever invented by white politicians. And bantustan leaders are subconsciously siding and abetting in the total subjugation of the black people of this country. By making the kind of militant noise they are now making they have managed to confuse the blacks sufficiently to believe that something is about to happen.

In South Africa there is such an ill distribution of wealth that any forms of political freedom which does not touch on the proper distribution of wealth will be meaningless. In our country there shall be no minority, there shall be no majority because all people will have the same status and rights before the law.

4. BOESAK ALLAN: is a coloured Dutch Reformed Church Minister and student chaplain at the coloured people's University of the Western Cape, Belville, Cape Town. He is also the current president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the man behind the WARC declaration of Apartheid as a heresy.

- Farewell to Innocence; Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 1977 and published in the United Kingdom as Black Theology and Black Power; MowBrays, London & Oxford 1978.

The book offers a socio-ethical study of black theology and power pointing out that the christian faith calls forth an active commitment to fundamental change of the whole apartheid system. Black theology he says is the reflection of blacks on the situation in which they live and

on their struggle for liberation. It is a different approach to =c Christian theology, a new world view and the responsibility of the church in the world. The Western world theology has so far ignored the realities of rich and poor of white and black of oppression and liberation from oppression. For the Church throughout history has created myths which were used to subjugate the black man, thus the theology of liberation exposes such myths which to the Christian church means a farewell to innocence or the hope that God would accept the responsibility for our failure.

This is a farewell to innocence for whites who think that they are innocent because it is God who put them as guardians of black people as superior people or nation. The question therefore to whites is whether they are prepared to identify with the oppressed in the struggle for liberation. Blacks' affirmation of their personhood is also a farewell to innocence because they now realise that historical structures are created and maintained by people.

Black theology is the content of the gospel of Jesus Christ which takes seriously the black man's experience, and rejects the understanding of the gospel as advocated by racist prophets. It sees the God of the Bible as the God of liberation who in the story of the Exodus identified and freed his people. It is situational because it seeks to project the black situation in such a way that it will begin to make sense, for it brings the gospel as a relevant message to people who have lost their self-respect. He identifies the poor and oppressed as those who happen to be black and assures them of God's support in their liberation struggle. Black theology like black, consciousness means that for blacks 'blackness' becomes the decisive factor in their expression of belief in Christ.

Black theology in its understanding of black history would like to show that there has always been a distinct black understanding of

Christianity and the Bible as evidenced e.g. by the many successions by black leaders from white mission churches. Christ has identified himself with the black man and to him Christ is the Black Messiah. As black consciousness and theology, black power is concerned with black humanity and the self-affirmation of black people, and this establishes a definite relation between the three. Black power therefore is an authentic Christian witness to God's intervention in human affairs.

The author attacks primarily what he calls the innocent ideology which is the Christian Nationalism sanctioned by the white Dutch Reformed Churches, and warns that even black Christian Nationalism can easily become a quasi-religious nationalism. The task of black theology therefore is to transcend ideology, and it tries to recapture what was sacred in the African community long before the coming of the white people. Boesak interprets the South African order as evil which needs fundamental change although not by violent means. He not only rejects the social structure but also the values underlying it. Towards the end of the book the author indicates that 'racism' is an analysis too narrow adequately to diagnose the problems of modern society. He also admits that there are some whites who have fully identified themselves with the black struggle against injustice and that the objective of black theology is a reconciliation of both black and whites. The liberation praxis is finally judged not by the demands of the situation but by the liberating gospel of Jesus.

- The Crucified Christ Challenges the powers of the World: South Africa; International Review of Mission; Vol. 69, 1980-81 p. 342-344.

Christ came to continue God's work of liberating the oppressed in the world. The South African apartheid system is protected by an ideology of 'national security' it is a racism which lives by violence, and is indirectly supported by the economic powers of the western world. There

is conflict and tension between the Christian church and the South African Christian state, but even in the Church there are whites who support the government Apartheid system and those who oppose it. The Church is also divided on the question of violence. Apartheid is a pseudo-gospel sanctioned and theologically justified by the white Dutch Reformed Church. The church is therefore summoned to denounce apartheid because the South African challenge is for the whole church.

- Wearheen wil Swart Teologie (Whither Black Theology) Pro Veritate, February 1974, p.5-7.

The question which we need to ask is : what is black theology? Black theology seeks to reveal to the black man that God is on the side of the oppressed, the poor and the black people. It is a theology which seeks to expose racism for what it is, a rebellion against God and the gospel. This way of doing theology aims towards the liberation of the oppressed; it is a reaction not against whites nor is it the expression of the black man, but rather it is a response to theology, the Christian belief.

Black theology shows that the liberation of the black man also means freedom to the white man. Black here has nothing to do with the colour of the skin, and whiteness should not be seen as the yardstick of all that is good. It also teaches black people not to stop loving white people.

- Civil Religion and the Black Community: J TSA, No. 19 June 1977; p.35-44

Civil Religion in South African is the Afrikaner understanding of himself in history. This Christian Nationalism does not only affect the Afrikaner, but it determines the destiny of all people who live in the country. It is a pseudo-theological ideology which enables the oppressor to justify the lot of the oppressed as God's will. The Missionary enterprise of the Dutch Reformed Church made sure that the Black daughter

Churches are moulded in such a way that they fit into the framework of the Apartheid policy. But now because of the new awareness that has come about, the historical relationship between the white Dutch Reformed Church and its black Mission churches is seriously threatened.

The Afrikaner type of Calvinistic civil religion was from the onset aimed at propounding the doctrine of separation of the races. The Afrikaner sees himself as ordained by God to be a guardian of black people and a protector of Western Christian Civilisation. This civil religion strangely teaches that for the white Afrikaner Church and state cannot and must not be separated, because it believes that the nation has a duty toward the christianisation of all peoples and cultures. But this does not apply to the black reformed people who instead are fed with a pietistic otherworld religiosity.

Thus the author submits that only black theology of liberation can adequately respond to this Christian Nationalism. For black theology is simply the proclamation of the age old gospel but now liberated from the deadly hold of the might and made relevant to the situation of the oppressed and the poor.

The author rejects the white Afrikaner theology as an ideology that needs to be destroyed. He summons them to embrace the true Reformed theology which affirms the truths of the Lordship of Christ and recommends black theology as truly acumenical and universal, because it is not an exclusive theology apartheid in which whites have no part.

- Swart Bewusyn, swart Mag en "Kleurling Politiek" Black Consciousness, Black Power and "Coloured Politics" Pro Veritate, February 1977 p. 9-12

South African politics have reached a decisive time and politicians face a new reality. The old slogans and policies are now unmasked as inadequate. Our old fights about 'liberals' and 'Conservatives' integrationists and segregationists, 'labour' and 'federals' are now

meaningless for the black man who is now asserting himself anew. After June 1976 South Africa can never be the same again and this rings true for 'Coloured politics and the Coloured labour party'.

Black consciousness is the awareness of black people that their personhood is determined by their blackness. Black here is a positive description as opposed to the negative term non-whites. Black consciousness means that it is an attitude of the mind and a way of life. Black consciousness like black power is a critique of the whole system of oppression. Black consciousness is a clear 'no' to equating whiteness with humanness. It calls for the solidarity of all black people.

Power means service to others. It is the ability to realise one's humanity as much as God has affirmed it in liberating man to be truly human. When one realises this in South Africa and believes it and you are black, then you have embraced black power. Therefore black power is the answer to white racism, exploitation and degradation, because for black South Africans white power is manifested in apartheid. Solidarity and black humanity are builders of a genuine future for us all, and we are called upon to work for a free and just future for both black and white in South Africa.

5. BUTHELEZI, MANAS: is a bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South African and the former director of the now banned Christian Institute in Natal.

- African Theology and Black Theology; in Relevant Theology for Africa, edited by H J Becken; Lutheran Publishing House, Durban 1973 p.18-24.

The paper deals with the relationship between black theology and African theology. African theology is an attempt to relate the Christian faith to the life realities of Africa. It is about the past traditional heritage, present day problems and needs, as it is also about the future and expectations. Christianity has tended to forget the African past

or even condemn it. The white Missionaries prohibited all that had to do with the African past, and this resulted in the African forgetting his past heroes and his entire traditional past. This very past which gives content to a people's faith was destroyed and left them empty. African theology has therefore sought to correct this attitude because it has realised that the past traditional heritage is a fruitful point of departure in the task of theology in Africa. But in South Africa this exercise was received with scepticism by blacks because it sounded like the government's attempt to link the political future of the black man to past traditional institutions e.g. chieftainship, while the black South African wants a share in the present political realities. Nevertheless the author concedes that the African theology Methodology has in itself merit as far as it draws attention to positive elements in the African past.

He clearly prefers the black theology method which deals with the present experience of the black man. For black theology takes seriously the black man's situation and seeks to understand the gospel in relation to it. Black theology interprets the gospel as a liberating event from the chains of rejection. These chains are the myths created by the white man on the meaning of blackness. Thus black theology rejects such myths and takes the black oppressed as its point of departure.

- An African Theology or a Black Theology; in The Challenge of Black Theology in South Africa; edited by Basil Moore; John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1974, p.29-35.

The author draws a distinction between the method used by Black theology as opposed to that used by African theology. This differentiation centres around what point of departure is applied in both theologies, that is whether it is an ethnographic concern with the past or the anthropological realities of the present.

African theology is over concerned with the African past world view at the expense of the present situation in which the African man finds himself. This quest is narrowed to the conflict between two world views, the European and the African. There is also a tendency in African theology to romanticise the historical past as if Africa was not able to undergo cultural transformation in the absence of the white man. Thus for the author the ethnographic approach of African theology falls short because it does not deal with the life dynamics of the present day African.

But the anthropological approach of black theology reflects on the existential situation of the black man. This way the gospel reaches man and addresses itself directly to his actual situation. Blackness embraces the totality of the black man's life and determines who he is and what possibilities are open to him. Black theology therefore sees established Christianity upholding a theology that never took them seriously. Therefore it brings home to the preacher and minister the need to stop preaching the otherworldly religion and to come down and wrestle with the black man's daily problems and expectations. The author clearly prefers the black theology method which helps black people gain access to that which constitutes the wholeness of life in the present because to realise ones humanity does not need a reconstruction of the traditional past as advocated by African theology.

- Theological grounds for an Ethic of Hope, in Moore p. 147-156

In this article two concepts are dealt with, which are faith in God and faith in God's world.

The experience of alienation from God and his fellow man gives man a sense of insecurity. The Christian ethic is that of hope because it is about the now and not yet. The struggle against injustice coexists

with the hope of victory as a realised eschatological event. The belief that God in Christ is Lord over all situations breeds a sustaining hope. Thus we have a responsibility to inspire hope among the people who struggle in life situations not regarded as Christian. For it is easy for such people to run away and try to escape the harsh realities of life. People need to be taught that to have life means to contribute creatively to one's neighbours, whether Christians or non-Christian.

Sin also accounts for the alienation of man from man, reconciliation therefore is not only between God and man but also man and man. The theology of pietism is responsible for making man lose sight of the latter dimension. It is only when man has learned to accept what God has accepted that he will be able to accept his neighbour into his fellowship. Therefore our ethical and Christian responsibility is to equip man with the tools which will enable him to stand on his own feet. This will instill in him the courage to be himself so that he may take his place at a point in life and begin to have faith in himself as a man after we have had faith in him as our fellow-man.

- The Theological Meaning of True Humanity; in Moore p.93-103.

True humanity is the state and form of existence which God intended when he created man. The author treats the subject in two ways, first the image of God in man as well as man's status as a redeemed creature, and with the existential contradictions in the realisation of true humanity.

According to Genesis God gave man dominion in the world, standing and acting in God's stead. This describes the unique relationship which exists between God, creator and man, creature, because man was created in God's image. The author argues that even as a sinner man has not crossed the boundary between the human and the brute, even if sometimes he deals brutally with other men. Nevertheless he is not beyond redemption, he is still a man created in the image of God.

Man's redemption puts him on the road towards the realisation of his true humanity in Christ which happens in the medium of his daily life. His transformation does not take place in heaven but here on earth. The question now is whether it is possible for a Christian to reach his potential as a man under sub-human conditions?

It is true that for the African religion is not a department of life but religion is life: every member of the community participated in its religion. Life was so much a whole that not even death could disintegrate it; thus there was a real solidarity between the living and the dead. The African concept of wholeness of life serves to preserve the integrity of man. But the historical factors in South Africa has caused the African to doubt his personhood and to have a self-hatred of himself. The black man has been made to bow therefore to opinions and ideas of those whom he has been conditioned to associate with, he becomes a channel, rather than a fountain of ideas.

- Black Theology and the Le Grange - Schlebusch Commission; Pro Veritate, Oct 1975 p.4-6.

This is an analysis and summary of the report on black theology by the Government appointed commission.

After the commission had investigated the two organisations which promoted black theology, that is the Christian Institute and the University Christian Movement, it doubted the scriptural basis of black theology. After linking black theology with some United States movements like the Black Panthers, it concluded that the gospel is first and foremost concerned with redemption and not with a racist ideology. This theology is influenced by Rudolf Bultmann whose thinking they say is not founded on Christianity, therefore the inference here is that black theology is not based on the bible but on pro-Communist sources. The commission also relates black theology to the World Council of Churches, a body it suspects to be communist inspired.

In his evaluation of the report he points out that the Commission ignored a number of important facts. He argues that even if black theology is a foreign import there is nothing wrong in that and it need not bring its validity into question because even Christianity was brought to Africa by European foreigners. The other fact ignored is that Apartheid is responsible for the quest for black theology in South Africa. But more seriously the Commission which passed judgement on black theology had no black member sitting in it; this is enough to discredit the report because it was drawn up by people with well defined political interests.

- Mutual Acceptance from a Black Perspective: J TSA No 23, June 1973, p.71-76

The discussion in this paper is on the problem of mutual acceptance in church organisation, teaching and church participation in life.

The preaching of the gospel in Africa was accompanied by the injection of an element of social division which made it difficult for those who had accepted Christ to accept one another. This was caused by denominational rivalry and competition which sometime left the impression that the distance between denominations is the same as that between Christians and unbelievers. A Lutheran would never dream of seeing a Methodist minister in a Lutheran altar and this lack of mutual acceptance affected the black convert. In order to make himself accepted to Christianity the black convert had to accept not only Christ but also European clothes because his own culture belonged to the past. This is significant because the method of political control over slaves was to make them forget their past and their language. They therefore became disorientated and lost a sense of destiny.

In the ecumenical dialogue for mutual acceptance to become a reality all parties concerned need to list as agenda items of their theological insights and concerns. This will enable us to have ecumenical theology

in the true sense rather than creating a consensus out of past confessional and theological disagreements in which the black man has no historical sentiments. The unity of the church must become visible not just within the walls of the church but in the events of daily life. Mutual acceptance means establishing a physical presence in one another's moments of crisis; it may mean using as points of departure not only the 16th century insights but also what is being said today e.g. the insights of black theology or liberation theology.

- Christianity in South Africa; Pro Veritate; 15 June 1973, p.4-6.

The church in South Africa has been turned into a living monument of a race and colour orientated society; many church buildings have become heathen shrines of a race and colour god. The South African way of life has undermined and almost destroyed christianity, the white man as the architect of apartheid has destroyed the heart of the faith he brought with him. When the white man came to South Africa he was received with open arms by the black man, but now in South Africa there are many things which remind the black man that he is a rejected member of society. But irrespective of this fact the black man realises that white people whether they like it or not are their brothers. The black man owes the white man not just passive love but creative and creating love.

The problem facing black christians is that they have not preached the gospel to all nations; their only contribution is to people of their own race. They therefore have underestimated their integrity as ambassadors of God in South Africa. White people need to be told that God loves them and that he wants to give them power to love the black man, and to accept him as his daily life brother. Thus there is a great and urgent need to establish a black christian mission to the whites in South Africa which will be manned by blacks.

- The Relevance of the Gospel Today; Lutheran World, No. 21, 1974 p.271-273

As Christians we are called into this hostile, unjust and inhuman world and not to withdraw to some peaceful spiritual ghetto. It is not

only in the church where we meet God but also in the course of our daily lives with other people. We are ashamed of the gospel when we fear to stand in solidarity with our brother or accepting people of other races and colours as brothers. God needs disciples who manifest the power of reconciliation, the power that turns enemies into friends, that can indeed bring about reconciliation between the blacks and whites in South Africa.

- The Relevance of Black Theology, South African Outlook, December 1974
p. 198-199

Black theology is a theological contribution in a situation in which there is a destructive obsession with the colour of one's skin, because in South Africa colour has been elevated into a decisive principle of social, economic and political order. Therefore black theology tries to call the attention of the church to this problem because it tries to awaken people's consciences.

The ecclesiology reflected in the patterns of our worship and community life is based on the principle of division with separate black and white church structures. Black theology therefore aims at equipping black people with a theological perspective as they play a creative role in meeting the needs of all the peoples of South Africa. It wants to teach South Africans who are so obsessed with national security that the theological basis for security is Christ's atoning work; it is reconciliation between God and man which accounts for security. Black theology addresses people of South Africa to the true liberating security of the Gospel.

6. GOBA BONGANJALO: is a lecturer in Practical theology at the University of South Africa and a parish minister in the Orlando Congregational Church, Soweto, Johannesburg.

- Doing theology in South Africa; A Black Christian Perspective, JTSA No. 31, June 1980, p. 23 - 35.

The paper is a quest for theological reflection on the nature of the praxis of faith in the South African context, a context which makes it imperative for the black Christian to be part of the black people's struggle for freedom. Theology must be an expression of the community of faith within a particular context, in this case it requires a critical examination of some of the current problems confronting the black church in the process of liberation.

Black theological reflection becomes a new way of expressing the cultural revolution that is going on in Africa in which God's goal of liberation is manifesting itself. It therefore plays a significant role in the process of conscientisation, because it enables the black Christian to be fully acquainted with the contradiction of South African society. Its primary purpose is to reject the system of Apartheid in the light of the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, because the challenge is the situation of oppression.

The black church has to begin to discern God's liberating action in the world and therefore respond by active participation, that is to engage in the actual process of political change. It has to help both black and white christians to find a theological basis for participating in the process of political transformation informed by faith. This requires the church to rediscover her obedience to the liberating mission of Jesus Christ. The church has to preach a theology of the Christian community wrestling with concrete problems as well as providing alternatives in the process of liberation.

7. GQUBULE, SIMON: is a lecturer at the Federal Theological Seminary and attached to John Wesley College, Pietermaritzburg.

- What is Black Theology; JTSA No.8 September 1974, p.16-23.

This is an attempt to clarify the meaning of black theology. Black theology is not a return to African traditional religions though

it would be valuable for it to discover the nature of these religions. Christianity is not a white man's religion although it was brought to us by a white missionary and again missionary societies did not confer with imperialists to plan a systematic subjugation of the black man. But it is natural that any black or white artist who really understands the meaning of the incarnation would portray Jesus as a black or white man. White missionaries were indeed at fault when they forced on the black man European dress, custom and culture.

Black theology is that discipline which deals with the experiences of the black man in his encounter with Christ and the world. Black in South Africa speaks of the whole history of domination, oppression, disenfranchisement and segregation; thus the Indian and Coloured people are included in the designation 'Black'. Therefore the Christian message must be brought to the black man in terms of his own life and experience. Black theology is that attempt of presenting the gospel relevantly with all its liberating power.

8. KAMEETA, ZEPHANIA: is the principal of the Paulinum Theological College at Otjimbingwe; Namibia

- A Christian Message after Detention; Pro Veritate, December 1975 p.7-9

This is a letter by an ex-detainee sharing his jail experience with other Christians. Through my study of the Word in jail, I felt very strongly that the Lord himself was speaking to me, he says. Jesus became anew my Saviour.

The presence of the South African regime in Namibia is not only a political question but a threat to the gospel of Jesus Christ. In this country which claims to be Christian you can be a Christian ten thousand times over, but if you are not white you are treated like a dog. The struggle for liberation in Southern Africa is not merely a political struggle but religious; thus all christians are called to participate.

- A Black Theology of Liberation: Lutheran World, No.22 1975 p.276-278.

The author explores the nature and meaning of black theology. Black does not designate a philosophical concept or an ideology or a colour, but oppressed humanity, it stands for the condition of wretchedness in which the oppressed live. Therefore God speaks his word in a situation of bannings and restrictions of hunger and poverty, of racism and discrimination. It is to this situation that the Lord speaks his liberating Word, the black theology of liberation. Those who are liberated are to be instruments of liberation in the world; with this message they confront the reality of sin within the godless structures. For Jesus Christ is the liberator of the whole of humanity without distinction of race or colour.

9. KHOAPA, BENNIE: is a former director of the now banned Black Community Projects and living in exile in the United States.

- Black Consciousness; South African Outlook; June-July 1972, p.100-102.

Black Consciousness means the complete liberation of blacks from white oppression by whatever means blacks deem necessary, including when expedient integration or separation. The primary issue is not separation or integration but liberation. At this moment the essence of our situation is that we can neither integrate nor separate but need to regroup. It is not separation of blacks but the separatism of whites which threatens the country. We shall earn the right to love all men by struggling against some.

The liberationist says that the presence or absence of the white man is irrelevant, what is important to him is the liberation of black people. Men cannot love each other if their material interests conflict, because racial problems can only be solved in a climate of economic equality. Racial integration requires economic integration and this requires structural change in the South African society. Black people must re-evaluate everything they are doing and saying because everything must be made anew. There is a strong justification for black people to regroup and to form their own organisations.

10. LEDIGA S.P: is a minister of the Presbyterian Church serving in Pretoria, South Africa.

- A Relevant theology for Africa; in H J Becken p. 25-33

In this paper the author makes no sharp distinction between African religious belief and black theology. Africa had a theology long before the advent of the white missionary, because every religion has a form of theology. The black man is in search of a God of his own who will heed him in his dilemma and answer his cry; the God of the white man is sectarian and selfish. The God of the white man is loving to the whites only and indeed from the material point of view he favours them and them alone. He allows them to destroy and oppress the black man.

Black theology is a theology because it seeks to discover God in a way appreciable to the black man as a member of the human race and not as a sub-human creature. Black theology therefore originates in the very existence of a religion pertaining to Africa. Perhaps it was dormant and covered in the mystery and taboo that pervades primitive religions. Just as God spoke to Moses in the burning bush, so Africa will hear a message of the creator in thunder and lightning. Black Religion it should be admitted has many similarities with that of the Old Testament from which the Christian religion developed. Black theology's homiletical and catechetical practices wear a new and dynamic look.

11. MAKHATHINI D D L is a former lecturer at the Mepumulo Lutheran Theological College, Natal, South Africa

- Black Theology; in H J Becken p. 8-17.

Black theology is not racist nor an ideology but it is a black man's freedom in expressing his faith in Jesus Christ. Black theology seeks to remove anything that stands in the way between a black man and

his black God. In South Africa long before black theology, black churches expressed strong feelings against white domination, and this was one of the reasons for the early separated churches.

Black theology makes an assault on all Western modes of worship and aims at the de-denominationalisation of the black people by instilling into them the understanding that they are first black before they are Christian. The bible ought to be made alive to the twentieth century black people to answer their questions. It must have the word of prophecy heard and understood. Concepts like sin, salvation, fellowship etc. may need redefinition. Black theology calls black people to a solidarity in their hope and trust in God. It is never aimed at opposing Western theology but wants to answer black people's problems on the basis of the Word of God. Nevertheless like any theology it does not claim permanence beyond its validity.

12. MAYATULA V; is a former minister of the Bantu Bethlehem Christian Apostolic Church of South Africa
- African Independent Churches contribution to a Relevant theology in Africa; in H J Becken p. 174-177

African Independent Churches are divided into two groups the prophets of physical liberation, e.g. Ethiopianism and Messianism and the prophets of psychological liberation that is Zionism. The former group used Lk 4.18 as their point of departure, to them the love of God meant mercy and justice.

The latter group that is the Zionists introduced a new type of esoteriological theology of liberation. Their way of worship satisfied the aspirations and ideals of blacks and healing was the central part of their ministry. The Zionists believe that it should be stated that the saving event of the cross and that of the resurrection are bound

together and cannot be separated.

13. MGOJO E K M : is a lecturer at the Federal Theological Seminary and attached to John Wesley College, Pietermaritzburg.

- Prolegomenon to the study of Black Theology; JTSA No.21,December 1977 p.25-32.

A historical evaluation of theology in general until the emergence of black theology. The appearance of Black theology is attributed to the failure of white theologians in particular to relate the gospel to the pain of being left with no dignity as a black man in a white governed society. Since apartheid is given religious sanction and respectability for the oppression of black people, there is still an obvious need to reinterpret the Christian faith from the standpoint of the oppressed. Black theology therefore justifies its existence on the grounds that it is seeking to relate the truth of the gospel to a grossly neglected area of concern to black people viz. black experience of suffering.

The distinction between 'sources' and formative factors is very important to the study of black theology, for among the sources listed by black theologians are items such as literature, history, sermons, folklore, art etc. All of these may very well contribute to the construction of Black Theology, but unless the major factors are identified and given due weight, distortion may easily occur. Therefore the most important sources for black theology are, biblical revelation, black experience, black history, black culture and tradition.

14. MOORE BASIL: is a Methodist minister and is the one who popularised black theology in South Africa; he is also the editor of the book, The Challenge of Black theology in South Africa, John Knox Press,Atlanta, Georgia, 1974.

- What is Black Theology, p.1-10

The catch title 'Black Theology' has been imported from the United States but the content of American black theology has not been imported with the title. Black theology begins with people, specific people, in a specific situation, thus it starts with black people in the South African situation facing oppression, fear, hunger, insult and dehumanisation. Black theology turns to the scriptures to ask them what they have to say to these black people with this history? The answer is, through the incarnation God identified himself in Christ with the poor and this is to say that Christ is black.

Blacks know too well what it is to be the playthings of people in power, concepts such as omnipotence and omniscience ring fearfully of the immovable military backed South African government and its security police. Black theology cannot afford to have truck with these images which lend religious support to a fascist type of authoritarianism. Thus black theology needs to explore images of God, for we need new images which are freeing images in that they are images of unit and wholeness, images of humanising relationships of love, truth and justice. Black theology therefore is a call to action for freedom, for God, for wholeness, for man.

- An Introduction to the South African Voice, 1970 unpublished.

An examination of the historical Jesus in the light of first century Judaism and his relevance to the South African situation.

Jesus, together with most of his Jewish contemporaries was poor and evidence of this abounds within the gospel records themselves. Therefore it was the poor who clung avidly to him and his words because he offered them a realistic sense of hope. In South Africa blacks are poor and they are also dispossessed without political rights in the land of their birth.

Black theologians reject the charitable christian hand out as an adequate Christian response to the question of poverty. They hear Christ addressing them in their humiliating poverty (see me not only in the wretchedness all around you, but also in your own wretchedness and break free. So blacks are saying that the Jesus message demands that we say 'no' to political disinheritance. The church in South Africa has to be out there among the poor, the oppressed, the downtrodden inflaming and being inflamed by a passion for freedom from the inequalities of wealth and power.

15. MPUNZI A: is a student of Divinity at the University of Glasgow.

- Black Theology as Liberation Theology, in Moore p. 130-140.

He refers to the interplay of uniqueness and community, everyman is an individual but at the same time everyman is a social being who wants to live in relation to others.

There is no person who wishes to be, or to be seen as nothing more than a cog in a machine or a digit in a system. We want to be ourselves and to be treated as uniquely ourselves. But our desire for uniqueness is not a desire for isolation, it is a desire to be recognised as unique. At the same time we have a strong desire for community because we want and need people about us who love and accept us. Thus the desire for uniqueness and the desire for community usually balance each other.

Black theology claims that God affirms my uniqueness and so my blackness. We must therefore respond both to God and to others as what we know ourselves to be, black people. The doctrine of the Trinity affirms the uniqueness of the 'persons' of the Trinity, but at the same time they are one. Therefore we are also persons in the unity that holds people in the powerful give-and-take of love and acceptance.

16. MOSOTHOANE E: is a lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of the Transkei.

- Liberation of Peoples in the New Testament, Missionalia, Vol. 8 No.2 August, 1980, p.70-80

Identifies the poor in the New Testament as referring to sinners, harlots, prostitutes, tax collectors etc.

To say the kingdom of God is soteriological is to say most definitely that it is a liberating kingdom. For so far as Jesus was concerned the crippled woman in Luke 13:11-16 was in bondage from which she needed to be freed. The kingdom of God is also a liberating force from oppressive social, economic, cultural and political situations. What the kingdom brings is liberation from indignity, isolation and alienation, into the Messianic community.

The expression *hoi ptchoi* includes much more than those who were economically deprived. But the expression 'the poor' includes harlots, tax collectors and publicans who were despised and hated. Therefore the community of the kingdom is in the gospels essentially all-inclusive. The challenge of the proclamation of the kingdom of God is to be demonstrated and experienced in our frighteningly problematic world, our beloved South Africa.

- The Message of the New Testament seen in African Perspective; in H J Becker, p.55-57

The New Testament also challenges African Christians for discriminating against the *baloi* (witches, sorcerers, wizards) the *libeti* and *lifebe* (adulterers, fornicators and rapists) the murders and the thieves, the uneducated and the ignorant.

Jesus use of the designation 'the poor' refers to those who receive a raw deal from their fellow men. For him they were not only sinners, tax collectors, harlots etc., they were the 'poor' ones who

needed pity, mercy and sympathy. Therefore if Africa is to be enriched by the gospel, it must also be judged by the gospel. In Africa the most hated man is the one who is a threat to one's power and life. This most hated man is in terms of the gospel 'the poor' man. The message is a challenge and an indictment to African Christians. Do not think that your black skin automatically puts you on God's side. They may be witches, wizards, adulterers, uneducated etc. all offscourings of society, but these are 'the poor'. What is required is to proclaim forgiveness and to allow it to issue in acceptance and forgiveness.

17. MOTLHABI M: is the director of the Educational Opportunity Council, Johannesburg, South Africa.

- Black Theology; A Person View, in Moore p. 74-80.

Dismisses the dualistic view of the world into spiritual and secular and calls for the salvation of the whole man. Perfection for the world does not mean its being extracted from its earthly situation into some abstract 'Christlike' one, but it means that Christ is happening to it in its authentic existential situation. Therefore the church has a direct mission towards the fostering of a human community which should necessarily imply Christ's presence in every sphere of human life.

Black theology seeks to relate God as both man's creator and his liberator in his entire situation, not only religious but also social, political and economic. In black theology man is seen as a complete whole, a mind-body-soul composite in, and confronted by a complete situation. Black theology is not a theology of theory, but of action and development, because it is an authentic and positive articulation of our reflection on God in the light of black experience.

- Black Theology and Authority; in Moore p. 119-129

A rejection of authoritarianism in both church and state. In South Africa the primary way has been to set up political structures in which authority to take certain decisions is vested in people because they hold that office. Thus we have everything from prime ministers down to police constables, but certain people who are of a different race are rigidly excluded from holding some of these offices.

It is also to be found in the church in which a hierarchy is set up with different offices into which men are called!

In the church there is the myth of 'divine election' which hardly masks the struggles for power that go on at election times. Much of our language concerning God shows him to be the authoritarian par excellence; we speak of him as Master, Lord, King, Judge, Father Omnipotent, at the same time man is pictured as one who should be in total submission e.g. slave, son, child.

In the place of these authoritarian images we should explore those images which speak of the suffering God who is identified with the oppressed. God should be seen not as our master who treats us as he chooses, but our comrade and friend in the struggle for freedom. Black theology therefore says we cannot have the authoritarians who try to tell us what we believe or what to believe and who have the power to reward or punish us.

18. NTWASA SABELO: is a parish minister in the diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman and the former director the UCM Black Theology Project.

- The Concept of God in Black Theology (with B Moore) in Moore p.18-28

An analysis of the traditional concepts of God and the need to formulate new images of God.

The symbol of God as 'father' reinforces his authority, God as

'Son' reinforces his maleness and God as 'Shepherd' or 'Guide' or 'Lord' or 'Master' reinforces his authority. God as Father while trying to express God's loving concern still carries strong overtones of authority. Black theology must therefore explore new symbols of God which affirm human authenticity, freedom and wholeness. Perhaps such images would be God is freedom, he is the freedom made known in our history, the freedom that calls us out of our chains of oppression into a wholeness of life. God is the wholeness which exists in the spaces between the people when their dignity and worth is mutually affirmed in love, truth, justice and caring warmth.

- The Concept of the Church in Black Theology, in Moore p. 109-115.

The role of the church in the world should be that of total commitment to the liberation of black people, a dying with Christ to free men from bondage.

The church in South Africa is essentially the most colonial institution in the country, because the power and decision making is still safely in the hands of the white minority. The liturgy is western and all land owned by the Church is registered as white land. This epitomises the discrepancy between word and action in our white-dominated churches. The black people in our country have largely resigned themselves to the fate of having other people decide what is good for them.

Black theology calls the black churchmen to start defining the Christ-event for themselves. Black theology grapples with existential problems and does not claim to be a theology of absolutes, it seeks to return God to the black man and to the truth and reality of his situation. In Black Theology, the Church is that company of people 'who die with Christ' in the quality of life which is totally committed to liberating black people.

- The training of Black ministers today; in Moore p. 141-146

A criticism of the curriculum provided for the training of black ministers as irrelevant to their situations. A review of black seminary teaching and training is long overdue. Such a review should seriously take into account black education and the socio-political situation of the country generally and black parishes in particular. The white staff members who are in the majority at black seminaries (though there is a change) now often lack any existential knowledge of what it is to be black in racist South Africa. Few, if any, of them have any first hand experience of either black communities or black parishes in their living or work situation. Surely there is an urgent need for an intimate knowledge of black history, culture, community and parish life. If such a need is to be met it might become an accidental circumstance that most of the seminary staff would be black. This will more adequately meet our situational needs.

19. OPOCENSKY, OKITE AND BUTHELEZI: Black Theology in Bangkok, South African Outlook, September 1973 p. 153-157.

A conference communique on liberation theology that it meets the socio-political and spiritual needs of Africa.

Salvation has both a spiritual and a social-political dimension, a present as well as a future tense. The salvation of Christ means a war against evil. The church came to Africa as part of a foreign history and as an agent of that history. It shared not only the tremendous achievements, power and glory of Western civilisation, but also in its shortcomings. Therefore the church in Africa must now become a full partner with others in Christ's total mission in our world today.

For South African churches in particular there is the need for a reinterpretation of the Gospel. The black man should cease playing

the passive role of the white man's victim and it is now time for the black man to evangelise and humanise the white man. The black theologian must therefore discover a theological framework within which he can understand the will and love of God in Jesus Christ outside the limitations of the white man's institutions.

20. PITYANA, N: is an exiled South African now a priest in the Anglican church in Milton Keynes, United Kingdom.

- What is Black Consciousness; in Moore p. 58-63

Examines white values and calls for new ones which are appropriate and meaningful to black people. And he regards black theology as an extension of black consciousness.

Christianity brought with it a deep upheaval of African norms and values, a disintegration of families and tribes and the cancerous money economy. Black consciousness implies a vision of the heritage of our forefathers, and seeks a social content of the lives of the black people and to involve the one in the suffering of the others, for this has been the cornerstone of the traditional black community.

The churches are still an extension of the missionary ideal, and dominated by whites and the values of white superiority. To black people the church needs to be a haven where they can freely shed their tears, voice their aspirations and sorrows and empty their souls out to God. Therefore both black theology and black consciousness are instruments of construction. Black theology concerns itself with liberation, and liberation presupposes a search for humanity and for existence as a God created being.

21. SETILDANE G: is a Methodist minister at Thaba Nchu in the Orange Free State, South Africa.

- The Theological trends in Africa, Missionalia, Vol.8, No.2 August, 1980 p.47-53

Highlights African theology as the theology of the future in Africa and sees black theology as a fading discipline. Black theology is still doing theology within the field of Western European, Graeco-Roman rooted thought forms and worldview. And as soon as the black vs white scenario is over, there will be no need for black theology any more, because as soon as the black man has attained his liberation black theology will go out of business. Black theology is going out of fashion because a deepening in our experience of Divinity as a community has taken place. Black theology cannot do without the white man and his whiteness, these are irrelevant to black consciousness which helps the black man to go back to his roots as man, African man.

Black consciousness in our South African situation is serving as a happy vehicle or bridge from black theology with its limitations to the theology of Africa. African theology seeks to build a Christian tradition which while being universal, integrates the irreplaceable contributions of Negro-African religious thought and experience. Therefore African theology shall become the theology of all Africa even South Africa and black theology waning,

- Black Theology; South African Outlook, February 1971, p.28-30.

An assessment of black theology and a critique of its apologetic nature.

Black theology in America is done in the dust and heat of political warfare hence their militancy and impatience. African theology like black theology of the US is born on the arena of human and cultural encounter out of frustration of trying to make Christian truths comprehensible to black people. The attempt of both theologies is to rip the foreign swaddling clothes and thus expose the authentic naked kerygma.

Everyman understands truth and expresses it according to his situation. Therefore African theology tries to break the seal of Western thought-forms and culture so that people can come face to face with Christ, and in Him see themselves and others. People have heard enough now about the reasons for a black theology, let it go ahead now and theologise black. As far as the author is concerned in this paper there is no difference between South African black theology and African theology.

22. SIKAKANE, E: is the director of the Edendale Ecumenical Center, Pietermaritzburg.

- The need for Black Theology, Pro Veritate, April 1974, p.20-23.

An appraisal of black theology as a discipline which encourages the black man to attain his manhood. The kind of theology coming from a man who is frustrated and discriminated against is quite different from the theology of a man who is secure and free to speak and express himself. Black theology therefore has its place and it can only be expressed by a black man, because no white man can express it for us, he has no experience of what it means to be a black christian.

Christianity as we have received it from the western missionaries, has not yet developed the African people to manhood. We are not yet free even among our own Christians within the same denomination. Therefore there is need for black theology to help white theology so that there should be a two way function of give and take. There is a need for a theology that would express itself in concrete models, the kind of theology expressed in our living relations.

23. SIMPSON T: former principal of St Peters College at Alice and now a lecturer at the University of Swaziland.

- Black theology and White: Pro Veritate, March 1974, p.16-20.

Contrasts the theology of liberation with the white pietist theology and recommends a working relationship and dialogue between the two. If blacks are liberated, it will be the blacks who do the liberating and not the whites. The white 'liberal' offer of integration must be rejected because it represents an attempt to force the black to conform to white norms, and enables him to make progress only at the expense of the sacrifice of his integrity and self assurance as a black. The black search for freedom is identified with the promise of liberation given in the gospel. In South Africa to be black means to be part of a community which has its own culture and traditions, its own worldview pattern of family and social behaviour. It is the living contemporary black experience which is the context of black theology.

White theology on the other hand recommends submission and meekness in the face of oppression. It lays stress on the individual conversion experience at the expense of the social dimension of the gospel. However, there is a need for white theology that will enable the white man to escape from the dehumanising effects of the materialistic and selfish society which he has created. But both black and white Christians find their faith in the same Lord through the same scriptures the same sacraments and experience of acceptance and liberation which he came to bring

24. SMALL, A: is a coloured poet and a lecturer in Philosophy at the University of the Western Cape, Belville, South Africa.

- Blackness versus Nihilism, Black Racism Rejected, in Moore p.11-17

He rejects the equation of whiteness with value and calls for black identity and awareness. It is not in terms of skin colour that we see our blackness, it is a certain awareness a certain insight. Blackness

is not racist, for we have suffered enough from white racism not to want to be racist in our blackness. Racism is a phenomenon of inferiority whereas blackness is a phenomenon of pride. In our blackness we can accommodate a sympathy for whites because we are not out to hate them but to treat them as people.

What we do care about is understanding ourselves and in the course of this task we seek to help whites to understand themselves, and grasp a reality in which blackness occurs. Black people may live by the grace of God, but they do not live by the grace of whites. Our first task will be simply to live our blackness on every front. Black consciousness is not a matter of severing contacts so much as it is a matter of a certain historical necessity. Blacks want to survive as men.

25. SPRUNGER, A R is a Lutheran minister in the Transvaal South Africa.

- The Contribution of the African Independent Churches, in HJ Becken, p163-173.

African Independent Churches came about because of the irrelevancy of the contemporary theology in Southern Africa. And there will be no relevant theology in Southern Africa and in Africa as long as the Mission Churches do not start looking at, listening to and learning from the separatist churches. These prophetic churches live their faith, because more importance is given to the direct intervention of the Spirit than on theological arguments in solving the problems of the people and the community.

Around the prophet in the separatist churches, the body becomes a living reality. Around him a community is created which gives his people a real sense of belonging, a new home. They give a sense of belonging to the millions of people thrown together anonymously in sprawling suburbs. The prophetic churches of Africa can help the universal church

to rediscover the New Testament meaning of Koinonia. We urgently need a relevant theology for the millions of people who have not yet a spiritual home in a truly spiritual Church.

26. TSHENKENG, I O: is a student of Divinity at the University of Glasgow.

- A Theology of the people, Pro Veritate, 1977 p. 15.

Calls for a relevant theology for South Africa. South Africa needs a theology that will enable people to do things for themselves instead of relying on handouts. We need a theology that will address people where they are, e.g. urban or rural areas, Jesus challenged his people to be the people of God. The long expected age of deliverance had come, and they must assume the role that God had in mind for them, Jesus offers new possibilities. When mutual rivalry and mistrust end, love will be possible. The people of South Africa cry out for liberation. The gospel offers liberation for both black and white.

27. TUT, D M B; is a bishop in the Anglican church and the general Secretary of the South African Council of Churches.

- Black Theology; Frontier, Summer 1974 p.73-76.

Examines the meaning of black theology and its difference to African theology. The white man perhaps unconsciously sought to control our existence. He has believed that his standards including theological reflection are of universal validity. Black theology repudiates this western arrogance, because it says that there can never be a final theology. It seeks to know if it is possible to be black and continue to be Christian. Black theology is saying, the time has passed when we will wait for the white man to give us permission to do what we want. Black theology seeks to show that God works to set his people free to enter the promised land in this life. African theology is challenged

by black theology to begin to address itself more seriously to present day issues.

- Black Theology - African Theology - Soul Mates or Antagonists, in Black Theology a Documentary History p. 483-491.

He sets out their difference but appropriates both. Is black theology related to African theology or are the two distinct. African theology and black theology are an assertion that we should take the Incarnation seriously. African theology has given the lie to the belief that worthwhile religion in Africa had to await the advent of the white man.

The difference between the two theologies is because the two arise from different contexts. Black theology arises in a context of black suffering at the hands of white racism. Black theology burns to awake the white man to the degradation into which he has fallen by dehumanising the black man and so is concerned for the liberation of the oppressor equally with that of the oppressed. Black theology is more thoroughly and explicitly political than African theology is.

African theology has by and large failed to speak meaningfully in the face of contemporary problems which assail the modern Africa. It has divorced itself from problems like poverty, disease and other urgent issues. Black theology may have a few lessons for African theology, it may help to recall African theology to its vocation to be concerned for the poor and the oppressed, because African theology will have to recover its prophetic calling.

- Freedom Coming for black and white, One World, No. 35, April 1978, p.7

The chief purpose of the church in South Africa is to sustain hope. The church has to declare that God is the living God, and that He is in

charge of the world. The church has to demonstrate that it is the alternative society where race, colour and sex are irrelevant. The suffering has also affected many white South Africans who cannot accept the present situation in South Africa because of their commitment to what is the true gospel. Are we black and white willing to carry Christ's cross for the redemption of the world?

- Church and Nation in the Perspective of Black Theology; JTSA, No.15 June 1976 p.5-11.

Theology should change with the changing conditions of those on whose behalf it was undertaken. Black theology claims to follow this fact in seeking to answer anguished cries of the black community as it tries to make sense of its experience. Religion cannot be restricted to the consecrated building of the church but it must spill over to all aspects of life and inform and transfigure them.

Black theology needs to tell people that God loves them and that they are of value, that no matter what others may say or do they are persons of infinite value. This evangelistic campaign of black theology must succeed to exercise from the souls of black Christians the self-contempt and self-hatred. Black theology must succeed in helping them to assert their personhood and humanity because only persons can ultimately be reconciled. The white people also need help which will enable them to recover their humanity and personhood which have been injured by their participation in an unjust and oppressive society. They too need to be assured that they matter and that they are of value because God loves them. Politics needs religion to transform and save it from itself, the state needs the church which is as salt to keep it from going corrupt. The vertical Godward dimensions of religion cannot be separated from the horizontal manward ones.

- Some African Insights and the Old Testament, in H J Becken, p.40-46

The African way of life and philosophy is more in line with the Bible than Western man's originally was. For most non-Africans before the coming of Christianity to Africa, to them it was the dark Continent. Black was the colour of the devil, white the colour of angels and perhaps even of God. The black races were devoid of light, wallowing in the gloomy darkness of ignorance, and superstition. Missionaries had to save the benighted natives from themselves.

Indeed there were many aspects of the African world view which were sordid, there was much that had to be demolished. But it is obvious that Africa like any other culture or civilisation had both the good and the bad. Unfortunately it remains true that some missionaries gave the impression that Western standards were the only ones valid in the business of life, also that western values were the only ones compatible with christianity. Those who have denigrated things African would probably be surprised to discover that the African way of life, his worldview and his thought forms are those not only of the Old Testament but those of the entire Bible since the New Testament is firmly based on the Old Testament.

Africans believed in the existence of a Supreme Being, the all powerful the Creator of all there is. Thus the Bible here and the African would be speaking much the same language. The African would also understand perfectly well what the Old Testament meant when it said 'man belongs to the bundle of life' that he is not a solitary individual.

- Whither African Theology? in Christianity in Independent Africa (edited) E Fashole - Luke, R Gray, A Hastings and G Tasia, Rex Collings, London, 1978 p 364-369.

A critique of African theology and a recognition of its merit in addressing the African soul. African theologians have set about demonstrating that the African religious experience and heritage were not illusory and that they should have formed the vehicle for conveying the gospel verities to Africa. And they showed that many of Africa's religious insights had a real affinity with those of the Bible. This anthropological concern of African theology has helped to give the lie to the assumption that religion and history in Africa date from the advent in that continent of the white man. African theology has performed a good job by addressing the split in the African soul, and yet it has by and large failed to speak meaningfully in the face of contemporary problems which assail the modern African. Therefore black theology as an aspect of African theology may help to recall African theology to its vocation to be concerned for the poor and the oppressed.

- God Intervening in Humans Affairs, Missionalia Vol.5 No.2, August 1977
p.111-117

God is fully involved in human history as revealed in Jesus Christ. The theme that is central to the gospel of Jesus Christ is that of liberation. It is important for an oppressed people to know that God of the Bible is known first and foremost as the Exodus God, the God who is on the side of the oppressed. The setting free of captives comes to be a central theme in the biblical description of what God has done and will do. God delivers them from bondage and delivers them for being his people to be his peculiar people. South Africa needs the gospel of Jesus Christ because we live in a critical situation in our country at this time.

ZULU, A; is a former bishop of the Diocese of Zululand and now a member of the Kwazulu Legislative Assembly, South Africa.

- Whither Black Theology? Pro Veritate, March 1973 p.12-13.

Black theology is christian because it attempts to understand and to speak of God the father of Jesus Christ. This way of doing theology is beyond the understanding of the average white christian because it derives from the black man's experience. Black theology represents a symbol of the black Christian's awareness of himself as a human being and an object of redemption in the sense of liberation. Black people are led to see that when white people treat blacks as less than human, when they exploit and are unjust to black men, they are being unfaithful to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Black theologians however, need to guard against equating 'God being on the side of the oppressed' with 'the oppressed being on the side of God'. But it is by God's gracious love that he takes their side and acts for their liberation. Black as well as white men share in the disobedience of man and neither can speak or act as if he has no responsibility for the evil that is in the world.

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